

Potomac LAC Meeting Minutes

Aug 17, 2025

LAC Member Attendees

Gael Cheek

Sylvia Diss

Sheila Graves, Co-chair

Karen Grimm

Millie Kahn

Rosemarie Lentini

Don Libes, Secretary

Patty McGrath

LAC Member Absentees

Ella Hu, 3 previous meetings missed

Caitlyn Jennings

Anne Ma, 3 previous meetings missed

Michael Namath, 2 previous meeting missed

Cara Seitchek

Mallory Starr, 6 previous meetings missed

Roger Williams

Other Regular Attendees

Jim Montgomery, MC Library Board Liaison

Nancy Samson, Branch Supervisor

Other Regular Attendee Absences

Patrick Fromm, Asst Director for Branch Operations, acting Regional Mgr for Potomac, Chevy Chase, Little Falls

Other Attendees

Julie Perlman, Potomac Village Garden Club

Shelley Kreitman (virtual)

Names and abbreviations (unofficial, for convenience and clarity)

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

Friends or OneFOL: One FOLMC (new)

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

FOPL: Friends of the Potomac Library (new)

PL: Potomac Library

MCLB: Montgomery County Library Board

plac: Potomac LAC mail list

Pre-meeting notes

No OWL device was available to provide Zoom attendees with a view of speakers.

Branch staff initially did not know who the Zoom host was and LAC decided not to wait further.

Gael: Please send email to plac that meeting would be conducted without virtual attendees.

Don: Done.

One attendee (Millie) initially virtually, came in person.

Staff ultimately was able to provide Zoom access. One guest (Shelley) used Zoom.

Chair called meeting to order 7:17pm

Agenda previously distributed by Sheila via plac.

Minutes from Previous LAC Meeting

Karen moved to approve June minutes. Gael seconded. Approved.

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Gael: Nancy did not receive minutes because she was not subscribed to plac.

Don: Look for an invitation in your email.

Patrick Fromm, Regional Manager Report

Absent

Nancy Samson, Potomac Library Manager Report

PL is currently down 2 library associates.

Clara, child's associate, left 3 weeks ago.

Paula, adult services, left in April.

Because of staff shortages and because staff cannot work 2 weekends in a row, we were forced to cancel some children's programming which the public was unhappy with.

Mothers got angry: "Not acceptable"

4 storytimes cancelled. 3 My First Art Classes cancelled. The latter is the most popular with 20-25 people.

We pleaded to get the positions filled quickly and expect PL back to full staffing in October.

Until then, expect more program cancellations in September.

Summer Reading is wrapping up, kids love it, treasure hunt

Kids get stickers every time and some kids come every day.

We have given out 10,000 stickers!

Some patrons complain about the noise but I love the laughter and joy.

Jim Montgomery, MC Library Board Liaison Report

Board did not meet for summer. Will meet in Sept.

I would like us to address the budget documents. These can be viewed on the county website.

The budget documents include statistics on usage. Some statistics are alarming. For instance,

the number of patrons using their card at least once a year is down (to 180-185K) significantly since COVID. Represents a risk to funding.

Sylvia: Do metrics include online?

Jim: Yes, but they use different metrics and it is hard to compare.

Shell: Do they know why?

Jim: No, they don't.

Sheila: Will this affect the budget?

Nancy: Reciprocity arrangements are driving some of this. People in other counties are making use of MC.

New Business

Proposal for new furniture

Nancy described needs, designs, constraints, etc.

Nancy showed many slides. Here are just two representatives.





Nancy talked about her experience with new furniture needs and designs:

Nancy: I worked for Sonoma County Library. We doubled space from 3000ft to 6000. Showed photos of actual furniture used in other libraries including Maryland libraries.

Nancy: Patrick requested I work with Duron which buys from other companies.

We have a 238 sq ft section of open floor that we can fill with new furniture.

36" clearance required by ADA compliance.

Patty: I don't like seats with no arms.

Nancy: Woman at computer could not get out of chair because of arms. We had to help her. We had to file an accident report.

Nancy: Maybe we should buy armless chairs.

Shelley: There are chairs designed specifically for people with limited mobility but have arms.

Nancy: There are chairs with different heights, too.

Group: Outlets are desirable, too.

Nancy: If we put outlets at every table, we still wouldn't have enough outlets.

Jim: How many daily newspapers?

Nancy: Washington Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, and one other.

Nancy: Designers did not provide enough space for so many students who get out of their AP classes early and stay until closing every day.

Nancy: I like modular furniture. Also like furniture that snakes around.

Nancy: Chairs are \$2-3K but couches are \$5-6K. \$6K for larger.

Gael: Can you choose colors?

Nancy showed slides with color schemes and talked about current color scheme at PL.

Nancy described texture: We want vinyl or something washable.

Nancy: Current color palette is blue and reddish gray, ash.

Nancy showed couch designs for “people who don’t know each other.”

Project Timeline - Depends on FOLMC/Director/Asst Director approval

Key Stages

1. Approval (above)
2. Resolve budget considerations
3. Select furniture
4. Create invoice
5. Business office
6. Plan delivery , work with DGS/Angelisa
7. ?
8. ?

\$20 to \$40K for a social area (according to Patrick).

Gael: Invite Darcel because the 1st thing she said was libraries need comfortable furniture

Nancy: People have remarked how sterile the library seems.

Perlman:: There is no art; no art on the walls. There are plenty of artists in the area that could be displayed. Could tie in to local things such as the C&O.

Gael: Someone complained about a display at Rockville. That closed the display cases.

Don: Would art in the library run afoul of the display case policy?

Sylvia: About 50 years ago, we could check out art from the Rockville Library

Don: Let’s bring that back.

Sylvia: Get on it Jim!

Sylvia: Would be good to know how people come in for meetings/

Jim: There are figures for how many meetings.

Don: Are there counters?

Nancy: There are auto-counters at the entrance and we count library-sponsored meetings but not non-sponsored meetings.

Jim: Magazines are unaffordable or have gone out of print.

Someone: Cosmos club has every magazine!

Exterior Trash

Perlman: The Garden Club started the trash pickup from kids vaping.

ARC program (special needs adults) used to walk the grounds. It gave them something to do.

People who cleaned the building said It’s our job, but they didn’t do it.

Garden Club is here nearly every day.

Took us nearly a year to get a trash can on the Falls Rd side for people eating lunch there.

Kids throw trash in the ivy beds.

Sylvia: Yell at them!

Perlman: Can't yell at them when they have nannies who don't speak English.

Sheila: Are we paying for services not delivered?

Perlman: County is in charge of grounds but not trash?

Will not mulch but will spread leaf-gro.

Building and grounds person is very good.

Sheila: Is exterior trash an issue now?

Perlman: Yes!

Jim: Happy to bring it up to the Board.

Perlman: Whose job is it now that they took the job away from ARC?

Nancy: ARC still does daily light cleaning inside.

Jim/Gael: Who told ARC not to clean outside?

Nancy: Don't know.

Jim: I will follow up with Gael to find out who told ARC.

Perlman: Please ask: What is the policy for exterior grounds to stay clean?

Leslie Clark, program manager, is in charge of grounds.

They don't mulch and don't hedge. Because they consistently do it wrong.

But they do work with us - such as grinding dead trees to ground.

Perlman: Last week, someone came to the library with a memorial brick. Don't know if he even lived in Potomac.

We've been told county does not allow memorials

Perlman; He put it by the sundial.

We paid for that sundial and it had a dedication. Putting a brick there would make it appear that the sundial was due or dedicated to that person which it wasn't so the brick had to go.

Perlman: We made many calls trying to track down the source of the brick; No response.

We don't know who sent it.

Next meeting is Oct 21.

Karen moved to adjourn. Gael seconded.

Meeting adjourned: 8:00pm