

Little Falls Library Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting December 2, 2021

1. Chairperson Kathy Davies called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Secretary Dave Shumaker called the roll. All members were present: Kathy Davies (Chair), Mark Mitchell, Hannah November, Robert November, Dave Shumaker (Secretary), and John Stodola. Eric Carzon, interim Little Falls branch manager, and Grace Manubay, Montgomery County Library Board liaison, were also present. Two community observers attended: Elida Bessalel and Donna Collins, President of the Sumner Citizens Association.
2. Dave Shumaker requested approval to put an additional item on the agenda under New Business, for “Library System Upgrade Concern.” Approval of the revised agenda was moved by John Stodola, seconded by Robert November and adopted unanimously by voice vote.
3. Branch manager Eric Carzon submitted a written report detailing services provided and current staffing status. There are currently 3.5 FTE vacancies, including 1.5 Information Staff and 2.0 Circulation Staff, or a total of 5 vacant positions on a team of 16. There are also several vacancies for Library Pages. Pages are hourly, flexible, part-time positions that can be filled by anyone from high school students to retirees. Interested community members can view the vacancy announcement and submit applications at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Library/about/pagejobs.html> . Questions for Eric included the following:
 - Is there a timeline for filling vacancies? No. These vacancies aren’t top priority right now. There are many vacancies system-wide and Librarian I positions are being prioritized.
 - How does our staffing situation compare to other branches? It is similar. Many branches have multiple vacancies.
4. Grace Manubay presented her report of Board activity. The last meeting was the joint meeting on Nov. 11 with the Friends of the Library. Several LAC members attended that meeting and expressed appreciation. Eric mentioned that there will be a followup joint meeting in January, to prepare for budget advocacy. Grace noted that the Library administration will be preparing a new strategic plan and new facilities plan; and that a return to in-person programming will be decided branch-by-branch. The lack of facilities for outdoor in-person programming at Little Falls was noted. Eric commented that staff are looking at using the far end of the parking lot for in-person programs.
5. In the Chair’s report, Kathy thanked John for preparing his article on an interview with Eric Carzon, which led into the first item of Old Business.
6. Old Business

- Item 1 was a discussion of John’s article. It has been published in the Bannockburn community newsletter, which comes out once a month. Dave is working with the editor of the Sumner newsletter, who hopes to publish it in the next issue, before the end of the year. It’s also available for publication in other neighborhood newsletters, and LAC members are encouraged to follow up in their respective neighborhoods.
- Item 2 was a discussion of the status of the Little Falls Chapter of the Friends of the Library. The Little Falls chapter was dissolved at the beginning of November; all its funds, amounting to over \$400,000, had been moved to the control of the Montgomery County Friends organization previously. Four members of the LAC who were also members of the Chapter had a phone conference with FOLMC Board President Pam Saussy and Executive Director Ari Brooks on November 18. Assurances were given that the funds transferred will remain restricted for use to benefit Little Falls. However, there is no pathway at this time for the re-establishment of the Chapter. The FOLMC is reviewing its policies regarding chapters but could not provide any details regarding the progress, plans, or target date for conducting and completing the review. Discussion ensued regarding the current situation and impacts on the Little Falls Branch and the LAC. It is our understanding that funds restricted for Little Falls are expended on the recommendation of the Branch Manager and approval of the County Library administration, and this process remains in place. The LAC can influence the expenditures by being an effective representative of community needs and providing its input to the branch manager.
- The third item of old business was an update on the sunken lawn area around the storm drain between the building and Mass Avenue. Eric reported that he had contacted the library administration and that recently a crew had set fence posts for what may be a chain link fence around the danger zone. However, he hasn’t had any communication from the facilities staff. He will try to find out what they are going to do to restore the area, beyond putting up the fence.

7. New Business

- Opportunities for improvement of library facilities were discussed. One idea is to build a deck off the children’s room on the lower level, which could be used for outdoor programming. Another is to restore and improve the steps and plantings on the slope leading from the parking lot down to the corner of Westbard and Mass Avenue. It would be helpful to know when the library is scheduled for its next “refresh” and whether improvements could be scheduled to coincide.
- Dave spoke about library system concerns. In the recent system upgrade, personal lists stored in the system by library users were not transferred. At least a couple community members are affected by this (Dave is one). Dave’s inquiries over the past couple months have not yielded any meaningful response, and he suggests that library systems managers should address the problem and provide better

communication to affected users. Grace will bring this up at the next Board meeting.

- Schedule for coming meetings: we agreed to change our meeting night to the first Tuesday of every other month, and to continue meeting via Zoom, at least for the first half of 2022. Meetings are set for February 1, April 5, and June 7.

8. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.