



**2023-2024 MCC Governing Board  
Programs & Outreach Committee  
November 8, 2023 5:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

- Committee members ALL present:** *in-person:* Anna Bartosiewicz – Chair; Eleanor Ague; Sophia Bruno; Katie Gorka; Lisa Mariam
- Other Board members present:** Rasheq Rahman
- MCC Staff present:** Betsy May-Salazar, Executive Director; Holly Novak, Executive Assistant; Mike Fisher, General Programs Director; Catherine Nesbitt, Special Events Manager; Sarah Schallern Treff, Performing Arts Director; Sabrina Anwah, PIO
- Guests:** None.

**CONVENE MEETING**

Chair Bartosiewicz convened a meeting of Programs & Outreach Committee of the Governing Board of the McLean Community Center on November 8, 2023, at 5:31 p.m. The meeting was open to the public attending in-person. An announcement was made about audio-recording. No changes were requested to the Agenda; it was adopted by acclamation.

**MCLEAN DAY 2024** \*remarks by Betsy May-Salazar, Mike Fisher, Sarah Schallern Treff and Catherine Nesbitt

Beer garden/music: SATURDAY ONLY.

Catherine Nesbitt has been working on a new idea for a beer garden. A vendor has been selected for McLean Day (Saturday, May 18): a beer garden truck that also offers wine. Vendor has 501(c)3 qualification which would allow us to designate a non-profit to donate \$\$ to. This vendor has been in business for several years and is experienced. They are handling everything for liability and Virginia ABC licensing/permitting.

*Clarification by Executive Director May-Salazar:* People sitting at the beer garden are a natural audience for the stage which will provide high quality, enjoyable music. Our goal is not to increase attendance; rather, the goal is to enrich the experience. This will require a change in the stage location – we are working through all possible iterations.

*Background context about performers at McLean Day:* Large audiences for Art in Motion dance class recitals –a large amount of friends and parents. However, attempts over the last few years to present a ‘community stage’ have had mixed results with performers dropping out close to the day resulting in an inconsistent quality that did not draw a significant audience. We will again feature the dancers (expanding to 2 shows) and then feature professional party bands for the rest of the day. We already have some good local groups scheduled. The McLean Day stage should be reflection of the high caliber of programming that MCC delivers. McLean Day is often the only experience some people have with MCC; therefore, the stage music should be a reflection of the level of programming offered at MCC year-round.

Friday Night Field Games – FRIDAY, MAY 17

At the suggestion of a former youth board member, we are considering offering Friday night field games. Friday night is very popular: a record number of attendees in 2023 between ages 13-18 years; 90% high schoolers. Based on the growing popularity of the evening we are looking for more activities during the evening and places for the teens to channel their energy. We are taking into consideration what high schoolers and middle schoolers will enjoy. The field games will entail contracting for additional security presence in the field area because of more activity over in that space. Stewardship of the field is also a priority: we must be careful about exactly which sports equipment to introduce onto the field area.



OTHER IDEAS to enhance the Friday night experience:    *\*suggestions from committee members*

- Glow-in-the-dark games.
- Silent disco. We did offer that years ago. It has been very popular at OFC in the last couple of years.

*Opinion of youth board members:* 1. At the OFC it was fun, but you need to have your friend group with you to really have fun. 2. Depending on where it is located, if people were watching, I would be hesitant. It would also depend on the music. Live music can't be offered on Friday night because the carnival rides are so loud. Also, there is no lit area near the stage; we would have to bring in light towers.

- Large nose walking around – throw beanbags into the nostrils. Some people really liked it; others didn't!
- Hula hoops – with professional hooper
- Glow-in-the-dark beach balls (where kids can burn-off steam); Glow-in-the dark bubble balls
- Ultimate frisbee There is a high level of organization and team required. It's hard to be spontaneous.
- Disc golf Not appropriate because those discs could actually cause injuries. In May, sunset is at 7:30 p.m. and we shut down the rides at 9 or 10 p.m. Most of the day will be in daylight.
- Laser tag in the field (perhaps glow-in-the-dark). A lot of teens would enjoy that.
- Frisbee is popular. Also spike ball; hand jam.
- *Comment by Mike Fisher:* We will ask the Youth Ambassadors what they like. At "AP's Out Party" last year we had: axe throwing... wrecking ball (four pedestals and knock the individuals off) – it was only individual attractions.

VOTING: We are considering an innovation of adding voting to Friday night, with the teen candidates represented then. We have inquired to League of Women Voters to see if this is a possibility. We could have teens represented Friday night and adult candidates on Saturday > which would shrink the total candidate tent area to less of a big walkway of tables.

**ACTION ITEM:** This is pending; we will hopefully know the decision of League of Women Voters before the ENC meeting on Dec. 11 – as to whether they have the capacity to staff full voting (ADULT ballots & YOUTH ballots on both Friday night as well as Saturday.

**MCC ROLE IN COMMUNITY EVENTS**        *\*remarks by Betsy May-Salazar, Mike Fisher and Catherine Nesbitt*

We have received multiple requests from community members and organizations to spearhead community activities – such as the Downtown Block party and Community Parade and are trying to gauge the interest of the MCC Governing Board and to find areas of overlap with MCC current programs where programming can be combined.

1. Downtown Block Party: In recent years there has been much community interest in this idea. It would be for all ages and have alcohol as part of it. Not a civic showcase, but a placemaking event. It started with the McLean Revitalization group; now there is a new idea for it.

2. Holiday Parade (Winterfest): In past years, it was held on a Sunday in December; it did not come back after COVID. It was held at an odd time (Sunday at 11 a.m.) and it ended in a parking lot of Langley Shopping Center. MCC fielded one float – staff car with kayak on top; Teen Council walked behind a banner. The committee at that time was asking for MCC's participation (but not running it). Parade participants were several businesses and people with old classic cars. It was organized by individuals and they are looking for a new home for it. Executive Director May-Salazar has received requests from public officials asking whether MCC would want to take this on?

*Summary by Executive Director May-Salazar:* What is important to MCC? What do we hear from the community? How does this committee view this? How does this merge with what MCC already does? We are not considering these as additive programs but looking at ways to repurpose or combine with something that we are already doing.



These both are examples of things that are big asks for MCC. We would need to shift things in order to accomplish this.

*Clarification by Mike Fisher:* McLean 5K is a great example of a program that was going to collapse a few years ago until MCC stepped-in to lead it. We are at the edge of our resources of staff time and finding how to fit it into our current schedule. We need creative solutions to incorporate these ideas into an overall high level of events that MCC is already doing. Programming staff is meeting next week to discuss internal proposals for how to combine existing programming with these new ideas.

There was a wide-ranging discussion about various ideas being suggested:

1. Make parade part of the Winter Block Party and/or have it at BOTH locations (MCC and OFC)

*Question: Could parade be add-on to the Winter Block Party: walk through the park with lights and end up here at MCC for Block Party?*

Yes –we have thought about a lot of different things but haven't come together yet to discuss it. "Winterfest" is a new idea. Having Winter Block Party in January has varied between OFC and MCC; the conversation is ongoing about the ideal location. Potentially it could move back to OFC and happen in December.

*Question: Would it be too much of a burden to have Winter Block Party at BOTH locations?*

YES – potential concept being considered by staff: We could do the parade, the placemaking piece and even include alcohol block party idea and reserve both streets at OFC. Do the parade proceeding down Old Dominion and Chain Bridge Road and have Santa at the end - located inside OFC for pictures. That would incorporate the Milk & Cookies with Santa event we have here at MCC. We would shift the location to downtown McLean and hold the event before Christmas.

2. Have a Christmas Market *Question: Would you ever consider a Christmas market similar to European style Christmas markets?*

Yes – and we do envision an artisans market being the focal point of a downtown block party. Celebrate Fairfax would be a partner – they have been granted money to do an event in every district. Our Dranesville district has not yet utilized this available resource. This concept will be for next year (2025).

3. For McLean Central Park - Perhaps have a train... or a bigger light show.

4. A walking pedestrian parade or small vehicle parade. More walking... less cars. Then people can walk behind it.

Important factors to consider in decision-making:

1. Timing of this event will be impacted by McLean Central Park renovation project and proposed downtown reconstruction of Giant Food premises. The parking lots are usable now, but once downtown renovation occurs, those parking lots may not be available.
2. Envision it as a bigger, combined event:
  - a. With street closure around OFC, we could have music, reindeer parade, MCC antlers, Santa is there – maybe lead the parade, then pictures. Have cookies & milk.
  - b. Downtown Block Party could have some artisan vendors... music... beer... food... mulled wine. At OFC we could have Santa, Winter Block Party – have s'more fire pits; ice sculpture, amusements and silent disco in OFC concurrently.
3. Awareness that different organizations have different goals: (McLean Revitalization is trying to encourage development in downtown). Whereas MCC is interested in featuring OFC and we already have proximal streets that can be closed-off. We must ask: If we have a parade to what end? If the parade ended in this Block Party event, that makes it a bigger event. But we want to ensure that the Committee is interested in pursuing the parade component..
5. Figure out the optimum route in McLean for a parade:

*Question: Regarding downtown– where are they saying the "center" of McLean is?*

Discussion took place around various locations including: Elm Street adjacent to Listrani's – the store owners are not

interested in closing that street and do not want this event there; as well as new development talking place adjacent to Signet Condominium, with pocket-park, and MPA possibly expanding there. Current staff thinking on parade route is centralized around the Old Firehouse - line up in the alley by the Medicine Chest, then go down to Old Dominion, go all the way around and head back to the alley. It's all in the right lane – not closing any roads; as low-impact as possible.

6. Parades create a happy environment that unites and delights the community  
Executive Director May-Salazar has happy memories of Memorial Day parades where the whole community could get involved. Can we build that here? MCC could make this parade more fun, involving the community in a new way. We can advertise through schools and other organizations. A parade involves the entire community – to get the businesses out to have featured floats.

7. Timing of when to have a parade: *Question: Does the parade need to be in winter?*  
It does not however there is some historical momentum built around winter. We need to stay far away from [the massive effort of] McLean Day. Once you look at MCC's complex schedule parameters, there are limited options of what other times of year to hold it.

*Question: In December, do we run into the problem of too many other local activities competing for attendance?*  
Yes – but everyone is looking to have fun at that time of year. A Christmas Market would be in December; but the Winter Block Party was great because it was in January. The community appetite is big enough for EVERYTHING!

8. Feature options like caroling and involving the non-profit organizations and local churches; include a charitable component to the event.  
*Opinion expressed:* Of all the opportunities, I think the Christmas market (with or without parade) – having caroling, and so many possibilities of local businesses and organizations. There is also the opportunity for connection with non-profit organizations and churches. It could be a 'stuff the truck' opportunity. We could surely have a charitable component at the Block Party. All non-profit organizations need support throughout the entire year.

**CUSTOMER FEEDBACK SURVEY** \*update on progress TO-DATE by Sabrina Anwah, Mike Fisher, Sarah Schallern Treff  
We have rolled-out our marketing efforts: postcards, on our website; in e-newsletters; boosted posts on Facebook and Instagram. Info booths for the fall. Next steps include developing a flier to be sent to community groups and senior communities, as well as email request to all MCC class participants through ACTIVE registration system. We will do that as soon as the flier is ready. And we will repeat that again as a last final push.

256 respondents so far. This is 50% toward our goal of 500-700 respondents.

*Comment by Executive Director May-Salazar:* We will create an e-mail template that we can share with all of you with a link embedded that you can share out. The more we do it personally to get people to participate, the better.

Events: successful – engaging and talking to people. We also have the kiosk and are moving it to higher visibility location for better recognition by the public.

*Recommendation:* If all these people killing time here in the lobby would fill out a survey, that would be great. Or have someone walking around to engage and invite them to fill out the survey.

We have Constant Contact e-mail; we have until mid-January to have responses ready for March 2024 Public Hearing.

**COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH** \*update presented by Sabrina Anwah, PIO

**What's New...**

- **General MCC bus shelter ad** - Dolly Madison Blvd at Colshire Drive; displayed for 1 year starting 11/15
- **Winter Program Guide - in production**  
Includes information on Community Feedback Survey, 2024 Governing Board election and Public Hearing on FY26



Programs.

- **Website Development** Successfully transferred to new vendor Fionta. 1<sup>st</sup> maintenance performed 10/25. New P.O. will help us with *ad hoc* requests to build-out aspects of the site, such as the history timeline. Recent glitches have been fixed
- **Administrative Assistant position filled** Geneva Gray will begin work on November 14.
- **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Video and Timeline**  
Vetted video production companies  
Explored ways of repurposing 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary timeline.  
We are beginning to pull materials together representing 2000 to present.
- **Old Firehouse Center lighted sign** - will face Chain Bridge Road; now in design phase.
- **Banners on the fence @ OFC** Incorporating program banners at McLean Central Park & OFC

#### **Fall Program & Event promotions included...**

- Fall activities postcard with feedback survey appeal mailed.
- Outreach to schools for Afterschool and Youth Ambassadors programs.
- Photos and short videos produced for Monster Mash and Family Bingo.
- The Alden Theatre Fall postcard will be coming out soon (sent to tax district residents).

#### **OLD /NEW BUSINESS**

Chair Bartosiewicz opened the floor to any other matters of old or new business.

Nothing else was mentioned as a further topic for discussion this evening.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Bartosiewicz thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted – Holly Novak, Executive Assistant