



**2022-2023 MCC Governing Board
Programs & Outreach Committee
May 31, 2023 6:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

- Committee members present:** *in-person:* Anna Bartosiewicz – Chair; Lisa Mariam; Charlotte Loving
Ari Ghasemian; Melanie Sletten
- MCC Staff present:** Betsy May-Salazar, Executive Director; Sarah Schallern Treff, Performing Arts Director; Holly Novak, Executive Assistant; Sabrina Anwah, PIO; Catherine Nesbitt, Special Events Manager; Matt Hockensmith, Special Events Assistant Manager
- Guests:** Laurie Wallace; Laurelie Wallace

CONVENE MEETING

Chair Bartosiewicz convened a meeting of the Programs & Outreach Committee of the Governing Board of the McLean Community Center on May 31, 2023, at 6:37 p.m. It was open to the public attending in-person and was audio-recorded. No changes to the agenda were requested; it was adopted by acclamation.

MCLEAN DAY RE-CAP

We had an exciting time at McLean Day! This is an opportunity to share additional thoughts or reiterate any points.

Executive Director May-Salazar said it was beyond her expectations. She was very impressed with how well everything was run and the enormous amount of work leading up to the event. Seeing the radios, golf carts and the joy on the faces of the staff was great! She visited many exhibitor booths - an excellent opportunity after many months of learning about each community group, to see them all present and have a chance to interact. Food trucks were great!

*Friday night rides were amazing with an enormous number of teenagers having fun! Suggestions for improvements: more staff presence; more security.

*Election/candidate tents: There is no need for us to tell the candidates to come as early as 7:30 a.m. on Saturday. We can ease up by announcing set-up for the candidates to be at 9:00 a.m. Chair Bartosiewicz observed the early morning set-up with the candidates. She loved helping with the election and appreciated that opportunity to see that level of detail. The staff was so prepared! It was awesome.

*Community Stage – get applications out EARLY! Many lessons learned. We will put the applications out now for next year and advertise in Fall Program Guide. We had an awesome meeting with community leaders to select the performers– and then half of the acts chosen said they would not be in town. Communicating with teens is difficult.

*Community Stage – split into two separate shows (to accommodate all dancers/parents watching): It was packed for the dance classes (recital); but it was not an optimal experience for individual families who came to see their kids perform. We will split it into two shows next year so all parents can have an opportunity to watch their kids perform.

Summary by Catherine Nesbitt: It is a team effort: everyone who works at MCC and serves on the board are ‘ambassadors’ – being present and talking to people. Matt Hockensmith and Asma Sarwary did an amazing job. Everyone puts in 100% to make it a good event. It’s always a push to hurry and get it set up, then make sure people are having fun, and then hurry up to get it broken down before rain. Everyone did a great job! A vision statement that was written in 2014 for McLean Day: “To create a comprehensive and professional produced event that is fun, safe and intriguing while positively connecting McLean.” McLean comes together on this day – despite your political



or religious or other differences, everybody is side-by-side saying “Hi” and participating. It’s the one time in the year that people do that. It’s neat! *Summary by Matt Hockensmith:* He has been working on McLean Day since August and was excited to see it come to fruition. Record attendance on both days; good weather. Once you see everyone smiling and offering something for teenagers to do, it’s really fun. Thank you all for what you did to be a part of it. I’m happy that everything went well.

Summary by Chair Bartosiewicz: You could feel the energy and it was well-coordinated (not chaotic). She is amazed by how much work all MCC staff does. It’s truly amazing and thank you very much for putting your best foot forward – it definitely paid off. **As the board is the ambassador for MCC, McLean Day is also an iconic event for MCC. If done right, it peaks the public’s interest to come to our physical location.**

***Attendance:** Our estimated attendance was 9,000 on Friday and 10,000 on Saturday. It’s hard to do an actual headcount for McLean Day because about 800 people come through garden loop, people come through Nathaniel Lane, come through the path, from the soccer field off of Chain Bridge Road. This is consistent with 2019 numbers. *Comment by Matt Hockensmith:* On Friday it could have been even more. For the people who were there, it seemed to be more crowded and condensed on Friday night. We estimate it was almost twice as long (2 – 10 p.m.) vs. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. It may have seemed more condensed and crowded on Friday night because there was no exhibitor area.

***ribbon-cutting & media coverage:** *Comments by Sabrina Anwah:* For the first year since pandemic, we were able to get the *Gazette* to come out for the ribbon-cutting and the Saturday evening. We had two covers on the local newspapers. The Information Tent ran smoothly – everything was well run. It was the ‘best ever’ McLean Day.

Compliment by Catherine Nesbitt: Board member Melanie Sletten was there at 6:00 a.m. to manage the keys that went out to golf carts and radios. She has done this for several years. Every McLean Day, Melanie Sletten comes and helps in the Command Tent. Thank you!

***more options on Friday night:** Catherine Nesbitt would like to see games on the field (something in addition to the rides) for the teens. It was a record turnout; we had more ride sales on Friday than on Saturday. Also, McLean and Langley prom was on Saturday (May 20), as well as year-end parties for Cooper Intermediate.

***a ticket booth in the small ride area:** Next year we want to add a ticket booth in the small ride area – that was missing this year. We had only one ticket booth total in the large ride area and constant lines in the kiddie rides. The vendor was short-staffed, which may have had something to do with the lines forming. Charlotte Loving was in the election area (candidate tents) and had people approaching her to ask where the ticket booth was. Some thought they could buy tickets from the candidates – people thought the candidates were the Information Table. **Catherine Nesbitt personally had a lot of people asking where to get tickets; that indicates that it wasn’t clear. There should have been more notice about where the tickets are. They had a lot of online sales (up until the moment it opened). Friday – online was up until 2 p.m.; on Saturday, online was up until 10:30 or 11 a.m. They had a lot of online sales for weeks before. This method is catching on.**

PUBLIC HEARING ON FY25 PROGRAMS & SURVEY RESULTS **a summary document was distributed*

We have comments generally from the Public Hearing on FY25 Programs. We need to work on getting more responses: we received 19 responses. Everything will help inform the fall survey – it will help us drill down on future programming and how it ties into the strategic plan.

Consistent theme: Be visible (that ties into the strategic plan). In general, the people who responded were happy with what MCC does. It’s no surprise that the large community events for all ages are most-attended and most visible. Satisfaction is pretty high, overall.

What do people actually come to? That will be an important part of what we ask in the fall. Not – “What would you like to see?” (*theoretical*), but rather- “What will you come to see?” (*actual commitment*).

Most popular potential programs – a few were taken from other public hearing comments from years past. The most popular were: gardening programs and instruction; community projects addressing environmental sustainability. These could combine with the 50th Anniversary commemorative planting. Also, classes and lectures on environmental sustainability. This is a core value for MCC and for the community.

Offering alcohol at events! That’s second-most popular suggestion. We will explore having outside organizations sponsor alcohol sales.

Be visible (promotion) – How do people prefer to learn about events and classes? A huge majority hear through e-newsletters. Also e-mails to people who have bought Alden tickets in the past. The second highest is from mailed brochures and postcards. Mailing of the printed Program Guide is coming back! We always see a jump in sales of Alden Tickets after the Program Guide is mailed. We need to do a better job of telling people what we do.

Improve format of the in-person Public Hearing: It’s intimidating to have the public hearing in McLean Room. It could be in Community Hall with several round tables on topics – people could come over and join-in with a staff member to facilitate a small group discussion. People would enjoy that and have a better turnout.

NEXT STEPS: FALL 2023 SURVEY

GOALS: *Summary by Executive Director May-Salazar:* The public hearing format is a time of individual people getting up to speak. But it results in single comments being presented. A goal of the survey is to be able to pull that input back in and start to create categories of types of programming to present (such as climate-oriented classes). We will also get into: What would you attend? We offered several programs for Earth Day that were not attended at all. It takes time to build a new program: Time of day? What is the audience looking for? The Youth Ambassadors are not interested in a class that meets for 10 weeks, but they would participate in a one-time workshop. We must know our audience. Even if it’s in the right genre, we need to make sure it is in the right format and time slot. **The goal of the survey is to have more structure to guide programmatic instruction.**

Lack of follow-up on past suggestions by the public is an issue:

Individuals have submitted suggestions in the past. Melanie Sletten would like to see those suggestions given and the staff should make an effort to explain why you can’t fulfill the person’s request. Example responses would be: 1. We entertained that idea but ruled it out. 2. We’d like to do it in the future but we don’t have the resources now. To not hear back frustrates people and they give up. **The staff needs to explain back to the public. Unless we connect all those dots, there are people left out who believe that their idea was not considered.**

Comment by Sarah Schallern Treff: In the PowerPoint we need to sift through explaining what we do with ideas that we sifted through. Maybe we need to put it on the MCC website – what we do with the incoming suggestions. Perhaps wrap a suggestion around a broader opinion.

Offer the survey at other local venues, with incentives to participate:

We don’t have a statistically valid sample – it should be at least 3%. It was difficult to get the response from the strategic plan. How much work do we put into the solicitation? How to collect it throughout the year? Many people filled out surveys at McLean Day because they got a T-shirt. We do a survey after every event. We will put questions in that tie back to the strategic plan. That is an audience which is already attending.

Comment by Lisa Mariam: More incentives would help to drive better participation. Get out of MCC building and go to Farmers Market and other places where the community is gathering. We have a list of ideas, including translating into different languages. Also consider having a QR code for parents who are waiting for classes. Going viral on TikTok is a survey method – fill out the survey and get a free donut! Enter a raffle to win something.



Comment by Executive Director May-Salazar: We will have representation at Back-to-School nights. We will be working over the summer to rollout the survey in the fall balanced with the Public Hearing in the spring. *Response by Sabrina Anwah:* Our partners produce festivals in the fall – we have iPads out to collect responses. We have been present at the Farmers Market; it hasn't been productive. We gave out MCC swag; we do make it fun and incentivize it.

Make the survey have adequate budget to be a statistically valid sample size:

Comment by Ari Ghasemian: We have to think about and budget for a statistical sampled polling (through the mail).

**Holly Novak mentioned that she has a market research background and will be assisting MCC staff in these efforts.*

Comment by Sabrina Anwah: Years ago, we hired GMU to do a phone survey. It was expensive and we still didn't get 3% response. We have that past report. We will send a postcard to every household to get people to participate in the survey. The survey we just did was quick – and we got 19 people.

DRAFT ATTENDANCE REPORT **Executive Director May-Salazar has developed a preliminary report to capture walk-in attendance.*

**Re-thinking what we consider our "attendance." The goal is to capture as close to walk in attendance as possible – counting individuals in programs each day (rather than counting people enrolled in 10 week course only once). Goal is to understand how many people are participating and how regularly.*

**Starting with April and going backward to do a YTD estimate for FY23.*

**Shifting the data – not by departments but my type of activity: all special events will be grouped together, all summer camps will be grouped together, regardless of department coordinating the program. It will be useful as we start to build it and understand where our participation is coming from and where our dollars are being committed. We will roll it out to the full board in the new fiscal year.*

Question: During Evan Bruff's tenure, there was a brief conversation about using geo-location data to track attendance. Did that idea ever develop any further?

There were some questions about privacy concern. A lot of places are collecting information that way – they were scheduled to come to the board meeting and then cancelled. We can have the conversation to find out more about it and see what we think.

Ongoing questions about space utilization. Is that something that will be shown on this report?

We will reestablish that conversation with Vice-Chair Rahman, which was delayed last year. Joe McGovern will present the process of how we schedule – the complexity of why we do things as we do... what the perceived concern is and potential solution. Executive Director May-Salazar has worked on compiling fees to get more transparency about fees posted. The idea of being able to see availability is much more complicated than it sounds. Executive Director May-Salazar is learning about all the fees and various categories of groups that rent and use MCC spaces.

BOARD ENGAGEMENT & PROMOTION OF EVENTS **list of upcoming events was distributed*

Chair Bartosiewicz encouraged everyone to review the list and participate as they are able. McLean Day was a great example of why board engagement and presence is valuable and important. It will be fun to get many board members to show up at the concert series on summer Sundays in the park.

July 1 Fireworks needs board volunteers – Saturday night at Langley High School; rain date is Sunday, July 2.

Tasks: greeters, handing out flags, giveaways at the Information Tent. It's a fun event – DJ, red, white and blue beach balls, space is decorated. Professional fireworks, food trucks. It is valuable for anyone involved with MCC to learn about safety protocols for fireworks.

Weather conditions: Last year we had a monsoon! Event had to be cancelled at the last minute. 7 tent tops were ripped off – it was a localized severe weather incident. CERT and police did a brilliant job. MCC staff were unbelievable. People had the impression that the fireworks went off after everyone left – the reason is because, if there are any unspent, they must be lit after everyone is gone. It was mandatory to shoot them off late in the evening.

Transporting fireworks that are set-up and damp is very difficult. You must have someone licensed to do that – you can't just load them in the truck and get rid of them. There are procedures in place to sweep the area after the event to ensure no unspent shells are left behind. Last year, cancelled due to weather, involved the assistance of the bomb squad to secure the area.



PUBLIC COMMENT

Laurie Wallace: My daughter Laurelie has been on the board. I want to talk about the SIA program. And I know you all have heard a lot about that because there have been comments made in the last two meetings. It is a wonderful program for those of us who have been living in McLean. I moved to McLean in 1975 which was a long time ago. Besides having an opportunity to bring my children to the children's programs, there really hasn't been a lot for those of us to still attend. This program, under direction of Caroline Conley, has been wonderful. It is a mix of exercise, telecommunications, cooking. It started with one person and has grown to 70 members. Unfortunately, and to our disappointment, Carrie Conley found it necessary to resign. I hope that whomever is hired to replace her will have the same vision, excitement and enthusiasm that she brought to the program, and to those of us who have not found a home at MCC for ourselves. Of course, there is The Alden Theatre. But this is an every week program that has been very exciting and has been very helpful to a lot of the seniors. Many of them live alone and this has become a social community in itself. I understand the program will continue for the next year, but I hope everyone will understand how important it is to us and how well it's been received by our senior community. The other thing is that we all got to know Carrie. I hope the new person will have the same vision and excitement that Carrie brought to all of us.

Laurelie Wallace: As a former MCC Governing Board member, I know this was a group of people who we had a difficult time figuring out programming for. There is a lot for young kids, mothers... there was bridge, Mah Jong and exercise. We are bringing in a new group of people we have wanted to bring in. As you look around McLean, there are so many people aging in place. You know how much I love MCC. I am happy that my Mom has found a love of being here at MCC. I hope you all understand how important that is. Thank you for listening to us. We used to allow Public Comment in committee *meetings; thank you for listening to us tonight.*

Comment by Executive Director May-Salazar: I love to hear how engaged you are in the program. It is amazing and I've enjoyed getting to know the members. There is a strong infrastructure; Carrie Conley reported to Erin Bieger and Erin reported to Mike Fisher. I have seen the benefit of such community programs. We have a very good plan in place: the program for Fall 2023 is strong – having more exercise classes. I met with participants already; and we will learn from the group about the type of person they are looking for in a leader. The position is being advertised next week. There is no expectation that SIA decreases over time. Chair Bartosiewicz had read aloud in the April Public Hearing on FY25 Programs six e-mails that praised Carrie Conley. **SIA has a strong following and a committed group of participants. There is full support of the program by board and staff and there is every expectation that it will continue. SIA is also cross-departmental because we schedule performers to come to SIA. All departments are behind it and we are all chipping in to make sure the SIA program thrives.**

OLD /NEW BUSINESS

Chair Bartosiewicz opened the floor to any matters of old or new business. Nothing else was mentioned as a further topic for discussion this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chair Bartosiewicz thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted – Holly Novak, Executive Assistant