

Olney Library Advisory Committee Meeting
Virtual via Zoom – Nov. 18, 2025

Attending: Maria Caswell (Chair), Audrey Partington (Secretary), Max Handelsman, Madeline Lyon, Tim Lighter (Library Board liaison), Kylie Sparks (Branch Manager)

Absent: Ursula Gorham, Walter Lee, Harry Needleman, Nina Uzick

Call to Order, Approval of Minutes: The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm. The October minutes will be approved via email, due to lack of a quorum.

1. Branch Manager's Report: Olney Branch Manager Kylie Sparks provided the update below.

a. Facilities: No animals have entered the building in several months, which is a good sign that the roof beams were successfully repaired. Weeds have been cleared around the building. Gutters have not yet been cleared out. Trash pick-up and inside cleaning of the building are much improved. Faucets in the women's bathroom were replaced with automatic faucets. The Knox Box was replaced, putting the Olney Library in compliance with the Fire Chief regulations. The library received a new large book shelf unit from the warehouse and a small one donated to shelve book club books so that staff members can keep their workspaces clear, and it is easier to find upcoming book club books. A work order is in to repair the outside poles leading in and out of the driveway. Potholes were filled. Madeline noted that some white lines are missing for parking spaces in the back of the parking lot. Kylie will put in a work order for this.

b. Programs: Regular programs are continuing with good attendance. Storytimes, scavenger hunt, Stem craft activities, and Legos are all very popular. Participation in the English conversation circle is down. The library is monitoring this. The Adult librarian will sit in on a couple of classes and meet with the volunteer to try to determine the cause for a decline in attendance. Daniel continues doing computer group classes and one-on-one training. The Mahjongg program has been a hit, averaging about 30 participants per session, and growing. Integral Tai Chi also attracts 16-25 people each time. There is a huge need for programs for older adults in this community. The Children's department is trying out a new pajama story time twice a month on Tuesdays.

An author talk by Brian Meyers about Montgomery County History was attended by 65 people.

Musician Michael Hays drew 50 people

Miss Lou yoga with kids (first time program) had 46 participants.

Olney Theatre story hour drew 29 people

Spanish conversation class restarted with a new volunteer, This program was popular before the pandemic.

A Teen program to teach teens cursive is being lead by Librarian Carol Reddan, with a teen volunteer. The program is especially popular with kids from the home-schooling community.

c. Collections: The Teen nonfiction books were moved back into the Teen Room in an effort to increase their circulation system-wide. The Teen area was reorganized to better accommodate the Teen nonfiction collection. The early chapter fiction books have been made into a separate section (a browsable section for books that are in between early readers and the regular Juvenile fiction collection).

Displays: Drawn from the collections, the November displays are:

Juvenile

Nonfiction November

Pyramid display by series: Dino-vember

Picture book display: Friendship and Kindness

Along the window above Holiday Books: Thanksgiving

Adult and Teen staff:

Native American Heritage Month

Adult displays:

Pulitzer Prize Authors

Native American Heritage

Staff picks

d. Staffing: Librarian 1 Katherine Maleckar is assisting Koren Nero with volunteer coordination. She has taken over the training of teen volunteers. As the Juvenile Librarian she is well-placed to set teen volunteers up with craft activities and other volunteer jobs that will help the Juvenile/Teen department. Through a partnership with the MCPS Department of Special Education Services, volunteers from Magruder High School's Transition Program volunteer every Monday at Olney Library. They mainly clean up the toys used during children's programs.

e. Services: There is a new app that allows people to check out books on their phones using a barcode on the app. Library staff will provide help downloading and using the app. Circulation staff did pop-up Library App demos for patrons on 3 occasions, and will continue to do this for another month. They helped about 6-10 people each time, showing them how to use the new library app (<https://montgomerycountymd.gov/library/services/library-apps.html>)

2. MCPL Board Liaison Report: Tim Lighter reported that the Library Board is fully staffed, with the County Council's approval of 3 new members. Two members of the County Council abstained from voting to signal their concern about lack of upcounty representation on the Library Board. The Board sent a letter to those members explaining that there were no upcounty applicants for the Board, but there are numerous LAC members representing upcounty library branches. The Library Board is chaired by Grace Manubay, who moderated the Joint Meeting held on Oct. 8. (Tim provided the LAC with a written summary of the Joint Meeting in advance of tonight's LAC meeting). In addition to MCPL Director Darcell Graham,

speakers included Joyce McIntosh (Freedom to Read Foundation), Felicity Brown (MCPL Collections Manager, overseeing 1.6 million items), Shelly Johnson Carey (vice president of Friends of the Library). Tim noted that Director Graham is keen on developing a “dashboard” to display data collection information. MCPL is making plans to celebrate its 75th anniversary. The staff will be transitioning to Windows 11. (Web migration will be done county-wide). The Brigadier General Charles McGee LAC invites the LACs to join them in the Silver Spring Thanksgiving Parade, beginning at 9:30 am on Nov. 22.

3. Old Business: LAC members whose terms are up this fall need to reapply if they wish to continue serving. The form is on the MCPL website and can be completed online.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:50. The next meeting will be held (virtually) on Dec. 16, at 7 p.m.