

Potomac LAC Meeting Minutes

Oct 21, 2025

LAC Member Attendees

Gael Cheek
Sylvia Diss
Sheila Graves, Co-chair
Karen Grimm
Caitlyn Jennings, virtual
Millie Kahn, virtual
Rosemarie Lentini, virtual
Don Libes, Secretary
Patty McGrath
Michael Namath
Cara Seitchek, virtual

LAC Member Absentees

Ella Hu, 4 previous meetings missed
Anne Ma, 4 previous meetings missed
Mallory Starr, 7 previous meetings missed
Roger Williams, 0 previous meetings missed

Other Regular Attendees

Nancy Samson, Branch Supervisor
Kirstra Otto new Acting Regional Mgr, past Connie, Regional Mgr for Connie Morella, Chevy Chase, Kensington Park, Little Falls, Noyes, Potomac

Other Regular Attendee Absences

Other Attendees

Shelley Kreitman

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

Chair called meeting to order 7:03pm

Agenda previously distributed by Sheila via plac.

Minutes from Previous LAC Meeting

Sept minutes: Karen moved to approve. Gael seconded.

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Membership Updates

Kirstra Otto introduced herself: Previously Branch Supervisor at Connie Morella. Promoted to new Regional Manager for Connie Morella, Chevy Chase, Kensington Park, Little Falls, Noyes, Potomac. Replacing Patrick who was just temporarily continuing his work while being promoted to Assistant Director for Branch Operations.

Gael: Don, Please add Kirstra to plac. Don explained procedure: He will generate an invitation to which a person must accept.

Ella Hu resigned from LAC in August.

Kirstra Otto, Regional Manager Report

Nothing to report.

Gael: Patrick always had a prepared presentation.

Kirstra: I've only been on the job 12 days!

Kirstra: Library system has a new policy: The regional manager will no longer be the point of contact for the LAC. Now it will be the branch supervisor.

Don: You are welcome to attend the meetings. Will you?

Kirstra: I will attend when possible.

Karen: Your attendance also helps us hear what's going on at other branches.

Nancy Samson, Potomac Library Manager Report

Still 2 vacancies at Potomac.

Someone applied for the children's library associate position. We're just waiting for approval. So instead of 4 weekly story times (Monday and Friday), there are 2 story times each Monday. We're continuing to get comments from the community about this. Expect to continue this for a few more weeks. So if you want a quiet library, come on Mondays.

We're getting ready for holidays; Just did our Diwali celebration.

Teen programs are exploding; Mark handles them.

Teen advisory board to have movies and discussions.

Mark arranges movies and 3-hr discussions for SSL credits.

Mark is running Intergenerational programs.

Don: How does discussion qualify as SSL?

Nancy: We're trying to get kids noses out of their phones.

8-12 yrs coding classes are being taught by high school seniors who get SSL.

Sheila; Is the library doing AI?

Kirsta: We have Microsoft Co-pilot which is like ChatGPT. The county is getting trained on it. But it is up to individual branches on whether they are going to offer it to patrons.

Sheila: Mark can teach AI as well.

Nancy: PCV offers lectures on AI. Our last one had 78 attendees.

Patty: Warning about AI. Any time someone offers it to us for free, we'll get addicted and then we have to pay for it in some hidden way.

Sheila: AI is now being used for surveillance. That's how they are able to provide it "free."

Attendees observed that Milly turned on Zoom's transcription service.

Don: Is it being saved?

Patty: I don't like the recording going to the cloud. [Long rant about misuse of recordings.]

Don: Is it even allowed? Patrick said we could enable transcriptions but were explicitly forbidden from recording meetings.

Milly: I'll turn it off.

Nancy: On Sunday, we had over 1000 served, 1500 walk-ins.

Patty: Jim's stats showed library card usage was down. Is there a way to tell if all those people who came in actually used the library?

Nancy: Yes, we have stats now that we're expiring library cards. The old cards used to expire in 2040; now it is every 3 years.

Gael: Rosemarie can't sign in to Zoom, doesn't have password.

Kirsta: Need zoom account but it's free.

Gael: She has a zoom account. We will have to figure it out offline.

Jim Montgomery, MC Library Board Liaison Report

Sheila; Jim isn't here. Did anyone attend MCLB meeting?

All: No.

Old Business

Furniture

Kirsta: New furniture is a possibility. Nancy is going to send you links to furniture vendors. Give us ideas and we'll pass them to our facilities people.

Don: Nancy showed us all this at our last meeting. She presented idea, vendors, designs, colors, textures, etc.

Sheila: Right. We thought we already told you to move ahead.

Nancy: True, I will share this with Kirsta.

Zoomer status

Rosemarie: Finally figured out the problem and got on Zoom!

Caitlyn: I'm Zooming because I'm sick.

Cara: [On zoom but no response]

Trash pickup

Nancy: Amy spoke to Facilities and Lesley with County. They are not responsible for exterior pickup. There is no contract.

Gael: ARC volunteers used to help inside the library and pick up garbage outside the library but someone told them to stop doing outside pickup. Garden Club said ARC used to do a great job. So we're trying to figure out who told them to stop. Patrick was supposed to figure it out.

Kirstra: ARC was told to work within their contract.

Michael: Who is responsible?

Kirstra: Volunteers for light cleanup. We can put in a ticket.

Various people: Can we rewrite the ARC contract?

Sheila: I'll look into it. So no one cleans outside any libraries?

Kirstra: DGS (MC Dept of General Services) is the general contractor and would be in charge of contracts.

Gael: Would be helpful to know how and when it stopped.

Security camera for entranceway

Sheila: Are you comfortable with how cameras are pointed?

Nancy: Not really, but re-aiming them would cause new issues.

Counters

Patty: Wasn't there an issue with counters?

Nancy: Yes, all counters are being replaced.

Display case

Kirstra: No change. Only staff, schools, and county agencies can display in the library.

Gael: Is this policy permanent?

Kirstra: Until it's changed.

Gael: Are you getting complaints about empty cases?

Kirstra: Yes.

Gael: Can we complain to Darcel?

Michael: Should we go through the staff?

Gael/Patty: Girl scouts could not go through the staff.

Kirstra: The buck stops with the MCLB.

Patty: Not the director?

Kirstra: Existing policy was developed with the county attorney. I do not know who would be in charge but I can look into it.

Don: Patrick said that he personally made the decision with the county attorney.

Patty: Should we have an email campaign?

Miscellaneous discussion about events and event calendar.

Don reviewed restrictions and how they seemed unnecessarily limited and capricious. Potomac Community Village is a prime example. Considered a good community service but some of their meetings appear in the calendar and some don't. Discussion of others.

Karen: Saw a religious service taking place. Is this permitted?

Kirstra: As long as they don't conduct business.

Kirstra: Fees have been abolished.

Sheila: Where is this written?

Kirstra: Find it in the policy documents.

Kirstra: Birthdays are not allowed. Restrictions on food. For example, you can have snacks and drinks but no chafing dishes.

Sheila: I'm going to read the policy.

Patty: Community centers cost money.

Kirstra: Discussion of fee structure.

New Business

Bathrooms

Gael: Rusty soap dispenser in woman's bathroom.

Nancy: Will put in ticket to repair.

Potomac Day

Nancy: We looked into doing Potomac Day again

Sheila/Gael: Used to rent costumes. But now we have no money.

Nancy: We can get money from FoL.

Sheila: We used to have money for coloring events.

Gael: We had banners and table covers.

Michael: Can library do card signups at Potomac Day?

Kirstra: Yes.

Gael: Can staff dress up as book characters?

Nancy: We can dress up as our favorite book. We used to do that at my previous library.

Visitor: Who is the point person?

Kirstra: LAC has no budget, can't raise money. But could organize community and ask FOL for money.

Don: FOL had a booth at Potomac Day. No coordination with Potomac Library. Another reason FOL might not return: One of the bounce houses put their generator right next to the FOL booth making it impossible to talk with them. I complained to the Potomac Day organizers and received an unsatisfying answer.

Unusual loans

Don: Library has jigsaw puzzles but won't loan them out?

Sheila: Libraries lend out tools.

Kirstra: Branch library do not have flexibility to decide what to lend. It is up to Darcel and MCLB.

Next meeting: December 16, 2025

8:23pm: Gael moved to adjourn; Karen seconded.