



**2023 - 2024 MCC Governing Board
Programs & Outreach Committee
January 10, 2024 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: None.

MCC Staff present: Betsy May-Salazar, Executive Director; Holly Novak, Executive Assistant; Mike Fisher, General Programs Director; Sarah Schallern Treff, Performing Arts Director; Sabrina Anwah, PIO; Catherine Nesbitt, Special Events Manager

Guests: None.

CONVENE MEETING

Chair Bartosiewicz convened a meeting of Programs & Outreach Committee of the Governing Board of the McLean Community Center on January 10, 2024, at 5:35 p.m. The meeting was open to the public attending in-person. An announcement was made about the meeting being audio-recorded. The agenda was adopted by acclamation.

DISCUSS FORMAT OF MARCH 24 PUBLIC HEARING ON FY26 PROGRAMS

**An official notice goes out about the Public Hearing: incl. in MCC Winter/Spring Program Guide; Supervisor Bierman's office incl. in weekly newsletter*

Executive Director May-Salazar led a discussion toward new goals:

1. having multiple touchpoints to receive data for more robust gathering of information related to programs;
2. effectively sharing with the public what MCC does.

***Customer Feedback Survey results will frame the Public Hearing on Programs (overall context)**

For the first time, we will have Customer Feedback Survey results (survey runs through end of January 2024; 1,200 respondents expected). MCC staff will evaluate the data internally and develop a summary to present (first for Programs & Outreach Committee meeting on 3/13). That data will be presented as the first part of the Public Hearing: Here is what we've heard from people and here is some of our structure of planning moving forward now in line with the strategic plan. This will provide a framework for our programmatic direction. Followed by the public comment opportunity.

This will allow the presentation to be grounded in what MCC does – and what we heard from a large number of people. In the past, the Public Hearing on Programs has been a place for people to share their comments but without context, not really a 'hearing' on what MCC is planning.

***Enhanced Format**

A discussion took place about how to engage the public in more active discussion and create a less formal structure. The process of formal comment from the public at the podium is not warm and welcoming and does not encourage, nor is it intended to, create a dialogue.

Lisa Mariam referenced the strategic planning sessions, noting that she appreciated the opportunity to give feedback on the strategic plan in conversations at round tables (actually sitting and talking to people). Through discussion it was an open exchange; there were many great ideas. People heard a comment and then built on it and added their own take on it. It was fun and a 'community' feeling.

The current proposal is to start the presentation with a report on the survey results to show the breadth of customer participation and focus and then perhaps to have some discussion points around specific topics. This will be followed by the required public comment portion of the meeting.

*** Written public comments**

A discussion took place around the written public comments that are accepted in lieu of speaking at the meeting. Some people have questioned whether there is a need for the written comments to be read into the record, and it does not appear to be a requirement of the meeting. It is important to recognize the comments that are submitted in writing, but the proposal is to do that in another way:

- a. As of Monday, 3/18 – compile all written public comments received and share as a pre-read in advance. This might encourage people to attend if they are viewing the comments that have come in so far.
- b. Acknowledgement that additional written comments were received will be shared in meeting noting that they will be included in the Minutes record of the meeting.

***Room Set up**

There was a discussion around the possibility of a different seating arrangement with round tables where participants could circulate and focus on different topics. It was determined that this was not the right solution for the public hearing this year – that is a good format for strategic planning discussions. Perhaps in the future it could be envisioned this way where we are providing information regarding different program areas at different tables, in order to educate as well as receive comments. *Exec. Director May-Salazar, Mike Fisher, Sarah Schallern Treff agreed that we are not yet ready for a round table format (NOT this year).*

***Customer Feedback Survey results will provide an initial view of prioritization by the responding public**

Taking the information from the survey and reporting out on results will provide a broad view of our customer input. When we conceptualized the survey, it was to both educate on the programming we do and to start to narrow down the range of ideas we have heard, as well as solicit new input. Through the survey results, we can explain: these are the ideas that have been presented to us by the public and have risen to the top.

Summary by Executive Director May-Salazar: Because the survey is new (and hopefully it will become cyclical) we will do a report-out of some key themes and create focus topics to discuss as part of the Public Hearing. We won't know what those themes might be until we dig into the survey results.

Explanation of a “Public Hearing”: It is different than a board meeting, but similar in some ways. Also used for MCC's annual budget process. It is intended as an opportunity for the public to make comments. It is the public's chance to give information... and not a time for the board and staff to respond in the moment. The comments will be reviewed and responded to following the meeting. This has its place and value in the meeting.

This is separate from a presentation of the survey results and providing an overview of programming goals and soliciting discussion and feedback around specific topics that rose from the survey results. There is room and value for both aspects.

***Encourage wide participation –**

***send an invitation to people who filled provided email when completing the survey**

***invite frequent users as well as non-users to attend**

A discussion took place around soliciting participation in the public hearing. Each individual programmer would know of someone who participates in our programs very frequently. We can have those individuals come and contribute their opinion. The people we would invite would be those who use MCC services and would be very knowledgeable in that conversation and could provide some key insights. It was also recommended to encourage some people to come who don't use MCC services. Board members would be able to help with this effort. *(general agreement in the committee)* That has always been one of our struggles – how to reach those non-users of MCC.

***invite partner organizations (other groups who use MCC) to solicit their participants to give their feedback.**

People who are coming for *other groups'* events could be another source of participants in the public hearing: those who come to rentals and clubs held at MCC but might not be engaging here at MCC for other reasons.

***Meeting structure - Public Hearing on FY2026 Programs first (before other board business matters)**

It will be two-part: the “Public Hearing on FY2026 Programs” happens first (before the full board meeting convenes). So, people don’t have to sit through the whole meeting. Comments related to the Public Hearing on FY2026 programs will be heard in the Public Hearing portion of the meeting. (If they wish to make a general public comment, they will have to wait until the end of the full Board meeting).

***offer hospitality refreshments!**

Clarification by Mike Fisher and Chair Bartosiewicz: We have already begun publicizing the public hearing on programs; there are some required parameters, but we do have some flexibility within that to augment what we are doing this year.

1. We must allow people to speak.
2. We can take it from *pro forma* (comments from people getting things ‘off-their-chest’) and turn it into a more robust meeting.

Summary by Executive Director May-Salazar: These are some great ideas! This discussion gives us some direction. And we will really know once we dig into the survey data what possible topics will be want to focus-in on.

REVIEW ATTENDANCE REPORT **remarks by Executive Director Betsy May-Salazar*

This is something MCC staff has been working on in recent months – a new way of presenting our numbers. GOALS:

1. Attempting to count the people who are participating in our programs and at our events every day (number of people we are actually servicing). Closer to an actual walk-in headcount on a daily basis (not just the number of students registered for a 10-week class). It does NOT yet include other people who are here, such as parents who are waiting for kids in classes, or passively seated or interacting in the lobby for other reasons. For that kind of data (which is also hugely valuable), we will be looking into the idea of counting at the doors in the future. But this is a good measure of the participants in our programs.
2. It pulls things together in a way that makes sense – rather than separate measurements by departments. ALL of instructional... community events... OFC... performing arts... camps... rentals... MPA... youth. These figures show that over 100,000 people were served last year!
3. Monthly report: FY24 started in July 2023 and so far, we are at about 60K people. The goal is to have this attendance report in the Governing Board materials routinely to start gauging those statistics. Example: OFC after-school program – you can see we are experiencing a rebound. That shows robust improvement in terms of total kids who have come through this year compared to last year.

Q & A: *Question: In reorganizing it like this, did it give you any new insights or new details that were not obvious previously?*

For Exec. Director May-Salazar, it was a logical way to see all the camps together. The ‘specialty’ camps happening at MCC were lumped into ‘instructional’ – so we weren’t really counting them as ‘camps’ but they are really week-long camps! We can know how many kids we are reaching in all three types of categories of summer camps combined. Also, by putting all the Special Events together (regardless of age group focus or location), it shows MCC’s presence all over McLean. As the staff starts looking at this monthly, there will be more such fresh realizations.

SIA (SENIORS IN ACTION) PRICING **remarks by Mike Fisher, General Programs Manager*

Background: SIA is newish (offered for 3 years now). It has been very successful! We started off following a concept in Greenspring Village in Montgomery County, MD. We tried to model it to create more robust senior programming here.

Concept: membership at one price to have access to a myriad of programs to make their lives easier.

Dictated pricing: During Evan Braff’s tenure as Acting Executive Director, his big emphasis was making connections within the county. He envisioned that MCC would functionally be another “senior center” site within Fairfax County’s network of Senior Center system: when you buy one membership, you can go to any of their sites all over the county. It was a noble and aspirational goal, but not applicable to what MCC is and who our mission is to serve (McLean tax district residents). MCC would not be capable of accommodating someone from any senior center from across the county without prior announcement. There were a lot of things about that vision which wasn’t going to work for MCC, long-term. On October



26, 2022, a MOTION was passed by the Governing Board in an effort to match the pricing at other County senior centers. The pricing of SIA was dictated to mirror that pricing which was currently being offered for the senior centers.

Problem: The revenue is not the problem. The issue has been significant confusion among the senior adults about what they do and do not have access to, and what they are, and are not, signing up for.

SUMMARY: The price matching identically and being dictated to us, harms the SIA program. Our request for consideration is to eliminate the dictation of the price and let us come up with a price that suits the program, and the population, and specific needs here in McLean, and to differentiate it from the other Senior programs in the county.

Question: What is the difference between what you are proposing now and what was prior?

Current pricing = \$48.00 for in-district residents; \$100 for non-residents (year-long price in this current model).

We are not looking to change the pricing immediately. It is currently set for the year. We may ultimately change to be paid 3 times a year (seasonally) in line with our other class schedules. The goal of this motion is to regain the ability to change the pricing and to not have it be identical to the County senior programs -which is causing confusion among patrons and county seniors.

Question: Do people just show up for activities since they pay once per year? Does it create a problem that you're not able to control – such as where too many people are showing up?

Yes, we have come close to this problem. In Mah Jong for a time, we were scrambling to add seats; so far, we haven't turned away anyone. We have added additional opportunities for things we notice are building. Example: fitness is very popular – we started with chair-based yoga and everyone loved it. Now they are asking for mat-based yoga because they are stronger! Now we are starting to increase the difficulty and offer a class for more advanced, while still having a beginning class offering. As our offerings have grown and become more diverse, we have managed to avoid overcrowding. But at some point, if it continues to expand, we will have to make some hard decisions. Our new Senior Coordinator, Samah Habayeb, is wonderful. She is sending e-mails and doing Sign-up Geniuses to manage all those people behind-the-scenes for those things we know will be popular – to try to avoid someone coming and being turned-away or upset.

***managing overall pricing as a 'club' while trying to balance high-participation/high-interest offerings**

SIA participants buy the membership through ACTIVE but most of the offerings are “drop-in” in style – we're publishing a schedule and they come to it (year-long membership fee). If we know a particular session is going to be 'hot' (high interest) then we will do a special Sign-up Genius for that.

Clarification by Executive Director May-Salazar: SIA is essentially a 'club,' where you 'join' it and we manage the programs within it. We've given the new coordinator time to acclimate; eventual conversations will be: What do we do as SIA is growing? We must start making some decisions on size. What we don't want is for the room capacity to dictate the number of people who can be in the group, and that therefore, we are not accepting any new members.

***confusion about pricing & exactly what SIA is**

The purpose of this [DRAFT MOTION] is to get away from confusion and let us price SIA as we do everything else.

We have had multiple people requesting refunds... who signed up here thinking they were signing up for the whole thing (Fairfax County Senior Centers)... or vice versa - showing up unannounced. What SIA is doing is not what those other Senior Centers are doing.

***concern about not making SIA pricing prohibitive for those with limited income (compared to Arlington Co.)**

Comparing MCC to an entire county (Arlington Co.) is a poor comparison. Arlington has an entire senior division and a myriad of sites that they can support, while MCC has one staff member and a smaller program. It is not a fair comparison.

***financial assistance is available**

MCC has financial aid available – if people have trouble making that pricing, we will offer financial assistance. We are never going to price anyone out of the program – we always have the scholarship program available in the background for anyone who needs it. SIA has a dedicated staff member that the group has developed a strong relationship with. If someone needs financial assistance and is a bit embarrassed, there is that one-on-one relationship where they can say they are having trouble.

Summary by Mike Fisher: It's not an issue of MCC needing any more revenue from this group – SIA will continue to be one of the more heavily-subsidized programs in this facility. But no other program at MCC is dictated down to the exact dollar amount what the price will be. And the reason why it was changed no longer supports where the SIA program is today and where we're headed. We appreciate what they were thinking about at the time; but we've moved on from that concept and this pricing structure is not serving us anymore. Depending on what we want this program to look like, with the number of things we've added to it, it is a pretty significant cost to MCC if we are adding multiple classes. MCC is spending \$10-\$15 on every dollar the SIA program is spending. So, the value is phenomenal – SIA participants are getting an amazing value for little cost.

***SIA price should be \$50 exactly (to invoke \$5.00 senior discount!)**

Here is another point that has really aggravated the seniors: that the price is \$48.00 and not \$50! They want to pay more because when you hit \$50, then they would like to get their \$5.00 “senior discount!” So, then they pay \$45.00! (*laughter*) They wanted us to charge them \$2.00 more so they could use their senior discount. We are confident we are going to continue to serve the same amount of people. We are just trying to fix something that has created a problem.

Summary expressed by a board member: It sounds like you've had a lot of feedback from senior adults that they do not like the current pricing system and we need to make the change. *The MOTION was now ready to be presented for a vote.*

DRAFT MOTION (to be presented to full board on 1/24/24):

To eliminate public confusion and provide flexibility for future program growth and meeting the dynamic needs of a developing program, we move to rescind a previous Governing Board MOTION on October 26, 2022, which dictated the price of membership for SIA.

Approved by a vote of five: Sophia Bruno, Eleanor Ague; Katie Gorka; Lisa Mariam; Anna Bartosiewicz – all voting “AYE.”

At the next Governing Board meeting on January 24, 2024, Chair Bartosiewicz will present this MOTION as part of the report from Programs & Outreach Committee. It will be voted on by the full board > whether to codify.

DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION: FOLLOW-UP **remarks by Mike Fisher & Betsy May-Salazar*

At 12/6 Board meeting, Matt Colsia presented the opportunity of a new grant program (regional initiative) seeking young people to develop plans and concepts to try to prevent Fentanyl overdose deaths. He held this to be an urgent priority for MCC to champion because the dangers of Fentanyl affect young people everywhere. The opportunity was a competition within the school system where teams or individuals could submit a concept and win a prize (the deadline was imminent).

1. Because of fast timing, it wasn't something that MCC would be able to take immediate action on.
2. We recognized there are people within the community who are already doing programs like this. Safe Community Coalition has strong ties to the schools and has, for several years, focused on educating our community about mental health needs and resources, including drug abuse prevention. As an excellent partner to MCC, Safe Community Coalition is the logical local connection on this issue. Mike Fisher offered to consult with SCC about this urgent new priority being expressed by our board.

RESULT: We reached out to our friends at SCC to ask if they were aware of this initiative; they were not aware of the specific program mentioned by Matt Colsia. However, they made us aware of related issues they are already pursuing, including NARCAN training – and making NARCAN more accessible in the school system. We are working with SCC to offer this training at MCC. As the best course of action is to work with people who have strong knowledge and ties to the community, we felt the next step is to move forward and engage with SCC on this topic.

SCC is also interested in offering a program here on mental wellness (related to stresses of college applications) – SCC is proposing a future date and a speaker; we will determine how it will fit into our scheduling. We have a planned meeting with SCC to talk about other future topical presentations in conjunction with what we are doing at MCC. We also followed-up with Matt Colsia. On this issue, it seems to make sense: SCC is very tied to the schools, so they are an



excellent connection to facilitate.

PERFORMING ARTS UPDATE **remarks by Sarah Schallern Treff, Performing Arts Director*

We are expanding the foreign language film series from Thursday afternoons to also include Wednesday evenings.

Thanks to Lisa Mariam for coming to Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company master class. Many great shows are coming up, especially this weekend celebrating MLK: Michael Steele is speaking on Saturday afternoon. Calvin Earl – “Music of the Civil Rights Movement” performs on Sunday.

ACTION ITEM: Comp tickets are available for Gov. Board members. This is a big community event so we would love to see you there. Youth Ambassadors can also receive complimentary tickets.

January 2024 is packed: “The Never Too Late Show” starring Don Reed (an amazing performer). “Music + Literature: Murakami Music” chamber music concert coming up (solo piano). Lunar New Year celebration: Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company performance, vendors, artisans (cultural festival on February 4). Spring Show auditions in a couple of weeks (kids in tax district; middle school to mid-high school age). Macdonald Scholarship Competition application deadline - end of January. Categories: instrumental, vocal, dance, theater; three awards are given in each category.

ACTION ITEM: This would be good for the Youth Ambassadors to advertise.

Unruly Theater Project – teen professional improv troupe. Danielle Van Hook offered a workshop at OFC for SPARC. It was a great experience for everyone!

Recognition of Evelyn Hill (Patron Services Manager) - who is retiring in 10 days. We will miss her! Patron Services (Box Office) job description is changing because so much is done online now. Less responsibilities for in-person in the Box Office but more of an administrative role – including collecting and analyzing data. We want to emphasize target marketing and offering what people wish to see in MCC’s performing arts programming.

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH **remarks by Sabrina Anwah, PIO*

We are very busy working on promotions of upcoming events for Winter/Spring and now working on the Summer Camp Guide (registration starts 1st week of February!) Dave Craig has done a beautiful Olympic games theme on the camp guide.

50th Anniversary video and timeline: We were able to scan the old timeline – now we have digital files. We have identified the first people to be interviewed: Carole Herrick, Mary Anne Hampton, Glenn Yarborough, retired Dranesville Supervisor John Foust, Jane Auerbach. We hope to include Diane Alden; having a member of the Alden family would be great. Contracted vendor: Istrico Productions in Alexandria, VA.

Preparation for 2024 Governing Board Election cycle: legal notice in local papers. “Call for Candidates” – to seek people to participate in the election (coming out in the next couple of weeks).

Social Media toolkit: It was distributed last week and we encourage you to please share out these social media posts about upcoming events in your personal social media accounts.

Website improvements: We are working with the vendor on some improvements to fix kinks. We met with them last week to improve the “Visit Us” page and we also are working with Joe McGovern (Facilities) so we can improve the “rentals” section.

Printing source vendor: Each time we do a publication, we usually must go out for bids (which takes time). We found a company in Lynchburg, VA that does web-printing (a lot cheaper, more efficient). They did a great job on Winter/Spring program guide. We met with county Procurement and are hoping to be able to get a multi-year contract so that we can stop the process of having to go out and seek multiple bids every time.

OLD /NEW BUSINESS

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



3rd annual Winter Block Party (Saturday, January 6): despite the rain deluge, 820+ people attended! Chain saw ice sculptor was featured in the courtyard (MCC logo; penguin). The whole event was awesome: Sensory Room in McLean Room; firepits and s'mores outside in the rain! Youth sellers from the previous OFC Block Party from summer came back. Everyone enjoyed it! Staff did an excellent effort transitioning everything to indoors: spending the week prior preparing for the impending bad weather (making alternate plans). Sensory Room in McLean Room was excellent! There were bean bag chairs, weighted stuffed animals & portable cushions; clay (no mess or clean-up required), coloring stations with paper and scented crayons, bubble machines, lights off (dark – rain outside was visible through the windows). Adults and children were enjoying the environment and lingered for minutes/hours. It was a peaceful, dark, warm interior.

We eliminated the inflatable slide and pivoted to a giant light/bright machine – which was very cool! We also removed roller skating at the library parking lot. We adapted everything that was possible and converted some monies into alternate amusements/attractions. The Programs team did a wonderful job; several other staff members were present to help that day. It was fantastic!

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

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bartosiewicz thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted – Holly Novak, Executive Assistant