

## **Potomac LAC Meeting Minutes**

June 6, 2023

### **LAC Member Attendees**

Gael Cheek, Co-chair

Wei Lu, Co-chair

Don Libes, Secretary

Sylvia Diss

Rosemarie Lentini

Laju Satchi

Patty McGrath

### **Absent**

none

### **Other Attendees**

Patrick Fromm, Regional Mgr, Rockville Region: Potomac, Aspen Hill, Rockville, Twinbrook

Jim Montgomery, MC Library Board (MCLB) Liaison

### **Names and abbreviations (unofficial, for convenience and clarity)**

FOLMC: Friends of the Library, Montgomery County (old)

OneFOL: One FOLMC (new)

FOLP: Friends of the Library, Potomac Chapter (old)

FOPL: Friends of the Potomac Library (new)


PL: Potomac Library

MCLB: MC Library Board

### **Chair and Member Updates**

Meeting held via Zoom. Wei called meeting to order at 7:14pm. Agenda previously distributed by

Wei via <https://groups.io/g/plac>

 2023 06 06 Potomac LAC Agenda.doc

Gael: 3 new LAC members. Expected to attend next meeting.

### **Minutes from Previous LAC Meeting**

 2023 03 07 Potomac LAC Draft Minutes

Gael moved to approve minutes from previous meeting with no changes. Approved.

### **Patrick Fromm, Branch Manager Report**

Hybrid meeting using OWL - camera with 360° lens. 5 members attended physically, 2 by Zoom. Approximate cost \$1000, considered too expensive to equip every library so they currently move between libraries.

Several people: Works well but can it be recorded?

Patrick: Open Meetings Act incurs a heavy burden on recording storage, access, etc., so for convenience, MCPL policy is not to record meetings.

Don: The LAC meeting appeared on Potomac's calendar but not on MCPL's virtual calendar. It should be both since it's hybrid.

Patrick: Agreed. Will have to check if it's possible and how.

New branch supervisor starts June 20: Nancy Sampson from Sonoma CA  
Natisha Harper was to have been PL's new supervisor. She has been reassigned to Long Branch.

Elizabeth Bintrim, new children's librarian.

Asst Supervisor Amy Chen is on leave, Erin Fishman filling in when needed.

Patty: Can we get a staff list?

[This triggered same conversation and requests as March 2023 meeting. See minutes for additional info.]

Patrick: Will see what I can do.

Wei Wah (sp?) county data analyst is looking at PL stats.

Patrick: Personally interested in self service stats, currently 82% by book last month.

People are happy with self-checkout and this frees front-desk staff to handle trickier checkouts.

Gael: Checkout is easy to use but I like talking to staff so I'll sometimes let them check me out.

Don: Me too. Plus, I cannot check out books when I have one out late but staff have no problem so even though checkout is easy to use, I often enjoy staff checking me out.

Patrick: MCPL focused on strategic priorities

- Ready children for kindergarten
- Ready teens for college/workforce
- Helping non-English speakers
- Helping navigate digital divide

Note: Potomac does not qualify as having enough people in latter demographics

PL is still in honeymoon phase, resolving issues.

We're looking for more lounge chairs.

Getting ready for Summer Reading, June 17, starts at Rockville.

Erin has restarted adult book club.

Elizabeth has started story time and some other children's activities.

Gael: Can the big screen in the common room handle movies? What happened to movie events?

Patrick: Interest in movie events has trailed off with streaming availability.

Gael, Rosemarie: Are you sure? We believe there is strong interest by some groups, clubs, etc.

Patrick: All patrons get MCPL newsletter

Don: Last I checked, it was opt-in with very low subscription rate.

Patrick: Will check.

Patrick: LAC proposal for announce mail list is no longer necessary because MCPL is creating newsletters specific to each branch (micronewsletters) and Potomac is first beta-test. However, patrons have to indicate their home branch in their account.

Patrick gave a demo of how to set home branch.

Don: Many patrons have several "home branches". Is this supported?

Patrick: Unclear. Will find out during beta test.

Don: How do we actually subscribe?

Patrick: When you get the newsletter, it will have an unsubscribe link and from there, you can control subscriptions.

D: Using the unsubscribe link is very unintuitive. And there is a bootstrapping issue. How do patrons get the unsubscribe link if they don't already subscribe? How do you inform patrons of the system if they don't already subscribe to be informed?

Patrick: Use unsubscribe link from main newsletter.

Don: Does the main newsletter still exist? Last I checked, it was opt-in with relatively few subscribers.

Patrick: I thought it was opt-out. Will check. We hope that people will hear about micronewsletters by word of mouth and we'll sign up as people apply for cards, word of mouth. Will watch to see if this is sufficient.

Gael: Use front sign.

Don: Good idea but will be tricky to describe in such a small space.

Patrick: Followup to complaint about sign continuing to show events after expiration. [See previous minutes for sign complaints.] Sign will not expire events automatically. Will ask staff to be alert to this issue and manually remove events in a timely way.

Patrick gave demo of feedback on purchase requests.

Don: Good idea but feedback is poor, sometimes just saying "Rejected (This title will not be purchased at this time.)" with no actual explanation.

Patty: MCPL needs beta testers for all these new services. I am happy to volunteer.

Sylvia: Could not find PL's environmental display. I had to ask a librarian where it was. Librarian had to lead me all the way to the back. Good display but bad location. Who has the authority to move it to a better location? It should be front and center.

Patrick: Erin is the person. But we rotate display positions. We've found people tune out displays that remain in the same location.

"Lucky Day" books got priority at grand opening but we will move displays.

Patty, Don: Agree with Sylvia. Environmental display should be high priority and better positioned.

Don: Confused by recycling bins. There are both kinds (cans, paper) in meeting room. At front desk there is only one. It has a slot for paper recycling but is marked "commingled."

Don: There is no trash can in meeting room. Asked front desk if there was trash can in the library and they said yes but didn't know where it was.

Patrick demoed operation of meeting room blinds.

Everyone: Big improvement!

Don: We asked staff during recent book club meeting and staff didn't know how to operate blinds.

Patrick: Will train staff.

Don: Meeting room clock has incorrect time.

Patrick: It's battery operated, not centrally controlled so either it needs adjustment or new batteries. [Patrick demonstrated how to adjust it.]

Wei: Can Monday-Thursday meetings run past 8pm since that is closing time?

Patrick: Yes.

Patrick: FOLP donated \$40K for the new staff kitchen and people have said it doesn't look like a \$40K kitchen. We called in David Dice who agreed that it didn't look like a \$40K kitchen. The staff have submitted suggestions for improvement. The staff want function over form.

Gael: What suggestions were accepted?

Gael: Could we get a visitation?

Patrick: Will check with Anita. Website has been updated with kitchen plans, future upgrades.

Jim: Gardens look glorious.

Gael, Patrick: Thanks to Garden Club and FOLP's \$40K donation to Garden Club.

Gael: What's the status of Spanish and Chinese collection? FOLP donated money to be used for this purpose.

Patrick: Edie Wingate said it was "preferred" to be used that purpose so we have the right to use the funds for other reasons but we are looking at the best way to serve that purpose. Felicity said funding from FOLP really didn't buy that many books.

Patrick: One-time donations of money or books are not the preferred way to help with collections. Sustaining (recurring) donations or budget process are a better way.

Gael: Who makes decisions on Spanish and Chinese collection?

Patrick: We don't have someone specifically for World Languages.

Gael: Would be better for a native speaker to do so.

Gael: Do we have Chinese newspapers?

Patrick: No.

Sylvia: Are magazines returning?

Patrick: No magazines anywhere. Too many magazines going out of business. And we cannot justify the remaining magazines in the budget.

Sylvia: How do branches decide which books to purchase?

Patrick: Branches don't decide. Central selectors look at branch interest, size, etc.

Sylvia: Why doesn't PL have books that they used to have?

Patrick: If items haven't circulated for 18 months, we'll generally remove it. If there is a lack of interest in a subject, we'll stop buying them

Don: Isn't there a circular argument - that people will stop checking out books on a particular subject if the books aren't present? Or have all been read?

Patrick: We can tell when interest has disappeared.

Don: Why does MCPL bother returning books to "home" branches?

Patrick: This is a huge issue in the library community and some libraries do it one way, some the other way. Each has pros/cons and MCPL wouldn't save money by letting books "float."

Recommend you read the article: "Floating"

### **James Montgomery, MCLB Liaison Report**

Budget hinged on 10% property tax increase that Elrich sought. Council didn't want the 10% increase and looked at long-standing vacancies as an alternative to raising taxes. Council studied MCPL as a potential source since it also had many vacancies. In addition, Elrich had asked for additional \$825k for MCPL, particularly aimed at kindergarten readiness. Thanks in large part to its strategic plan, MCPL Administration did a good job defending the proposal and the \$825K survived. Nonetheless, the Council asked MCPL to demonstrate success of strategic plan.

Gael: We need clarification of the new guidelines from Regina:

1. *Virtual Chat: Do not use anymore during Board or LAC meetings (can be used to clarify a statement).*
2. *The Board and/or LAC must not engage in any advocacy activity at the State or federal levels unless that activity is approved by the Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OIR). Most advisory boards advise the County Executive and County Council.*
  - a. *LACs must receive approval from the Library Board before conducting any advocacy or engaging any elected official (local, State or federal) in their LAC role.*
3. *Library Board and LACs must publish the approved meeting minutes within 5 business days after approving the minutes.*
  - a. *A reminder that minutes should be brief. A member should take minutes but staff may do so if no member is available.*
  - b. *Minutes should include any action taken (who made the motion and seconded it and what the vote was). How each person voted should be listed unless the vote was unanimous.*

4. *Library Board and LACs must publish the meeting agenda within 5 business days after the group has determined the agenda and at least 2 calendar days before the meeting.*

Gael: Can we advocate as individual LAC members vs group?

Gael: Must we seek approval from the Board first?

Don: Jim's previous statements to LAC implied we had been given carte blanche to communicate directly with council members on funding. Is this a misinterpretation?

Gael: Waiting for Board approval could take months.

Jim: You can send with just your name.

Gael: Of course but that's not the scenario we're asking about.

Don: We want the answer to both scenarios - advocating as LAC members and LAC as a group.

Jim: Will find out.

Gael: Does MCPL really care about minutes being short? Why? We like them long.

Don: I realize my minutes are more detailed than minutes need to be. I can make them shorter - just recording important decisions for example.

Patrick: I've gotten no complaints about our minutes so don't change.

Jim: I am preparing to ask Board permission again for LAC-sponsored community mail lists.

1. Announcement mail list is no longer needed, thanks to MCPL micronewsletters.
2. Community mail list will be our focus.

Jim: Perhaps it would be easier to seek approval for 90 days.

Gael: No, then we'll have to seek approval again. Hassle for no good reason.

Patrick, Gail: Warning, MCLB inertia is strong.

3. Book club list seems out of scope.

Patrick: MCPL should provide this mail list.

Don: Book club members have already set one up. It's just frustrating that its existence cannot be mentioned by MCPL.

Sylvia: How do I get on? I have never heard of this. How come?

Don: Exactly - it is unadvertised.

Patrick: Bring the list to Erin's attention.

Jim: Will post new draft of pitch for the MCPL Board to plac group for feedback.

### **New business**

None.

### **Next meeting**

1st Tuesday of Sept

**Meeting ended 8:32pm**