

Little Falls Library Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting February 1, 2022

1. Chairperson Kathy Davies called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m. and called the roll. LAC members present: Kathy Davies (Chair), Mark Mitchell, Hannah November, Robert November, LAC members absent: John Stodola, Dave Shumaker. Eric Carzon, interim Little Falls branch manager, and Grace Manubay, Montgomery County Library Board liaison, were also present. There were no guests or observers.
2. Kathy Davies requested approval of the agenda - moved by Robert November, seconded by Hannah November and adopted unanimously by show of hands.
3. Branch manager, Eric Carzon, submitted a written report detailing services provided and current staffing status. Big spikes of activity in the he Montgomery County Public Library (MCPL) system occurred in October when the new system was installed and in January 2022 due to distribution of COVID tests and N95 masks. The MCPL system has given out over 200,000 COVID-19 test kits in less than four weeks and 500,000 masks in the last two weeks. Of these Little Falls handed out about 14,000 kits (1,000 a day) and almost 24,000 N95 masks (2,400 per day). Meanwhile staffing remains at 68% of budgeted staffing, with 5 vacant positions (including library manager) on a team of 16 staff. From July 2021 – November 30, 2021 – LF conducted 73 virtual programs with 1,816 attendees. Mr. Carzon reported on programs in the summer of 2021 and future programs to be funded by FOL funds. A safe outdoor space is needed for children's programs. One solution may be to close off part of the parking area and to get cushions or other temporary seating plus additional audio equipment. Library services are generally going well, but scheduling is difficult. Little Falls is in the process of finalizing offers to three Pages (Shelving Assistants). Currently other library staff members are doing the work of shelving. The sunken area in front in of the library around the big storm drain has been surrounded by a durable fence except for a gate space. Mr. Carzon will inquire about this opening in the fence. Large tree limbs have fallen near the library and the Department of General Services is estimating the cost of cleaning up the debris and trimming the trees based on Mr. Carzon's recommendations. Programs in February will feature Black History Month and the Year of the Tiger. The MCPL system is developing a new strategic plan and has created many activities and opportunities for community input in February and early March. Major questions include what does library mean to you and what do you want MCPL to be in 2025.
4. Grace Manubay presented her report on MCPL Advisory Board activity. The last meeting was in December of 2021 and a joint meeting with the Friends of the Library was held in January 2022. Dave Shumaker's concern about lists that did not transfer to the new MCPL online system has been largely resolved. She reported that no refresh is scheduled for LF soon because the last LF refresh was recent - 2016-2017. The next MCPL Advisory Board meeting will be on Wednesday, Feb. 9. Ms Manubay encouraged LAC members to attend. She spoke about the MCPL Strategic Plan and opportunities to provide input. She urged everyone to attend.

5. LAC Chairs' Report - Kathy Davies likewise urged the LFLAC members to attend both the MCPL Board meeting and the MCPL Strategic plan sessions if possible. The session specifically for LAC Chairs is scheduled for Tues 02/08/2022. Ms Davies plans to attend. She forwarded the schedule for five additional virtual meetings, all open to the public, to the LF LAC members (email sent 02/01/2022). These meetings afford good opportunities to learn and provide input.

6. Old Business

- John Stodola's article has been published in the Bannockburn newsletter and a condensed version submitted to the Sumner newsletter. It's also available for publication in other neighborhood newsletters, and LAC members are encouraged to follow up in their respective neighborhoods. Robert November will ask if the Wood Acres newsletter will publish it.
- Item 2 - the Little Falls Chapter of the Friends of the Library. The Little Falls chapter was dissolved at the beginning of November. Funds, amounting to over \$400,000, are now managed by the Montgomery County Friends of the Library and restricted for use to benefit Little Falls. Requests for using the funds go through the Manager of LF library. As representatives of the community, the LF LAC can provide ideas for use of the funds to the branch manager. We discussed possible uses such as providing funds to improve the grounds and make a safe space for outdoor children's programs and activities.
- Item 3 - the sunken lawn area around the storm drain between the building and Mass Avenue. The area has been fenced in except for an opening for a gate. Mr. Carzon is following up on this with the county. Another issue is that the fence is an eyesore. The possibility of using FOL funds to improve the appearance was raised.
- Item 4 - opportunities for improvement of library facilities were discussed including building a deck off the children's room on the lower level, which could be used for outdoor programming and improving the steps and plantings on the slope for outdoor activities and seating. Mark Mitchell re-circulated photos he sent in December of examples of steps and plantings to give people an idea of some possible approaches.

7. New Business

- It was suggested that in order to improve community engagement could the LF LAC meeting dates be put on a sign in the library (first Tuesday of every other month at 7:00 PM, via Zoom, set for April 5, and June 7).
- Everyone who wants to participate in the LF LAC Zoom meeting needs to have a Zoom account. The reason for this is that MCPL system Zoom meetings and

programs were being Zoom “bombed” (interrupted) by people displaying inappropriate and foul behavior. About a month ago the MCPL system began a policy of requiring all meeting participants to have Zoom accounts. The Zoom bombing has stopped, but it was not clear to all the participants that having a Zoom account is now a prerequisite for entering a MCPL Zoom meeting.

8. Comments from Observers – None
9. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m. Next meeting April 5, 2022.