

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES
Olney Library Advisory Committee Meeting
Virtual via Zoom – March 21, 2023

Attending: Maria Caswell (Chair), Audrey Partington (Secretary), Max Handelsman, Madeline Lyon, Dianne Whitaker (Regional Manager), Tim Lighter (MCPL Board Liaison)

Absent: Walter Lee, Nina Uzick

Call to Order and Approval of Minutes: The meeting began at 7:05 p.m. The January minutes were approved.

1. Regional Manager’s Report: Regional Manager Dianne Whitaker provided this report:

a. Facilities: The property manager for the Olney Branch received an estimate for vine removal. The cost is prohibitive and Montgomery County Government will not pay an arborist to remove vines. The staff reviewed the FEAP (Facilities Emergency) plan at the January staff meeting, focusing on evacuation plans, availability of flashlights, etc.

b. Collections: Book bundles are popular and are continually replenished by the staff. The newspaper section in the back was consolidated to make more room for fiction books.

The collections were featured in a number of displays: to celebrate Women’s History Month, St. Patrick’s Day, Ramadan, Read Across America Day. To celebrate Library Lovers Month in February, pink slips were provided so that patrons could write down why they love libraries.

c. Programming: In partnership with the Olney Theatre, the Olney Library hosted Drag Story Hour on Feb. 26. The popular event drew 183 participants, necessitating a second session for the overflow held in J Room. The program was attended by the MCPL Director, 2 regional managers, 3 county council members, and a state senator. Supporters of the controversial event were also positioned at the front entrance.

Other recent programs: Mask making for Mardis Gras, Art at the Library (artist Alma Thomas was featured for Black History Month), and a film showing of “A Wrinkle in Time.” A Teen Study Lounge is held on Wednesday afternoon. “My First Book Club” will be held on March 20. A book from the Katie Wood series will be read aloud and then discussed, followed by an activity.

d. Staffing: Several new members of the Circulation staff will come on board shortly.

3. MCPL Board Liaison Report: Tim Lighter reported that MCPL has hired an Electronic Resources Manager and a Teen Program Manager. The Library Board is down 5 members but 9 applicants have been interviewed for these openings. Seven applications have been received for the Library Advisory Committees. The FOL and LACs met jointly and issued a position paper regarding MCPL’s new Strategic Plan. The LAC Handbook has been updated (to include procedures for online meetings). Unfortunately, the LACs were not asked for their input, but will be asked for input in the future. The handbook should be updated annually. Work is being done on a new Library Board manual. The Library Board is preparing to testify at the County Council’s Budget Hearings. Tim reported that he will testify at the April 11 hearing.

4. Unfinished Business: Recruitment of new Olney LAC members is still needed. A suggestion was made to hand out the recruitment flyer at public programs, including family story hours. Audrey reported that Greater Olney Rides (formerly Olney Home for Life) sent a letter to Jaime Flores, MCPL's Asst. Director for Marketing and Outreach, to request the use of meeting space in Olney Library for its public programs of interest to seniors. The response was that only technology-focused programs for seniors will be approved.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. The next virtual LAC meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 18. The LAC will not meet in May.