

**2022-2023 MCC Governing Board
Special Called Meeting
March 16, 2023 6:20 p.m.**

MINUTES

- Board Members present:** *in-person:* Barbara Zamora-Appel - Chair; Lisa Mariam; Rasheq Rahman; Melanie Sletten; Sarah Tran; Charlotte Loving; Bill Glikbarg; Anna Bartosiewicz
- Board Members absent:** Shivani Saboo; Ari Ghasemian; Kristina Groennings
- MCC Staff present:** Betsy May-Salazar, Executive Director; Sarah Schallern Treff; Catherine Nesbitt; Ashok Karra; Joe McGovern; Holly Novak; Jennifer Garrett; Mike Fisher; Justin King; Sabrina Anwah
- Guests:** Jamie H. Loving; Paul Kohlenberger

CONVENE MEETING

Chair Zamora-Appel convened an in-person Special Called Meeting of the Governing Board of the McLean Community Center on March 16, 2023, at 6:31 p.m. Purpose: collaborative discussion among board members and staff about proposed updates to the DRAFT Strategic Plan, leading to next steps about voting to affirm the plan and moving forward with implementation in months and years ahead. The current DRAFT Strategic Plan has been available for public review on MCC website over the past several months. No changes to the meeting agenda were requested; it was adopted by acclamation.

OVERVIEW OF UPDATES TO DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN **remarks by Executive Director May-Salazar*

Focusing on the strategic plan is topmost priority for the MCC Executive Director, as communicated by the board. The current DRAFT is aspirational and thorough. An effective strategic plan needs full buy-in of the staff and must be easy to interpret. This DRAFT plan is solid; much effort has gone into the development process. The goal now is to make adjustments focusing on top-level aspects: purpose; mission; vision, values; goals; objectives; strategies, measurements and outcomes. "Tactics" are specialized details that fall below the top-level and will developed by MCC staff in the future. The strategic plan is to be inspirational and reflective of what we intend to do at MCC. Executive Director May-Salazar has worked with MCC staff over recent weeks to refine this strategic plan to be operational and relevant. Governing Board members will work ongoing in collaboration with the staff in development and fulfillment of the current and future aspects of this strategic plan. Key question now: At the high level, does it read as we want it to?

The following points were raised in discussion:

***clarity on referring to "McLean" vs. "Small District 1A-Dranesville" throughout the document**

Small District 1A-Dranesville is a complex, awkward phraseology; MCC's service area encompasses all of McLean as well as specific areas beyond McLean. The moniker should be clarified and defined early in the document

***"Learning" mission of MCC seems to be missing; this should be reflected as part of "invite discovery" goal.**

The taglines (under each goal) are aspirational and sound – informing key nuances of each goal. We can continue to refine and build under the goals through the taglines and perhaps also into the tactics.

***better order of priorities: put 'sustainability' items at the top, followed by 'good stewardship' items**

***use precise language referring to Fairfax County documents (One Fairfax; county environmental and energy plan)**

*** providing a "sense of community" is not the purpose of MCC – the purpose of MCC is only to inform and educate**

Some expressed that the purpose of MCC is to inform, educate and entertain – as an aside, it might create a greater sense of community. But 'creating community' is not the purpose of the community center and should not be part of this wording. Another way to express it would be: 'connection.' Executive Director May-Salazar likes the phrase: 'live... work... play... connect.' Connecting with people makes this a broader definition of what "community" is.

***the mission statement as written seems very long**

***substitute another term for “customer” – that word seems inappropriate**

Suggestions: “patron”... “stakeholders”... “participants are better words. The description could be shortened – ending at: “... through direct programming and managing facilities for the community...” However, specific feedback from the public was that MCC was intentionally built as a place for the community to hold their events and for community partners to have space for their events. This was a large part of MCC’s original mission statement. The task is to reference in this strategic plan document that our community partners are important.

***somehow differentiate reference to “Small District 1A-Dranesville” as our source of revenue through tax support while communicating that the audiences and users of MCC are broader (Fairfax County; DMV region population)**

Is there a way to recognize that the small tax district is the source of the revenue while also broadening the scope of who we see as our service area? The Alden draws audiences from all around: the tax district, Fairfax County, and Maryland. We must communicate we are willing to support all those audiences and build a sense of community for the MCC as not just ‘inside the tax district.’

*** ‘embrace best governance practices’ – unclear what that means; it is not specific enough**

“Governance” does not mean only the board role; it refers to governance of the entire organization and looking at the ‘measurables’ underneath the policies – such as having a thorough operating manual. We would need to build all these pieces around the way we operate and govern if MCC decides to seek accreditation.

SUMMARY: We will look at the term “McLean”... beyond McLean.. and how to effectively communicate the aspect about facility usage. The purpose clearly states – to provide a sense of community for residents. Everything in this document (purpose; vision; mission) is very tax district focused, referencing “Small District 1A-Dranesville” but with a caveat that ‘everyone is welcome.’ We must be conscious of the MOU legal documentation which specifies that MCC is for Small District 1A-Dranesville. While the base purpose of MCC is our local community, yet throughout this strategic plan there is also a larger message of surrounding communities.

Recommendation by Executive Director May-Salazar: Focusing on first three (purpose vision, mission) is a good starting point. Those will stand on their own (mission statement will be posted on the wall –you want it to stand by itself). Perhaps we don’t have to refer to the tax district in all three levels of this plan. The document can have a simple explanatory line throughout to explain the tax district distinctions.

Observations & feedback from youth board members:

***the plan as written lacks mention of “teens” or high schoolers.** It does reference ‘all residents’ of McLean tax district. However, in including teens on the Governing Board, then it is also worth mentioning/highlighting the word “teens” somewhere in the document.

***the word “community” is understood differently by younger vs. older generations**

Students talk about how communities are people with ‘shared’ experiences (a club is a community; everyone in the same English class = a community).

***the word “discovery” is broader** – it is definitely learning, but also ‘discovery’ for participants in activities. Such as: ‘discovery’ for board members - everyone learning more about MCC and new ideas we can bring in to MCC. “Discovery” is a good word to encapsulate that goal. Executive Director May-Salazar suggested perhaps another objective under it to clearly express that concept, such as “reaching new communities” – we added the word communities and ‘population’ for that clarity. Throughout the plan, we are not specifically identifying any age groups, so there are areas to add a teen segment (and all such categories: seniors; children).

Recommendation from MCC staff member, Ms. Novak: The beauty of a good plan is that it represents a basis (beginning) and it also contains a future that can be defined forward. In building this out further, we don’t know today exactly what that will look like... but it offers a roadmap to develop different components in the future. You want to envision the strategic plan with versatility: as having a current view but also a future perspective.

TIMEFRAME: *What is the intended duration of the strategic plan? 3 years? 5 years? FY2023-FY2025. Will focus be on the top three priorities for next year and the next three priorities in the following year? Or will it all be concurrent?*

We look at all the goals at once – and that becomes our direction. Then we start to look at ‘layered’: What are we already doing that we can identify? What can we do in this next year with the budget that has already been approved a year ago? We are not starting from zero at this point – we’ve already started several of these things and it is reflective of changes that were underway. We are stepping into this as a movement: looking the specifics and goals we’re going to be working on in FY2024. In planning FY2025, we will start to build that out, and then FY2026 and FY2027. Every five years, it is recommended to review the strategic plan against how we have done (cycle of review/modification.)

UPDATED SIGNAGE: Executive Director May-Salazar’s goal for updated signage is to work on that for MCC 50th Anniversary (making sure it is put into the budget).

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS: Within the FY2024 budget as approved, there is room to focus on many of these things. MCC staff will begin defining a sequence and what makes sense toward these goals. We will start developing what is in the annual plan for FY2024 that we feel relates directly to these goals. We must consider staffing: Do we need to modify the things we are prioritizing? Do we need additional staff? We must think through all such future ramifications even while there are things we can start to implement immediately. The strategic plan will bridge FY2024 to FY2028 – a five-year plan. FY2028 will be the end point of this strategic plan.

NEXT STEPS: Chair Zamora-Appel stated she would like to have a vote on this at the April 26 Regular Meeting. Executive Director May-Salazar plans to synthesize tonight’s input and make recommended changes. Executive Director May-Salazar will present at the March 22 meeting next week an update about the few suggested changes based on today’s conversation. She will then prepare an updated document as a pre-read for the April 26 Regular Meeting that will be distributed to the board sufficiently ahead of the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Kohlenberger:

I will comment just on this last conversation; I hate to belabor the point. According to what you guys are planning, you will have approved this document before any member of the public will be able to testify to its virtue or vice. You will have voted on it at the April board meeting, at the end of which, as is now, you will have a public comment period. So therefore, before any citizen, stakeholder, patron, renter (whatever we want to call them!) will have an opportunity to speak to you as I am now, this document will have been approved. I just want to make you aware of that. Are you O.K. with that? If you are O.K. with that, then you are O.K. with that.

Response by the Governing Board Chair: The document that Betsy May-Salazar received from us [DRAFT Strategic Plan] was approved last year. Remember, there was a lot of public comment and feedback... there was a survey. What Executive May-Salazar has done now is to streamline to present it in a much more concise way: removing tactics... but there are very few other changes. So, the public will get a chance to see it as a pre-read.

Paul Kohlenberger continued:

O.K. – what I’m saying is that you did not officially approve it. And furthermore, that this has been a dormant issue entirely out of the public eye for close to a year. So, I think it’s worth an extra month is the point I am making. Is it worth approving it through narrowly in April and pushing it off? But again, that’s my opinion; now I’ll be quiet.

Chair Zamora-Appel thanked Mr. Kohlenberger. She asked if anyone else from the public wished to make a comment. No one else spoke up.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chair Zamora-Appel thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted – Holly Novak, Executive Assistant