



**2021-2022 MCC Governing Board
Strategic Planning Session
July 15, 2021 6:00 p.m.**

*Remote participation: quorum in-person at MCC; some Board members attending remotely:
ZOOM meeting ID: 857 720 57297 Password: 374847*

MINUTES

- Board Members present:** *in-person:* Barbara Zamora-Appel; Rasheq Rahman; Lisa Mariam; Shivani Saboo; Suzanne Le Menestrel; Melanie Sletten
virtual: Maria Foderaro-Guertin (Vail, Colorado; 1st time virtual); Bill Glikbarg (Orlando, Florida; 1st time virtual); Carla Post (Bethany Beach, Delaware; 1st time virtual)
- Board Members absent:** Ivy Chen; Max Blacksten
- MCC Staff present:** Daniel Singh, Executive Director; Mike Fisher; Sarah Schallern Treff; Sabrina Anwah; Joe McGovern; Ashok Karra; Danielle Van Hook; Jennifer Garrett; Holly Novak; Catherine Nesbitt; Christian Hayes; David Craig; Kyle Corwin
- Guests:** Christopher Henzel (*in-person*); Kathleen Gillette (*in-person*); Jeffrey Shapiro (*virtual*); Luke Garrett (*virtual*); Carmen (*virtual*)

CONVENE MEETING

Chair Zamora-Appel convened a “Strategic Planning Session” of the Governing Board of McLean Community Center on July 15, 2021, at 6:20 p.m. This meeting was open to the public attending in-person at the McLean Community Center or virtually on ZOOM.

ADOPT AGENDA No changes were requested to the proposed Agenda; it was adopted by acclamation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Zamora-Appel invited those from the public who would like to comment to observe these guidelines: 3 minutes each is allotted - for up to five individuals who wish to speak. Additional speakers beyond this 15-minute “Public Comment” segment may contribute their remarks via e-mail to: holly.novak@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Christopher Henzel: **Mr. Henzel also submitted these remarks via e-mail.*

Good evening. My name is Christopher Henzel. I am a resident of the McLean Community Center’s tax district (1306 Forest Wood Drive, McLean, VA). I respectfully request that the members of the Community Center’s Governing Board make clear whether they will permit the use of additional taxpayer funds to expose small children to Drag Queen performances. First, the background: According to the Community Center’s website, I printed out the section a few hours ago, on June 26 the Center paid three drag performers to put on two performances for small children. Judging from video of the event, the children’s ages appear to range from about 4 years to 8. The Center says it paid each drag queen \$300. One of the persons paid to perform for the children calls himself “Majic Dyke.” Again for the record, that is “Majic Dyke”. Is “Dyke” the sort of language small children should be exposed to? I don’t think so, and I suspect most Fairfax County taxpayers would share my view. Another performer that the Center paid calls himself “Kamina Sutra”, an allusion to the famous Indian erotic text, the *Kama Sutra*. “Kamina Sutra” performed a suggestive dance in front of the children during the first performance at the Center that day, but did not do so in the second performance. There is video of the dance; I would be happy to forward the video to board members if they wish. Again, I think most Fairfax County taxpayers would agree with me that it violates common sense to expose small children to this.

To be clear, the issue here is: first: the involvement of small children; and second: the use of taxpayer funds.



The issue is not what drag queens do for adults, and with private funding. The Community Center's website makes clear that the Center intends to continue using more taxpayer money to fund more performances like this for small children. So, to conclude: I respectfully request that the members of the Governing Board state, on the record, whether they will permit additional taxpayer funds to be used for performances like this. And if so, how much? Thank you.

**Chair Zamora-Appel thanked the gentleman for his comments and said: "We will take that into consideration. Thank you."*

Mr. Henzel continued: May I ask when you will take it into consideration?

Comment by Chair Zamora-Appel: We will discuss it. All our meetings are open, but tonight's agenda is not about that. Thank you for your comments.

Mr. Henzel asked: Will it be placed on the agenda at another meeting?

Comment by Chair Zamora-Appel: We shall discuss it as a board... and we will make it public.

Question by Mr. Henzel: Will you let the public know when you're going to discuss it as a Board?

Response by Chair Zamora-Appel: Of course. All agendas are publicly displayed on our website and other ways.

Comment by Mr. Henzel: Good. I'll look forward to attending that. Thank you.

Jeffrey Shapiro: I don't want to jump to the head of the line but I'm happy to go next. The previous speaker gave a great quick summary of the factual aspects of this. What we have here... First of all, this is one of those ideas that - whomever thought this was a good idea really should be fired. This is just ridiculous. Getting into the specifics: the idea that we should expose children to sexual pathologies like this is just bad parenting and pretty depraved... and not really part of the richness of our community, as I've understood it to-date. So, I think it's a very bad idea. But I also want to address Executive Director Singh's defense of it that I saw in an e-mail. Because, for one thing, he says: 'This is all part of making One Fairfax equitable, welcoming, supporting... and a welcoming space for all McLean citizens...' 'We treasure our LGBTQ community, like many rich aspects of the McLean community.' But we don't have a 'history' of drag queen library story hour in this county. And there is a significant segment of the community, of which I'm one, who don't like the idea. And you didn't create a 'safe space' for us? You violated our safe space. So, really, by your own description: if you're trying to be celebratory - this was a provocative act, in my opinion. An attempt to normalize this behavior and say that "It's so normal that little kids can be exposed to it." That's a moral statement and I think Executive Director Singh had to know that this was a provocation. And then in his e-mail, he's upset and feels 'unsafe' when people criticized him. First of all, the performer didn't express any physical safety; and I assume he's talking about his emotional safety - but I'm not sure. But the point is, it basically said: 'You were the bullies, not me.' But actually, if you commit a provocative act and then someone is provoked [*ZOOM connection was temporarily frozen*]... Before you offer an activity, then you should really consult the community and reflect and celebrate the feelings and morality of the community which you serve. This was an act intended to move the community in a direction which a lot of the community doesn't want to go. And it was a provocative act. And I hope, before you engage in additional provocative acts, that you will consult the public and then decide if it's really a good idea. Because in this case, it was sprung without any real notice. And some people noticed. But there was not widespread notice.

Chair Zamora-Appel informed Mr. Shapiro that his time was up. If he would like to submit more feedback on that, we welcome that. There are a few e-mails that we can provide to you. And as she mentioned earlier, any agenda item that we have in the future will be publicly known. So, you are welcome to come back at a later date.

Comment by Mr. Shapiro: OK- I appreciate that. I do intend to continue the dialogue because I think this is unacceptable.

There were no further public comments.

WELCOME REMARKS

Chair Zamora-Appel thanked the staff for helping in this next phase of what the McLean Community Center is going to go through.

Change is difficult. I have dealt with a lot of change in my career. I always see that as an opportunity. MCC has provided programming in the past 20-30 years that has grown as the community has changed. Now we're entering a new phase and with our

new Executive Director at the helm. This is the right time to do strategic planning - to see where we can go, from where we are and have been... to where we can be. All comments tonight from staff and Board members are welcome. I have no doubt that we will have a good working product at the end of this session. But if we don't get to finalize it tonight, there is opportunity for other meetings. With all these changes coming, not just for those present right now, but if you want to talk to your community to receive any comments and ideas about programming – please bring it back to us. We don't make these decisions ourselves – it is the community's program.

APPROACH POINTS *Exec. Director Singh invited Ms. Novak to give remarks about how to approach collaborative discussion format.*
A quotation from a podcast at Univ. of Maryland about “Executive Leadership – the Power of Perspective” focuses on the value of listening to one another actively, and intentionally trying to understand different perspectives being expressed.

“What can we learn from each other? We look with our eyes, but we see with our minds. We hear with our ears. But we listen with our minds. What the mind does not know, the eyes do not see and the ears do not listen. Collaboration is about broadening perspective. I see things now that I didn't see before.”

Tonight, if you have a different perspective or thought than the person speaking – that's good. It can be woven-in to our common conversation. That's what collaboration is about. Last year in all the ZOOM meetings, I noticed that the board had very little dialogue - an unfortunate fact of the electronic environment. Now that we are in-person and together, I look forward to the nature of better conversations. You all are so talented – with substantive backgrounds and subject-matter expertise among MCC staff and board members. I want to see us make the most of that!

GENERAL CONCEPTS – MCC PROGRAM LEADS *PowerPoint presentation

Opening remarks by Executive Director Singh: I have been pushing MCC staff to look at what they are doing... how we can work together across departments and formalize the process. MCC staff ‘curate’ their programs. We arrived at ways we could talk to each other. MCC staff has great ideas! We have established “common ground” and will ‘pick up pebbles and eventually move the mountain’ to get where we need to go.

Strategic planning process: (expected to be a 4-month process; staff has been working on it since mid-May). The board just came into the process in the last week: contributing long-form responses and creating a ranked-choice. The last complex piece will involve a consulting firm coming in to hold public meetings, town halls, surveys... making sure we get the public's input. From there, we will craft a strategic plan going forward. We are also doing deep-dive analytics into our tax district How many of the 18K households is MCC touching right now? For those who have never set foot in here – How do we find out why they have not attended? All such analysis is going on; by the time the consultants start, hopefully we will have that data ready for them. Looking at every idea staff had for programs based on community input + all submissions from the board, we found **eleven ‘anchors:**

- * Branding/visibility came up repeatedly from board and staff. We have three brands: OFC, MCC, and The Alden Theatre.
- * Recovery – the struggle of everyone who came to MCC through hybrid programs... and now want to maintain it. FCPS is providing all after-school clubs as hybrid There is expectation of us and new competition - because other organizations are offering everything hybrid. How does MCC logistically position ourselves for that recovery?
- * Nurturing: getting people comfortable to be indoors without masks; dealing with emotional trauma about not having seen their family or friends.
- * Fun - we are trying to bring fun into our programming! Not just heavy stuff; but come to MCC to laugh and share a meal.
- * Innovation –board and staff kept pushing to create a “lab” for new ideas, new experiences, new participants. Figure out what works. What do we need to rotate every three years? What to do once and never again because it didn't work out?
- * Intersectional Programming – not just picking one item to focus on, but how sustainability addresses creativity. Commit to bringing in artists to talk about how being sustainable also supports creativity, innovation and technology.
- * Capacity building & Operations – Having many amazing ideas, how do we actually make it happen with staff, building facilities, staff hours. What do we need to build-up? What do we need to re-orient?
- * Regional destination – people want MCC to be a draw for people to come. Not just for people who live here, but as a way to get people outside of McLean to visit. Lisa Mariam moved here because she couldn't get into MCC registration system

because she wasn't a resident and classes filled-up quickly!. She decided to move here specifically to take advantage of MCC Programs! How do we keep that momentum going?

- * Responsiveness – staff and board are on-track with this. But by the time we have a great idea and then get to the budget process and eventually to execution of the program, it might be two years later; it may be 'old news' at that point. We are trying to figure out how to work with the county structure while finding ways to be responsive to community current interests at the same time.
- * Facilities – OFC; partnerships with Dolley Madison Library and amphitheater. Figure out how to make OFC be more of a 'draw' in downtown McLean. Cognizant of OFC 10-year lease don't let that facility slip away from us.
- * Building/Engaging community – in COVID-19, the communities that thrived were ones that had strong connections and were able to maintain through ZOOM; within their pods. How do we continue that small, locally-focused approach? How do we stay engaged with people? Program staff have great ideas about commissions and partnerships with local organizations to move forward this goal.
- * Diversity/Equity/Inclusion/Access – this came up in all staff and board surveys: providing free programming for all generations; inter-generational connections. Adjusting open hours at OFC (opening it up for longer hours).
- * Environmental Justice/Sustainability – in looking forward, make sure there is a healthy environment for our community and our children in the future.

None of these programs can happen in an isolated silo; they all overlap. MCC is touching all these important anchors of the community. How do we move forward from there together?

Sarah Schallern Treff next gave a high-level presentation; then Mike Fisher explained how MCC staff is drilling-down from those high-level anchors. PIO Sabrina Anwah explained how to connect the themes and find a way to get the word out about what we're doing.

Comments by Sarah Schallern Treff: With the anchor points in mind, and with data we have been collecting for years from our audiences– we aimed for the bigger picture: developing a 3-year matrix of types of programming; columns organizing the information: Programmer Program type; Anchor; Program title; Age range – to make sure we have a balanced performance season; Season for Fall, Winter, Summer 2024; Budget; Venue. It will be a great help to formalize this and then go into our budgeting having an idea of the long-range view.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: This helps other program departments know what is happening and coordinate related thematic programming. Up until now, we have programmed independently in five unusual years: relocation to satellite locations; renovation construction; moving back into MCC after construction; COVID-19 shutdowns; now coming out of the pandemic. MCC staff hasn't had a chance to put everything in-sync; this will help us all work in that direction.

Q & A/ COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS:

Do we begin to add McLean Central Park amphitheater into this? Or are we just looking at MCC's current facilities?

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: Right now, we are only focusing on facilities we actually have. Even if it does go forward, the amphitheater will take at least 3-5 years, there is an 18-month finalization of the plan, then build-out. It wouldn't fit into our 3-year matrix. By contrast, this matrix is leading toward MCC's upcoming 50th anniversary – how we can build to something big and fantastic for the whole community!

"Environmental justice" is deeply tied to diversity and inclusion. Why choose "environmental justice" and not go for a broader scope- when inclusion, diversity and intersectionality are addressed in a different anchor/pillar?

Clarification by Mr. Singh: Commissions will be a way to fill that bridge of 'social justice and the performing arts.' We hope to offer five commissions per year. Sarah Schallern Treff will commission local and international artists working in environmental justice and the arts as a way to bring arts here and do work in the community – leading classes or workshops. If there are other ways to express it through correct terminology, we are happy to do so.

Clarification by Ms. Schallern Treff: Some touring artists have environmental justice themes, such as performing on instruments made of recycled material. We can get very creative about how to present that on stage and in other types of programs.

Are you tracking events that take place in-person vs. online?

Clarification by Ms. Schallern Treff: We are mostly moving to in-person right now – with comprehensive procedures for safety in the theater. A few programs will be offered online. Danielle Van Hook has programmed "Garba 360" which is an Indian cultural celebration. Danielle is taking a holiday from each season and designing virtual programming – as being more accessible for everyone... leading up to a performance outdoors.

Clarification by Mr. Singh: That also ties in with “environmental justice” because usually the dances are done around planting, harvest... very connected to agricultural cycles in India. We are trying to find ways to connect the themes explicitly.

What is staff's view about retaining virtual content for future electronic distribution?

It was successful this past year, including expanding MCC's footprint beyond Northern Virginia. Are there such plans, going forward?

Clarification by Mr. Singh: We are hoping to build a capacity in Alden Theater for live-streaming. We don't have the capacity now – we must run the cable. But we are hoping to head in that direction.

In my neighborhood, a lot of kids participate in dancing classes and competitions.

Why aren't they doing some of these events at MCC? I think about bringing in community performers, as well as professional performers.

Clarification by Ms. Schallern Treff: MCC does it already. We have a vibrant dance program at MCC that offers two recitals: in December and year-end in July. MCC dance classes also appear on the McLean Day stage. We offer opportunities for training and performing for the community. There is also programming for adults; the youth dance instructor also teaches ballroom dancing with Jeff Virchow.

What are some of the lessons learned through COVID-19 and things you want to maintain or expand upon? With the success of drive-thru drama and commissioning of special plays, are you thinking about such things? Ms. Schallern Treff responded by mentioning overall themes MCC staff is focusing on:

“Recovery; re-emerge; rediscover; reinvigorate; reconnect” Everyone has been hibernating for over a year and it's time to come back together. We want to help our community do that. Diversity/inclusion; intersectional and inter-departmental programming – much diversity; celebrating cultures; and sensory programs. We are excited to be working with other MCC departments; ideas in recent meetings are exciting!. We are also looking at pieces of art/dance that are trauma-informed and created with mental health trauma centers which can also promote healing in a different way.

“Greater access to the arts for all abilities and identities, economic means” The Alden has ADA-accessible seating and listening devices. We are excited to offer more: 1. next summer, we will offer sign language interpreters at summer concerts; 2. better ticket refund policy; 3. improving ‘one-on-one relationships’ directly with patrons: looking at personal economic means to see if we can help people out with ticket cost. We will promote a policy on MCC website that cost is never a barrier for people. If someone needs assistance to attend a performance, they can receive it.

“Celebrating our multi-faceted community through heritage awareness months/weeks” Each individual is more than their job. We have such a ‘driven’ population here that sometimes, other interests, identities and facets of peoples’ personalities get lost. We would like to be able to draw that out. And not all serious! The end of the month is “national tiger day!” Bringing fun to the community is something we love to do!

“Increasing social media presence” In every artist contract, we will get the artist to record a custom video clip to go on MCC's social media and their social media, which will increase our audience. We can archive a personal message from the artist; we hope to expand this capability according to what Fairfax County will permit.

“Expand existing successful performing arts programs” We have some very successful programs; Spring Show – only local kids can audition for it; professional staff produces it. They cast about 25% of those who audition; many kids get left out. Why doesn't MCC offer more productions – based on this keen interest? We gleaned that information from e-mails, citizen comments, audience surveys, and upcoming listening sessions.

“Continuing to find opportunities in challenges” Like the drive-thru model: We say “Yes” when circumstances say “No.” To find a work-around, Danielle Van Hook came up with the wonderfully creative idea of drive-thru drama. The public is free to give us their ideas as well, and we will see what we can implement. The drive-thru drama model is inspiring MCC staff to try new and different things.

Comment by Mr. Singh: As a functional point, I'm asking staff to build into their schedules for creative projects. Sometimes in the drudgery of their schedule, they don't have creative time. I've directed them to keep 10-20% of their time and budget for creative ideas that we wouldn't be able to develop unless we had such time.

“Cultivating a regional reputation through commissions, partnerships and innovation” The Alden has a reputation of excellence and incredible innovation in drive-thru drama. We are known to present wonderful. People are very excited to see performances in this intimate theater; commissions would further that reputation. If we commission a piece to premier here, every time it is performed again, “Originally commissioned by The Alden /McLean Community Center” will be on all

publicity materials; such visibility can go nationwide, international and regional.

Question: Have you considered commissions from student writers? McLean H.S. has "Sketch Fest" where professional judges evaluate students' works. A lot of local student works are incredible.

Clarification by Ms. Schallern Treff: We do have programs in mind to cultivate youth and young adults in McLean -- to commission and help them thrive by providing mentors. In doing commissions, we want to partner with schools and faith communities, and be innovative in types of things we are commissioning; for example, a dance piece that is sensitive for those with sensory issues.

'PROCESS' QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS DISCUSSION:

Question: How are we including the board's comments? Have our comments been already provided to staff to incorporate? Or is now the time to give our comments? I want to make sure we are making this as productive as possible. What is the goal?

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: After the staff's short presentation, the next half of tonight's discussion is looking at your ranked choice order based on all your comments and see if anything needs to be re-adjusted or if the ordering is fine. Many of your suggestions align very closely with what the staff has built. It will be very easy to fold them into what we're programming. What we want from you is to say: Which ones get done in Year 1? Which ones move to Year 2? Which ones move to Year 3? Between the staff and board, it is a very robust list – and we haven't even started asking the community yet. We should get our lists merged; and then the community requests list will come in and we'll understand the overlap.

Question: Are we going to review the board's comments as well as the ranked-choice list? Because there is some good information in that.

Response from Executive Director Singh: Yes.

Comment from Chair Zamora-Appel: I think this also includes the community feedback; because we had the Public Hearing on FY23 programs that was widely disseminated and a lot of comments came through on that meeting in April/May 2021.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: We will engage consultants and hope to get at least 2% of the McLean population (1,000 – 1,200 respondents). It depends on whether people actually respond (given 'survey fatigue' right now after COVID-19). We will do our best – the consultants are open to visiting PTA's and schools, to faith-based organizations, to Giant Food to find respondents in-person. We are trying to find ways to obtain good data on this next piece.

More ideas expressed by Board members & issues to explore...

Opinion expressed: It would be good for the board to also have an 'innovation' process. We've all had ideas; sometimes only funneling them through individual meetings with Daniel. Otherwise, we will come with new ideas and not have a way to take them from an idea...to a process, through to the end. I suggest we follow a similar process to have 10-20% of our time in the board's communications for 'innovation.'

Question: We are seeing activities quietly going on at Clemyjontri Park– talking about a black box theater; amphitheater; opening up CapitalOne with two theaters. Do we have any sense of bringing this together for the community and taking advantage of those facilities, as well as The Alden? Is there any thinking about coordination?

Response by Executive Director Singh: We are hoping the consultants can help us figure out how to work within the changing environment – with CapitalOne and Clemyjontri We want to see where we can collaborate as much as possible. And then if it's an instance of competition, how does MCC differentiate ourselves as a small, intimate theater; accessible outdoor space? How do we program in a way that's different than a 1,500-seat theater at CapitalOne? If the Clemyjontri facility goes forward by MPA it would be a visual-arts focused performance space. MCC is open to partnering with them there. Since MPA will have a gallery here, Sabrina Anwah suggests reciprocally, MCC having dedicated space at Clemyjontri Park – to continue ongoing partnership with MPA. We are looking at all the ways we can collaborate.

Opinion expressed: I'm very enthused and positive about your desire to work with the different organizations – not seeing them as 'competition' but rather seeing them as a way to work together No one has mentioned First Stage Theater which was established seven years ago at Tysons; we might want to collaborate with them as well. And no one has mentioned support for community theater.

Opinion expressed: in taking this to the next stage, is to group these points by your framework of anchors (recovery; re-emerging). Then we will have a vision of what each of those terms mean.

Clarification by Ms. Schallern Treff and Mr. Fisher: This is a big overview; in a future meeting, we can give more detail. We used the major concepts to sort; we are still building the matrix. Some sub-anchors were important to commit to and understand. We've tried to filter under the sub-anchors the existing programs that we already do, and upcoming programs we hope to do. This is not an exhaustive list; many programs fit neatly under multiple anchors. "Potential future programs," and "Things we've done in the past" are noted.

Clarification by Ms. Schallern Treff: Starting with staff education and opportunities for difficult discussions among colleagues. "Safe space" – this is the idea of taking it a step further and making a place where people can be "brave," make mistakes, and ask questions that they may not feel comfortable otherwise: 'controversy with civility.' Being respectful and kind to differing opinions and hopefully to understand each other. The thought is to have anti-racism or other trainings; podcast group discussions; informal staff discussions... so we can model "civil discourse/civil disagreement" to the community and create programs that encourage such. Also, just get to know each other better; the better relationships MCC staff has, the better programming we will do for our community.

* Data collection, reinvigorating our population and community engagement.: advisory panels for performance and large events.

*Innovative programming on 'emergent topics' – unique programming in contemporary issues. We are most excited about "emergent topics" or current events/issues. We are trying to restructure how we budget to leave ourselves some money to do things quickly. Normally in our budgets, we are planning right down to line items of \$\$\$ for equipment and \$\$\$ for services. Now, we are leaving a few question marks – to give us the flexibility to respond more rapidly to emerging topics or trends within the community.

*Diversity/Equity/Inclusion/Access: We are committed to One Fairfax and the tenets put forth. We are trying to adapt what MCC offers to ensure that we are pushing One Fairfax forward as a community center for the county, and for our constituents. Accessibility is another big part: a lot of new ideas we are looking at aim to increase accessibility for all populations. *Comment by Executive Director Singh:* We are also trying to hire staff that are representative of different communities. That hasn't been a focus in the past, but we're trying to reach out to the teaching staff who are from those communities

*Intersections/Environmental Justice/More than: We are not just the sum total of the labels that are applied to us.

*Sharing and uplifting underrepresented populations: Bringing together our community; connecting; and technology. After the last 24 months, technology is such an integral part of connecting.

*The Center of it All: As the "center of it all" we've been using that tagline for many years. We want to remain the center of it all and continue to build the community that is around us. A lovely aspect of MCC is that we are literally in your backyard. High-quality programming is right here! You don't need to go into DC to enjoy a lot of robust offerings of events, activities and classes.

*Nurturing: We are trying to nurture the local population and see them thrive.

*Food and alcohol: We need to get more alcohol at our events! We are researching options to see how we can do that more effectively and more frequently.

*Facilities: Regarding the lease on OFC, there is a timeframe limitation. It would be nice to have more concrete and stronger protection/expectation of duration for that. We are monitoring it and working with Fairfax County to try to understand their plans – and doing our best to make sure that MCC presence in OFC are part of those plans.

*Synergies to proximal outdoor environments:

Comments by Executive Director Singh: Regarding the amphitheater, we've talked about ways that people are looking for outdoor entertainment. Having that would be really an asset for us. Jennifer Garrett's team installed exterior lighting on MCC building: right now, there is red, white, blue lighting on the building exterior (celebrating July 4th); breast cancer awareness month; St. Patrick's Day. We will also investigate projection mapping so that it doesn't intrude on neighbors but still creates an environment. I'm also investigating whether that can be flexible to offer projection mapping in downtown McLean.

*Future milestones marking significant impact in the community: We hope the next renovation of The Alden can have ADA-accessible renovation of the backstage area. It's a major renovation that will require load-bearing pillars to be torn



down. 50th Anniversary of MCC helps us look forward and consider how we can connect all these pieces. What can we look back to? Which youth members can we bring back who went through our programs? Shivani Saboo was here when she was 6 years old; and now she's a board member! How do we tell those stories and explain what MCC has done for the community? We are focusing on connecting those themes in a thoughtful way rather than letting milestone dates fly by us.

*Capacity-building: In envisioning a lot of new programs and new opportunities, we must build up our capacity to be able to do that. It is also building-up capacity within our community: through volunteer programs, CERT program, interns.

Operational capacity – making sure that our policies and SOP's are up-to-date. We are evaluating them on a regular basis.

*MCC as a regional destination: High-quality programming is what will bring people here. EV charging stations –such things fit under “environmental justice,” but is also something that could potentially put MCC on the map and make us a regional destination.

*Community engagement: MCC staff has a lot of ideas; the board has a lot of great ideas... and those are starting to come together through this process. Community engagement is another important aspect. We have various touchpoints: feedback cycles.

*Responsiveness: Emphasizing our ‘emerging topics’ program and MCC’s ability to be respond more rapidly to whatever trend is appearing in the community or topic that we feel needs to be addressed in the community: speaker series, open houses, film screenings, book clubs.

Question: In terms of connectivity to other parts of Fairfax County, is there a coordinated plan by MCC staff to connect with libraries; schools? Or to connect with principals? The library offers book clubs. Why do we do the same thing?

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: We partner with the library for the book club such as Hispanic heritage month. So, the book club will be led by the library; but MCC might offer a performance after that which will be connected. We are trying to work with partnerships and not duplicate as much as possible.

Comment by Mike Fisher: And we've been reaching out and connecting to the community already. Aaron Greene has been doing many ‘teacher appreciation’ efforts at the end of the school year and summer. Not only in front of PTA's and principals, but to reach out to the teachers as well – to communicate with them and see how we might collaborate. Back in 2007, OFC sent staff to Longfellow to support their after-school program. Partnerships like that are always a possibility.

Opinions expressed: I think that's something that we as the board can also help with. Many of us are parents of kids or participants in MCC programs and we can help with that. The AAUW meets at MCC and offers book clubs as well. We should coordinate with them as well.

PIO Sabrina Anwah gave the following remarks about MCC's public communication planning.

Media relations: This week, we sent responses to a reporter for *Fairfax Times*. We also get requests for information from various local outlets. **Branding:** all MCC publications and other products of MCC have the same look and feel, so that when people look at our things, there is immediate recognition – “That's McLean Community Center.” **Public relations:** trying to maintain MCC's positive reputation in the community. The PIO office supports marketing for the various division such as e-newsletters; The Alden to 5,700; weekly e-newsletters to 5,000; OFC – 1,800 subscribers; stakeholders (community organizations; HOA's; schools - 300+ recipients; MCC class program rosters (3,000 people). **Publications:** seasonal Program Guide is sent to 18,000 households in Small District 1A-Dranesville. It has won awards from VRPS; we will enter some of our publications into Virginia Recreation and Parks Society this year. **Social media management:** Upcoming, Kyle Corwin plans to ‘package’ posts for board members so you can share those posts with others to help us promote events. We also take photos or hire photographers to produce videos. We have a play list on Fairfax Co. YouTube channel: on our website, scroll down to see some delightful program videos. In returning to in-person programming, a goal for this this year is to get new videos created.

PIO GOALS: In 2019, Ms. Anwah attended a conference which had a theme: “Everyone will now be in the business of well-being.” Going forward, that is truly more important in the light of COVID-19. We are trying to reposition ourselves to reengage with the public...doing that by:

1. reinvigorating communication efforts that were hurt by COVID-19 restrictions and letting people know what we're

doing to address COVID-19 fears and sanitation concerns.

2. Handle emergency communications, if necessary.
3. Engage professional services to perform marketing research.
4. Listening sessions are planned for the fall. Reingold is a Fairfax Co. communications consultant; they will speak to us next week about engaging three groups: people who come to MCC; people who don't come; community stakeholders.
5. Work with Program Managers to increase and improve marketing efforts.
6. Increase social media advertising and pilot a Fairfax County effort by using a software program that Kyle has used previously called "Mish Guru" which will allow takeovers by performing artists, ArtsFairfax and other stakeholders.
7. Increase the variety of outlets that we use to advertise.
8. Re-engage with community stakeholders, including schools, faith-based organizations, youth and charitable organizations.
9. Share more 'county' news and 'community' news. We already share AAUW, Safe Community Coalition and some other organizations.
10. Establish an "Open House" for local media representatives -to have them come in and see what's coming up in The Alden Theatre and MCC, and participate in community events.
11. We want to reignite branding efforts – we have put out an RFP for redesign of MCC's website. We have a company in mind that would bring up-to-date and make more vibrant the look and feel of our website. We will also be able to integrate it into the registration program (ACTIVE) and the ticketing program (Audience View). We also want to engage a brand management company to help evaluate our branding and make recommendations on how we may be able to improve.
12. Enhance branding of social media messaging. Kyle Corwin is coming up with a style guide for social media messaging; and include on a consistent basis Fairfax County branding with the official county seal.
13. To respond to the needs of diverse and under-served members of our community. Expand outreach to people of differing abilities, LGTBQ, ESL and ethnic minority communities. We have done some of that, but we want to be more focused and intentional in our desire to make sure we are serving everybody in the community. We want to diversify advertising purchases to include targeting those communities. We want to expand outreach to and relationship with diverse community representatives and increase messaging that MCC is welcoming to all members of the community.

How can the MCC Governing Board help? Make us aware of community communications outlets. How do you hear about the things you decide to participate in? What are you looking for? Talk about MCC to others by word-of-mouth recommendations. Attend MCC events and bring a friend or two. Find sponsors for McLean Day and other events. Volunteers are always needed at our events. *Comment:* That was awesome, Sabrina. Thank you!

Comments by Executive Director Singh: The "Alpha Blockers" are a Grammy-nominated teenage band who come into a community and work with local youth to write music. We are hoping to bring them here in November for a week-long residency. Then they will return for Juneteenth 2022– with efforts happening across departments. We are shifting the way we do it. We're centering the African-American staff who are thought leaders in this topic and having them program it and lead the way for us; and we will be the support staff for them. This video is a preview of what it might look like.

RANK ORDERING & PRIORITIZATION OF GOVERNING BOARD PREFERENCES

Comments by Executive Director Singh: It may seem like we're rushing, but this is just the beginning of the strategic planning process. With the consultant proposal now underway, there is a solid chunk of time for the consultant to work with the board to continue this conversation. We wanted to lay this groundwork so that when they came in, we wouldn't be paying them \$2,000 an hour to do some of this work. This is just a stepping stone. Ms. Schallern Treff is going to share the ranked choices and what we gleaned from your long form comments into an Excel sheet. We will talk through it; and then we have a second link ready if you want to rank it again. Or, we can physically rank it on the screen while we have all of you here and to figure out how to move everything forward. Our goal is to see where things are now based on how board members voted. Then we have a new survey with the same order; and we can re-order it based on in-person conversations. As this is just the starting point, the consultant will work with you and the community to make sure we are lining up all those three interest groups [Board; community/public; staff], to make sure we move forward from there.

Opinions expressed: I had a hard time ranking because I felt some terms were ‘nested’ within other things and not mutually-exclusive. The example of “Earth Day every day” is sustainability. So that’s why it’s listed at the bottom.

Opinions expressed: You must look at the universe of environmental social/governmental issues. It’s very difficult because these are all issues that will build into another issue. So, to rank those particular initiatives within one framework doesn’t necessarily work. Thank you for doing this; but you need to make the priorities broader.

Opinions expressed: The way I looked at this is: “What is within our power? Earth Day is the overall umbrella and that’s why I ranked it last. But if we embed sustainability in our programming... if we have these facilities available... if there are educational programs that are available, all of this will turn MCC into the model and Earth Day will be happening every day.

Opinions expressed: Excellent point. What normally happens is: you take material issues to the community center and then you design a survey on those particular issues. ‘Materiality’ is dynamic; but they are definitely germane issues to a community center. We may want to make it a little bit broader if we are going to expose this to the public. But this is a great first target.

Question: But how would be broaden it? First, consider the universe of environmental social/government issues. This is a very narrowed-down universe. 1. You need to ask questions like: “On a scale of 1-5 what are the most important environmental issues in your world: Energy efficiency? Plastics prevention? Climate change?” 2. And then you need to make sure that those elements are applicable to a community center. What is applicable to any other organization may not be applicable to a community center. Diversity and inclusion are major issues in almost every industry right now, and almost anything you talk about. Climate is also – but how we couch that is a bit different.

Opinion expressed: It may be that we should just review the results but not aim to actually try to re-write them today. We either need another meeting or do it electronically where we expect most of the board to respond. This is good – it’s a dry-run with the consultant and eventually with the public. We may ask them to do this kind of work as well.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: We can work with all of you to develop the survey. We just needed to have something to start the conversation.

Opinion expressed: It seems to be three buckets: a clear ‘safe place for all’; ‘innovation’ and then a group of four with similar priority level; and then others. But some are either sub-sets or parallels of other things. So, we’ll just work on improving it.

Opinions expressed: It’s hard to help people understand. If you say “climate change” or “diversity and inclusion” – what does that mean to people? It’s a challenge. You must clearly identify what rolls up into that universe of ‘environmental/governmental/social issues.’

Questions: How can “fun” be third from last?!? Define what you mean/define terms: What does “fun” mean? I thought of “fun” as a given.

Question: I don’t know: that podcast on anti-racism - Would you have called it “fun?”

Clarification by Ms. Schallern Treff: No. I would have called the discussions ‘enjoyable.’

Opinion expressed: Yes – the collaboration, talking together, meeting new people. It was fantastic! That podcast was amazing. But ‘fun’... maybe not.

Opinions expressed: I like that we’re addressing it this way because we know that one of the most important things is engaging our stakeholders. And that many people who will come and comment into MCC’s sessions are not reflective of the entire community. They are not reflective of McLean at all. The ability for us to gather feedback from a greater majority of people in McLean will inform: diversity/inclusion; environmental sustainability; fun... will inform everything. While the ‘squeaky wheel gets the grease’ - they are very often not reflective of the view of our community. The ability for us to gather the view of our entire community is really important. These surveys will allow us to do that.

Opinion expressed: When we think about ‘engagement’

I think we have a very formal structure: these board meetings where members of the public join us and make spoken statements. But many of us may choose not to. For every time we do, maybe we should have a survey approach or another comment forum. As an organization that desires to be inclusive, we should also realize that people comment in different ways, as well. I’ve seen this in the letter-writing approach about McLean Central Park – when I reached out to people, some

would write long e-mails while others would jump-in and work on the letter directly. I liked to make that possible as we were developing this letter.

Opinion expressed: I think that's because I didn't really know what it was. It's a definitional issue.

Opinions expressed:: It's the idea of developing new ideas and someone on the staff to inspire not just their own department, but all entire departments. It's more about the process than the organization. Some of these options felt like: Are these do-able in the next 6 months to a year? Or are these structural/organizational changes to the way the board does business... or the way the board and staff do business? Maybe a way think about this is: What is do-able now – with a matrix bucket that way. And then let's look at: 1. We're just going to focus on what we can do on these topics in the next 12-24 months vs. 2. These are things that should be ongoing, part of our culture and process. I think this was frankly biased by the fact that several of us have been working on this topic right now.

Opinions expressed That's an important thing to think about: You are supposed to try your best to incorporate 'business as usual' in doing this process. Not considering COVID-19 is a huge challenge. *Question: Do you mean that we pretend like COVID-19 never happened?*

Opinions expressed: In a way, yes. You address issues that are important to your community. Address COVID-19 issue under categories like "safety"... or "resiliency" You try to identify who you are without all the extraneous issues. That is more 'corporate' rather than 'community' – but there is a focus to try to do that.

Question: The whole timing issue of the timeframe for these "wants/wishes:" when we look at the integrated arts campus, is it something that we can work on right now? Or should we be concentrating on outdoor programming even though it's at the end of the list – that's more feasible and more approachable? Because a park amphitheater is 5-years out. So, should we be looking at the possibilities within 3-years? Within 5-years?... in terms of 'ranking'?

Opinion expressed: That's a great point. The more you program for something, the more you realize the needs to provide better facilities to accommodate that program.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: it's a little bit of "both/and." The way we arrived at the amphitheater is because MCC Performing Arts has been programming the park and building that audience for 20 years now. We can't really focus on MCP without doing the work. However, figuring out how to manage our time and resources will be the next aspect involved.

Question: Generally, if you're building into a strategic plan, aren't those usually 3-5 years long?

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: Yes. That's something we can also discuss with the board and the consultants. A 3-year plan makes sense because the board rotates so often: five out of eleven board members rotate off every year (45% rotating). An example is the interior courtyard: the previous board was insistent that it should be a meditational gathering space – not programmable. And now, all of you are saying it should be a programmable space. But that is a \$200,000 - \$300,000 change. So, we need to figure out a way for us to keep moving forward as an organization while not every three years having to re-do something because there is a new direction. We need to find a balance where we don't keep throwing good money after bad.

Opinion expressed: Well... COVID-19 happened between that time. *Comment by Joe McGovern:* The point is that because of COVID-19, it is an outdoor 'programmable' space.

Opinion expressed: What I really liked is the view of the governing principals which are the 'mission' and 'vision.' Many of us have different ideas... and you can't capture that in a survey. Part of the next conversation should be: let's look at starting from the governing principles of the organization. Then the question about whether we can change something to programmable space or not will make us articulate: Do we have a view that all our facilities/resources should be viewed as being 'modular' and adaptive?... or... No - they should be made and resourced as such [purposeful, specific usage]?

Comment by Executive Director Singh: The problem is that if the board rotates off in three years and then the new board has a

different idea of what it should be...then we are stuck with an expensive remodel.

Opinion expressed: True. But the MCC vision statement is from the 1980's – which was a very different world than now.

Opinion expressed: People do change. That's why it's so dynamic and you must be continually checking-in with your stakeholders. If the board does change, so long as you really know what the community expects of you (not just one or two people who present themselves as 'representing the community' who really aren't) then you are in a good position. You must determine who your most important stakeholders are.

Opinion expressed: The demographics need to be taken into consideration. Demographics in McLean 20 years ago are much different than the demographics in this area now. It's a large area of 58,000+ people. My 'network' is parents with young kids. Many people in my network don't realize that they are paying for MCC. The moment they realize it, they decide to go in and start to enjoy the programming. And they start asking for more things: "My kid is in 2nd grade, why can't you do a program about how butterfly migration happens (like the schools)?" FCPS has had such resources for a long time; but MCC has not looked into it. MCC could become a destination for those children. How can we then look at 3-year, 5-years; sometimes even 20 years: a long-range plan? In the last 15 years, I have noticed that the idea of creating a 'single-use' type of place - people are moving away from that. Why? Because we don't know the unknowns. Once COVID-19 hit, people were looking for a place where they could take their families in an outdoor environment where they don't have to be with other people. The walking path in MCP to the library was heavily used during pandemic. That's something that was not anticipated. Look at the fact that MCC has a courtyard and people call all the time asking if they can hold an event there. I think the opportunity is here. This is the first time MCC is doing a strategic planning process; but we've got to look at it over more than one year because a lot happens in one year. As has been mentioned, several of us will be rotating off next year... and all of us will be rotating off in 3 years. What is the legacy of the Board? That's what we need to look at for the future.

Question: What we are talking about is 'flexibility/modularity' type of thinking – so that when an idea comes in, it must be thought about as something that can change in the future and there is flexibility to do it. On another topic... I'm wondering: What does 'contemporary programming' mean? If we are trying to engage the community, then we want to find strategies to do that. But another way to attract diversity is by the programming. That's what we should be going for. The 'contemporary' was a little generic - I don't know what was meant.

Comment by Executive Director Singh: When we do the next version, we can clarify with a glossary or definitions for the next iteration. We are just summarizing what we got. I can work with all of you to clarify the language for the next iteration.

Opinion expressed: To me, "contemporary programming" meant that it reflected demographics of the community— things at MCC that are fresh and exciting. But you all may have had totally different interpretations. The one on the bottom "start your own business class" is very specific; it wasn't up at the strategic level.

Opinion expressed: I don't think we would do this for our survey: it's like you took what we thought was important and tried to put it in a ranked-choice. It's a little biased. In many ways, the board members came in on a platform of what they thought was important. I came in on a platform of sustainability; that's important to me. Diversity and inclusion are important to almost every other board member. Getting kids off of electronic devices was important to another person. This is skewed and you must answer the questions in a different way.

Comment by Executive Director Singh: We must ask questions differently. But the biggest chunk of this work is going to be the community feedback. Because we 'think' we know what the community wants; but they will tell us what they want!

Opinion expressed: I recommend having a consultant do a 30-minute interview with each person using a common set questions and pull those into buckets. It's really: 1. the 'buckets' that we care about, and 2. the temporal thing Maybe you can create a process where the consultants will talk to each board member.

Comment by Ms. Novak: What occurs to me: Everyone is saying that everything is always all-important, all the time. If everything we want is all-important, all the time...then we're not going to get priorities. That's what Executive Director Singh is trying to do. You must have prioritization somehow.

Opinions expressed: You must ask the right questions. You are absolutely right, Holly. Within these broader categories, I could see focus groups where you're asking people to silent brainstorm broad categories... and then specific examples of what they would want to see. Silent brainstorming is a principle of "design thinking": everyone writes stuff down, put it on a board. Then you group responses and then look at the groups, voting on which 'groups' are important, then go to specifics.

Opinion expressed: I'm wondering if the "vision" statement shouldn't drive the priorities? I think that's the place to begin.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: The last time the 'vision' statement changed, it ended up being an 8-month process for the board. I'm happy to stand-up a committee to make that happen. I don't want us to spend all our meetings on it for the next 8 months. We have much more important things to focus on. I'm just saying what happened last time. I'm fine having someone chair it and lead it forward. But I agree that: If you don't have a 'vision,' then how can you build a strategy? It's like "the chicken or the egg" question. Maybe if we know the consultant is charging us \$2K an hour, we'll get to the vision statement quicker!

Comment by Ms. Novak: I think it's iterative. You may develop a preliminary vision statement... and after you look at all the details, you start to build back up. Come up with a preliminary/partial vision statement... and then refine it. So, it could work from the ground-up and be built that way.

Opinion expressed: That's a good point, Holly. You can't be siloed; but I think the "mission" and the "vision" feels like the 1980's in a way.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: I agree with both. I agree that we need to look at it first and that it's 'dated.' But I want to be mindful of your time. We also must take community input: we can't just create a mission and vision without involving the community. We would be looking at suddenly a \$150K to \$200K consulting bill, as opposed to half as much without that piece.

Opinions expressed: We need to look at other community centers. What are other community centers doing? As far as the mission, we can change that slowly. I would rather focus on our energies and time towards accomplishing the 'spirit' of the mission... instead of trying to work with the 'verbiage.'

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: Yes, that's why we didn't make that a focus of this meeting. But it's not off-the-table.

Comment by Ms. Schallern Treff: "Balancing historical programming with emerging needs and ideas."

Clarification by Mr. Singh: "Programming/lifting up"... Black and indigenous community stories.

Question: February 21 is United Nations 'Mother Language Day.' My family is originally from Bangladesh; Bangladesh fought a war with Pakistan and gained its independence based on its language. Both were Muslim countries; but had different languages, different cultural features. In recognition of that which killed 1 million people in less than a year, the U.N. has designated that day. Just around this table, we have multiple backgrounds. So, can we have a recurring international event at MCC?

Opinion expressed: I would rather it be called "International Day." The word "mother language" kind of seems nationalistic.

Opinion expressed: Fair enough. I was using the official terminology used by the U.N. But the concept being: this would be an opportunity to have tables featuring different languages and food...connections between language and arts. Many of us have kids doing emersion programs. It's also a marketing opportunity for several organizations that exist in McLean that market to people of different languages. It could be an interesting concept.

Comment from Vice-Chair Post: Again, this all goes back to the idea of the larger, over-arching framework: calling attention to nationality and culture. Culture manifests in many different ways, so we set the higher goal; and then within those goals, we have these initiatives like "mother language." Trying to put this into rank order would be unproductive. We need to have the larger, broader ideas of what we're doing for our communities; and then smaller goals. And then the staff will program to those concepts or 'pillars.'

Opinion expressed: It's also hard to mix programming with facilities; because facilities are things we presume will be around for a really long time and are 'permanent infrastructure' changes. While programming presumably would change and grow

and adapt as the community's interests and needs change. So, it was hard for me mix those things together.

Opinion expressed: And looking back on the 'anchors,' I would love to see the next version of this be: bucket it by the anchors/issues. The notion of "environment" – I'd like us to focus on that. I think it needs to be broader than "environmental justice." Because, looking at these results, something about the environment or "sustainability" has been in the top 3 or 4 on almost every single question. So, we are clearly missing something in our current anchoring framework.

Summary by Chair Zamora-Appel: But this goes back into the type of *programming being based on demographics*: because the way these are ranked is: 1. programming --under educational... social... cultural... environmental. 2. that's when the actual types of events could be talked about. Perhaps doing *more large events and festivals* like McLean Day. Is there a possibility to do more of something like that? A lot of festivals happen in Fairfax County – they are everywhere. We have the idea that we want to "engage the youth" with more programming– anything that is technology... innovation... emergence. That's the kind of thing that we would want. Providing *educational programming for women, men and veterans who want to go back into the workforce*. Yes – that is provided by other organizations. But why not partner with MCC? That bucket would include *resume writing; opening or expanding a business*. That type of thing would be beneficial for the community because everyone on the MCC Governing Board was elected by the community. So, we must ask the community for their ideas. They may not necessarily send their responses via e-mail or through a survey. They will simply come to us with their ideas because I represent them.

Opinion expressed: Talking about engagement with other communities: Fairfax Co. makes sure that materials are printed in different languages. Can we begin to put MCC materials into other languages? How much of that can we do? If it's an easy drop-down, that is best outreach to seniors.

Clarification by PIO Sabrina Anwah: Yes – we can contract to get things translated. In the new redesign of the website, we will have a translation available on our website. It's not as good as "google translate" but it is basic.

Summary by Chair Zamora-Appel: It's important to have this conversation now because it has been echoed a lot: the idea of having a pollinator garden outside... or billboards.... How can we then move forward? The strategy would be: What is important for the community based on what the community wants? And we're not going to get everything we want. So, how can we then make those priorities? What we need to look at in the 3-year master plan is to ask if all of what is there, is part of the start of this strategy of what the community wants? Once we get to the point where we're actually going back to the community to ask them, yet again: What would you like to see here at MCC? We have asked this many times; and they are routinely asked once a year. So how can the public be more engaged. We will hear people saying: 'I told you what I wanted 3 years ago and nothing has happened. So, what is different this time?' The strategy also includes: "Why?" "Why is it different this time?" Why is it important that we are talking to our community again? It's a matter of having the right messaging. This is a very good launching point where we can now move forward. I'm sure that our ideas and feedback is not ending. We're going to continue with this conversation.

Opinion expressed: Regarding the demographics about the community, it's important for us to look to the future of what McLean is going to be. But, also to accommodate the current stakeholders. Those demographics you sent are very enlightening; everyone needs to be aware and familiar. That's a part of this process. *Comment by Chair Zamora-Appel:* U.S. Census Bureau website – McLean CDP – reports and breakdowns Yet, I hear that some MCC programs are not sold-out every time. Why is that? Is it that the programming is not what people want? Or that they don't know the programming is here? It's a matter of understanding our community. The Asian community has increased since the last census; it's almost a quarter of our population. U.S. Census Bureau has projection numbers that can be requested for a specific geography. Looking at the demographic numbers is important as we move forward, because if you compare today's numbers to 10 or 15 years ago, they would be very different. And if a strategic plan were done 15 years ago, it would not be relevant anymore because McLean has changed so dramatically.

Opinion expressed: Someone was asking what is the issue that attendance is not where we would like it to be because people don't know... or why are they not coming? Fairfax County did a market study for the arts; two results turned up:

1. People just don't know. 2. Perception that the quality of the programming that is available isn't of the caliber of going

downtown to Kennedy Center or other venues.

Opinion expressed: How do you get people to come and engage in these events – especially cultural programming? I really believe that instead of doing one-off small celebrations like a “mother language” day, or AAPI events or heritage month, it’s more important, in addition to those events, to be having regularly programmed events where we are integrating these cultures such as having language classes every month. It doesn’t have to be a paid professional language tutor. It can be senior citizen immigrants who speak another language and are willing to teach their mother tongue to kids. Instead of one big AAPI heritage month – maybe have a series of Mah Jongg nights where older Asian ladies come in here to play. Those regularly-scheduled events will bring people in more. That might be a slow process; but it will get people to be a more committed base to McLean Community Center. *Opinion expressed:* Yeah – that’s a fantastic idea.

Opinion expressed: When we put on the performances during those months, weeks and days, we are competing with other organizations that are doing the same thing. If we spread it out over the year, then we kind of take that competition away, and MCC will have more of a ‘grab’ for that attention than one performance.

Opinion expressed: I want to echo the point about engaging seniors of diverse backgrounds: in many cultures, it’s not uncommon for older people to sit in a courtyard and talk and drink coffee. I feel like even though we are a community center, MCC is not the first place where people go. They go to the Galleria or mall and drink coffee there. How could MCC offer that? I’ve talked to folks who work on mental health issues in the county – among seniors during the pandemic, there was nowhere for them to go. Maybe they live here because their kids are taking care of them; but they don’t have a community network to develop. Maybe MCC can provide that engagement.

Opinion expressed: That’s fantastic – as part of the whole idea of deploying our mission/vision in the actual building – and putting things outside that engage people to come in such as having tea in the courtyard. MCC is not “the hub.” Things such as that will make it the hub. People just want to drop-in; they don’t do that.

Opinion expressed: It also involves having transportation. MCC is not exactly ‘pedestrian-friendly’ or close to public transportation – it is far from Metro. I suggest MCC having a downtown presence in McLean.

Clarification Executive Director Singh: We are looking at catering if we can. But MCC is not licensed to be a food provider. It would create a whole other long licensing process to become so. We can do catered events.

Opinion expressed: For this meeting, why aren’t we getting food from local restaurants? Jersey Mikes and Sweet Leaf are chains; but there are several good restaurants in McLean. We’ve talked in other meetings about how we are connecting with local businesses in a productive way.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: It’s harder to work with local restaurants because they are not good at catering large events. They are only set-up to provide maybe 10-20 meals at a time; but you cannot place an order for 100 items They are not set-up as a catering kitchen.

Opinions expressed: I beg to differ: there are several local-area vendors that are absolutely prepared for large-quantity catering. They may be more expensive. I also know of Indian restaurants who cater for large events. Maybe we can say: “We want to work with you, but Fairfax County has these requirements...”

Opinion expressed: In considering places where seniors can gather, you might also collaborate with Lewinsville Center and Vinson Hall. Vinson Hall is a self-contained community with transportation to Kennedy Center; doctor appointments, etc.

Opinion expressed: Vinson Hall is a great resource. I have partnered with them to provide educational resources to our younger generations It was fantastic. That is intersectionality. Using Vinson Hall as a resource some of this programming that Ms. Schallern Treff and Mr. Fishers are talking about is something we really should consider. Some ex-ambassadors who live at Vinson Hall! There is a rich wealth of knowledge.

Opinion expressed: That’s a great point because 21% of McLean population is over the age of 65. So again, looking at the demographics: Is MCC doing the right programming for the right audience?

Summary by Executive Director Singh about the strategic planning process, going forward:

Research all residents; consider current and future projections of demographics in programming; reach all residents; rigorous data collection to inform our path forward; broader marketing strategy in traditional and social media. It will be

really helpful for us to know how we can move forward in the next iteration in the survey and also how we can tee this up for the consultants to come in and work with all of you. Right now, we've budgeted about 8 hours for the consultants to work with the board. It can be four meetings of two hours; or if you want to do longer dives together. The more we can get ready for that next step, the better. The consultant will receive information in advance.

Opinion expressed: Maybe as a first step, can we start with how this stuff emerged from the conversations of staff to create these 'anchors.' Two suggestions: 1. A definition of what you broadly define as the buckets. 2. The board should decide jointly: Do we agree with these? Or.. Do we want to tweak them? Once you have those, the next step becomes: What is it for each of these topics that we really care about? Design a new survey: what are your priorities? Most of us started with three questions: mission/ vision; dream direction; dream project. And then you filtered those into these buckets.

Comment by Ms. Novak about method: The three questions that were sent to the board were literally the first step; that was qualitative information. What we have is qualitative: all the verbiage that you sent back – but it's only responses from eight board members Then, this is a little more quantitative – but it's still very small. My point is with that – keep in mind that staff has spent hours and hours developing this analysis.

So, you don't want to 'pick it apart' too much. It's valid what you are saying. But to say: "Throw this out; go back to square one..." – you must be careful of our process.

Opinion expressed: You can't take our personal opinions and then pop it into a survey to try to get a ranked choice analysis. You must have a ranked choice analysis aligned to material issues; and then get more details. We are not going to 'pick it apart;' but I think the way we went about it is different. You must start with 'broader' issues and then dive down.

Response by Ms. Novak: But it is two separate pieces. It's two tracks: you guys are developing your initial input, and then this ranked choice. Meanwhile, the staff has been building their pieces to go with it. So, it is two tracks.

Opinion expressed: The staff has done the work. Let's make sure that we agree with this. I go back to "environmental justice:" I like the terminology; but I think it's too narrow for the issue that's arrived here – which is sustainability. I don't know what the right term is – we'll figure it out. "Building and engaging community:" Frankly, what's missing here is partnership. We've mentioned several times: schools; community groups. This is just 'wordsmithing' –to bring that in. The Board didn't even know about this until literally it was handed to me. So now that we have this framework, let's start from there. Ideally, we'd like to re-visit the 'mission' and 'vision.' And we know we can't do that because of the time commitments. But if this is the next level, then let's work on this.

Opinion expressed: I really appreciate all the work that the staff team did. It's been amazing. I also think we have a lot of really smart people in this room. When I've developed things like "logic models" you always start with things like: environmental... social... cultural... economic conditions that are happening. In our community, we are fortunate to have a lot of resources: we have a lot of social capital, human capital, economic capital. Thinking three years down the road, I'm worried about flooding in our community. What happened two years ago when the streets of McLean had cars floating away – that kind of emergency. I'm worried about climate change; a lot of conditions are happening very fast. Hopefully, there is not another pandemic coming. 1. Having a sense of all those 'conditions.' 2. And then, in this little niche that MCC fills for the community - Where does MCC fit in and what kind of impact can we have? 3. How do we bring the community together and have foresight in looking at those conditions? That is what I think we need to have a sense of before we meet with the consultant

Opinion expressed: The employees of the McLean Community Center are one of the biggest, most important stakeholders. The issues you have identified that are important to you can build the basis for this larger materiality assessment.

FORWARD RECOMMENDATIONS: HOW GOVERNING BOARD CAN BEST HELP MCC STAFF DO ITS WORK

Opinion expressed: Regarding earlier comments - the staff did do a really good job. If you were to just do an overall idea of the work that they must do immediately, it is: 1. Engagement; 2. Environment; and 3. Diversity – as an overall umbrella. Then the details will come along. Take the spirit of what they found out here, and what we as board members have

decided— that will be a good grasp on what needs to be done and the type of programming that people want, whether it's from the board or the community.

Summary by Chair Zamora-Appel: I want to echo what has been said: thank you to the staff. Doing strategic sessions is hard — because we are going to say things that we think are the best answer and solution for the future. And there will be ten others who will say: 'That's a great start, but this is where we really want to be.' It doesn't reflect that we don't appreciate the work you have done. I know it's very hard to put your heart and soul into a presentation... and then hear the hard parts that some of the board members do not agree with. It is important to know that we're a team. Right now, we are working as a team to get to the vision of what MCC is. Having all the feedback — surveys; focus groups; questions; e-mails — everything, once we get to the solution phase with the consultants, we're going to see that where we started and where we end up is probably going to look very different. The over-arching goal here is that we are all working together. We respect everything that MCC staff has done. This past year has shown that it wasn't easy; but yet, there was a lot of programming. It has not been an easy road; MCC staff has risen to the occasion every time. I really appreciate that. Sometimes we don't say that enough. I just want to make sure that you know that whenever we are having conversations, we always talk about the programming that is happening. Looking to the future, every other board member here will echo: We really appreciate the work you are doing. Please let us know how you want us to move forward. Because ultimately, you are executing the programming that we are sometimes providing the vision for. With Daniel Singh at the helm, I think we're going to go to a very good place for the future!

ACTION ITEMS / NEXT STEPS *Chair Zamora-Appel transitioned the conversation to articulating action items and next steps:*

1. glossary; definition of terms
2. Next iteration of the survey. Daniel can work with Carla, Rasheq and Suzanne for ideas about how the survey should go.
3. Building information for the consultants. In August, we have no meetings, so we have a little bit of time to get this worked out. Though no official board meetings, but Daniel can still meet with board members and move things forward for that.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: Not under contract yet. The bid is out; we are hoping someone will put a bid in. Several vendors have written to us saying that Fairfax County rules are too difficult — they will not even bother putting in a proposal. The same thing happened with the website re-design. We solicited ten vendors for the website redesign; out of them, only three responded because they said the county rules are too cumbersome.

Opinion expressed: It was suggested to consider universities that have very robust ESG/social/corporate programs in Fairfax County —George Mason University, George Washington, American Univ.; Georgetown University MBA "Service Corps".

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: We can see how the bids come in and if we find someone who is good. And if not, then we might have to re-open the bid.

OLD / NEW BUSINESS

MCC Governing Board endorsement letter regarding amphitheater/redevelopment of McLean Central Park:

** A DRAFT letter was sent out to the board with a deadline to comment by a certain date.*

We need to make sure we publish and have an ability to: 1. galvanize people and 2. give comments into the media. Because what is driving the conversation is comments by other people about their letters appearing in the media. Please give us your feedback so we can finalize it by 12 noon tomorrow, Friday, July 16, so we can turn it around and put out a press release tomorrow. Then you'll have the final language and we can use that to create the campaign for the concert this weekend. This concert is one of the most popular groups; expect 300-400 attendees. It would be nice if we can get the letter approved tomorrow to be able to release it.

Question: But in a way, you really don't want to 'lead' the people attending the concert. You really want to understand their impressions without leading them based on our comments, right?

Comment by Ms. Novak: A question about process – the letter better be received before you do a press release. It must be to the recipient. You can't say: 'We're going to send a letter...'

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: No, but we can send the letter out tomorrow electronically.

Comment by Ms. Novak: I'm just saying - we must have the right sequence. You can't say: "Oh, we're going to do a press release and then the letter is going to come later." No.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: Chair Zamora-Appel sent a final version; we can share it out to everyone tonight for comments. The problem is that we don't yet have Sharepoint. It's hard to edit; if you do "track changes" and send it back, we can finalize all the changes.

Opinion expressed: We have been working through GoogleDocs; but you don't have access to that. I'm happy to put the latest version back on GoogleDocs and give people until tomorrow to make their edits. Otherwise, you're exchanging Word documents back-and-forth.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: Give us the final one as a Word document; because we can't access GoogleDocs.

Comment by Ms. Novak: But you can't vote on it electronically. It's either tonight or on July 28 for a vote.

**It was requested to take a few minutes now for everyone to study the document immediately. It should be read aloud for virtual attendees.*

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: Don't worry about copy-editing. Sabrina Anwah will do a clean copy edit tomorrow. It's mostly about content..

I appreciate your doing this work. It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity: if we miss this, it's probably not going to ever happen in the next twenty years. Because a lot of things are aligned: Supervisor Foust supports FCPA is in favor of it... the funding is there.

Opinion expressed: It also goes back to stakeholder engagement: what is really reflective of the community? That's why the concert on Sunday is an opportunity to really understand: Do they want something else? Or is this fine? And we have to be prepared for people to maybe not...

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: Sure. But they do not understand that the way the gazebo works is because of what MCC puts into it in terms of expenses: about \$2K a week; also about \$15K-\$20K in equipment annually that's depreciated. The community has also asked us for a later start time for concerts; but we're not able to do that because 5 p.m. is hottest part of the day. If you move the start time any later, our staff is loading-up equipment when it is dark. Some of the feedback comments already tell us that the public would want a more-equipped facility.

Clarification by Ms. Schallern Treff: And the amphitheater will be easier for the community to use.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: Yes – and right now, the gazebo can only be used by MCC for professional events because we have the equipment. But the community doesn't have speakers and sound system.

Question: I have a point to make because I have read that July is the hottest month in the metropolitan area. So, could we perhaps in future years, consider the concerts maybe in late June and early September or October – and not in the heat of the summer?

Clarification by Ms. Schallern Treff: We do June concerts.

Opinion expressed: That's an excellent point. And it's only going to get hotter; and you must really provide the flexibility of programming in alignment with seasonality...

Opinion expressed: I'm fine with the letter; everything is good. You guys did an awesome job!

Opinion expressed: We heard at the last meeting, concerns about the parking situation by local neighbors – regardless of the number of parking spots – of people parking in the neighborhood to the detriment of those homeowners. So, I think that needs to be reflected here in some way. We can't just dismiss it by saying "MCC has ____ parking spots."

Comment by Chair Zamora-Appel: I was there on Sunday and the parking lot was practically empty. Obviously, people are choosing to park elsewhere.

Opinion expressed: We have this parking issue and the noise issue; and these are, frankly, anecdotal. It could be anecdotal from quite a while ago. The challenge is: we can't address those directly. Those are not things we can quantifiably make an argument FOR or AGAINST. Therefore, how we tried to write the letter was: "MCC Governing Board is cognizant of these issues." And this is what we've been informed by staff about this. That's our position

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: We can put in things such as: hiring an off-duty police officer to station in that area and not have people go into the neighborhood at all to park.

Question: In the future, could arrangements be made to use the parking garage across the street? Maybe that's one way to address the situation.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: Yes; but we should say generally: "We will work with neighborhood organizations..."

Opinion expressed: We put that as provision in the letter – that that must be addressed.

Opinion expressed: We can say: "We are cognizant of this issue and we will look for alternative solutions." Something along those lines.

Question: Isn't that in our first paragraph: "We think this is only successful if we address the sustainability and the traffic..."

Opinion expressed: You're right – we talk about addressing traffic flow. But other board members, who are relatively new to this effort... Let's just put it more clearly or be open to re-wording that.

Opinion expressed: I like the letter. The only comment I have now is that the opening line makes it sound like the MCC Governing Board only supports three things in the whole plan. That's probably not the intention that we want to emphasize – only support for three specific aspects.

Opinion expressed: I think Barbara put that in. But I actually like talking about the vision vs. the specifics. Do you feel strongly about keeping that first paragraph?

Comment by Chair Zamora-Appel: It gets to the point of what the letter is about.

Opinion expressed: "... supports the redevelopment plan, in particular..."

Opinion expressed: Yes – because we want the park to be redeveloped. But we want to focus on these particular aspects.

Opinion expressed: Yes – and I want to survey the crowd. The other thing that struck me is that we've written at the end of the second paragraph: "We support the plan as long as FCPA can develop the facility." What troubles me there is that it's like: If they don't do this, we don't support it. Which is not actually true. We can "encourage" that. But I don't know how to say it.

Opinion expressed: We can change it to say: "We're confident that it will be developed consistent in a way that respects..."

Opinion expressed: I edited the word "sanctuary" because it had a religious overtone.

Opinion expressed: I will try to incorporate everything tonight and put it back on GoogleDocs. You all have until tomorrow to make any comments. Once that's done, I will distribute it to everyone and Ms. Novak will take that text and put it in the right template.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: If the letter goes out by 2:00 or 3:00 p.m., we can get the press release going. Friday is not a great day for press releases. If you give us the final letter, we can have it ready for Sunday.

Question: Can we do a vote now – have a MOTION?

Comment by Chair Zamora-Appel: Yes – we are going to make a MOTION on the letter with a caveat that there are not going to be any significant changes to this letter. The only changes are the ones that we just discussed and maybe some grammatical copy-editing. But in terms of the actual letter's voice, I think we are in a good place. It does include what we all wanted. I believe we are ready to put forth a MOTION that accept the letter with the agreed-on changes and final edits.

MOTION: To accept the letter DRAFT with the minor edits and releasing it tomorrow.

Unanimously approved by all seven Board members present.

Abstained: Ivy Chen; Max Blacksten; Maria Foderaro-Guertin; Bill Glikbarg

Comment by Chair Zamora-Appel: Thank you everybody. And thank you for the collaboration on this letter. It was not an easy task. Rasheq did a lot of work. Comment by Vice-Chair Post: Absolutely! Thank you, Rasheq.

Comment by Chair Zamora-Appel: And I think this is going to give us the talking points and the messaging to do this. We only have until July 30 – so there's not a whole lot of time. So that give us two weeks from tomorrow.

Survey at Sunday concert (July 18):

Question: So, what's going to happen at the concert?



Clarification by Executive Director Singh: We had talked about giving people a copy of the letter and saying they could edit it if they wish. And if you don't want to edit, you can use these talking points and send them as-is. I want to see what you all think.

Opinion expressed: I haven't been to one of these concerts yet; I'm hoping to attend this weekend. Are there opening remarks by someone?

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: Yes – very short. I support sending the letter because MCA has been very active and has put signs up in the park: “Don't pave our parks.” They are not allowed to do it; but we can't take it down because we are not FCPA staff. So, everyone coming into the concert saw the sign: ‘Don't pave our park.’ Which makes it sound like they are going to create a paved amphitheater. But the amphitheater is complexly open and green space. The other organization has been very aggressive.

Opinion expressed: Sarah Schallern Treff can set the stage; and then the questions can be more neutral. “Hey guys... do you love the outdoor concerts? And then people will start clapping! Wouldn't you love to have a bathroom facility here?). She can set that stage... and then the questions can follow.

Opinion expressed: Or... maybe the other way to do this is have the letter. Have a QR code that you can either show or hand-out. If we could get it set-up, could you put it on a music stand or something: take your phone to link to the website for a statement of support written by the Governing Board. If you agree, please fill it out and it will automatically get sent to the right people. That's what I was going to do.

Comment by Executive Director Singh: I don't know if it will be a QR code feature. But if not, I can check into a few iPads that people can use.

Opinion expressed: I think that letter is too long for people to read.

Comment by Ms. Novak: Personally, I don't think you should be sending it as anything other than as a .pdf. People should not be able to pick-and-choose pieces of it.

Opinions expressed: This is actually a good point because I was thinking about that too. You're absolutely right – the letter is too long and people won't read it. And if they do read it, they will find something they don't like about it. Instead, if that's something that you guys could condense to what's appropriate, and we can approve that. I want a set of talking points that people can write. Yes. It's almost like a form letter, built out of the letter with key points: “We are writing in support...” I can share what I've started working on this afternoon and maybe Sabrina and Daniel can make it better. And, then Sarah, your job is to get people to go that website and send their comment. The goal is: flood the peoples' mailboxes with it; 100 people who hit that in support. Because that's exactly what MCA is doing right now with their campaign.

Question: Could we do small postcards with the five key messages and then a QR code that could take them to the longer document?

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: I don't know if a QR code will work. But we can create the five messages. We are using a website called “Network Action” and they don't use a QR code.

Question: I'd like some clarification: So, the point of the letter is to garner support for MCC Governing Board's position - not to collect comments? Yes – exactly. That's correct.

Comment by Chair Zamora-Appel: If we were two months out then we could be using that and use those metrics for the letter. But because we only have two weeks of the comment period, then the talking points would be taken out for the press release. The press release itself could be the one of the documents we could be sharing, as well. And hopefully this will also garner support and interest from the press and there will be other articles that will be written on it.

Opinion expressed: That why we held a Special Called Meeting two weeks ago – which was open and publicly announced to everybody And some board members even spoke with their comments. So, the idea here was: We're reaffirming what already exists. The dialogue has been: let's take the amphitheater out. Our position is: let's make it better by taking into account the feedback that we received from the community. That's how we tried to argue it.

Comment by Sarah Schallern Treff: Here's what I need: a script for Sunday and some directions. Are people coming to walk around with QR code? How is this going to work?

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: I can help and work with you on that. Some of the board members will be there.



Maybe you can give us some iPads; and if board members have iPads, bring them too! We will print out the QR codes and have them on a little card that people can take home.

Question: Is she allowed to say that as a member of the MCC staff? Or does it have to come from us as board members? Could Chair Zamora-Appel have five minutes to speak to the crowd?

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: It would be better if a board member does it because we are county employees. Any of the board members can do it. Please meet up with Sarah Schallern Treff at 4:45 p.m. by the stage to prepare. And we'll have iPads or little business cards with the MCC logo and QR code: "Support your McLean Central Park."

Barbara, Lisa, Rasheq and Suzanne all said they would try to attend the concert on Sunday.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: Now that you have an official statement, you can move forward on social media. Wait for that. Once the e-mail is sent to FCPA Superintendent, then you're fine.

Opinion expressed: I'm glad we are going to have that FOIA training coming up, so we will really know how to do it.

Clarification by Executive Director Singh: As board members, you will probably always get requests for personal meetings with individuals. Please always just re-direct the public to the next upcoming board meeting's "Public Comment." You shouldn't have people meeting you in your homes or café's. It breaks your privacy. And also, we don't want people to think that someone has influenced a decision of the board based on your personal friendship.

Clarification by Ms. Novak: And also keep in mind that we have the Governing Board committees. We haven't even started the committee meetings. Those are the disciplines where we move up various ideas for larger consideration. So, that's where the groundwork starts – at the committee level. Keep that in mind, O.K.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Zamora-Appel thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted – Holly Novak, Executive Assistant to the Governing Board