



**2024–2025 MCC Governing Board
Regular Meeting
October 23, 2024 6:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

- Board Members PRESENT IN-PERSON:** Kristina Groennings, Chair; Katie Gorka; Aaron Stark; Sonya Thott; Doug Jeffery; Ron Keesing; Peter Pin; Gloria Marrero Chambers
- Board Members PRESENT REMOTE:** *remote:* Michael Monroe (1st time remote; Arlington, VA – daughter’s achievement award)
Kathleen Cooney Porter (1st time remote; McLean, VA - illness)
- Board Members ABSENT:** Anna Bartosiewicz
- MCC Staff present:** Betsy May-Salazar, Executive Director; Holly Novak, Executive Assistant; Matthew Hockensmith, Comptroller; Sabrina Anwah, PIO; Mike Fisher, General Programs Director
- Guests:** Lori Carbonneau, Exec. Director – MPA; Jim Lawless (Friends of MCC; MCA)

CONVENE MEETING

Chair Kristina Groennings convened a Regular Meeting of the Governing Board of the McLean Community Center on October 23, 2024 at 6:32 p.m. It was open to the public attending in-person. No changes to the agenda were requested; it was adopted by acclamation. Announcement was made about the meeting being audio-recorded for purpose of Minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of September 25, 2024 Regular Meeting and Public Hearing on FY2026 Budget were reviewed. No changes were requested; accepted as written.

Approved by a vote of ten: Kristina Groennings; Sonya Thott; Katie Gorka; Peter Pin; Doug Jeffery; Michael Monroe; Aaron Stark; Ron Keesing; Gloria Marrero Chambers; Kathleen Cooney Porter— all voting “AYE.”
Anna Bartosiewicz was absent.

CHAIR’S REPORT **remarks by Chair Kristina Groennings*

1. Reiterating the priority for board members to “Be Visible.” There is so much going on here, so many great activities: PetFest, Trunk-or-Treat, The Alden performances (Judy Carmichael Trio –11/3; Adam Levine classical guitar – 11/17. MCC classes are awesome. I encourage you to get out and SUPPORT!
2. Phishing & SPAM e-mails coming to your county e-mail address: Don’t respond; don’t click on it. The phishing e-mails were very specific – mentioning people by name, impersonating Chair Groennings. Be careful; it’s very ‘realistic.’
Clarification by Executive Director May-Salazar: There is a mechanism to report it if you get SPAM. If it happens in your county e-mail address, we can ask DIT to assist. Chair Groennings will request DIT assistance.
3. Winterfest Parade – Sunday, Dec. 8: this is being organized by the McLean Revitalization Corporation not MCC, but we’ll participate as a sponsor. We would like to have a ‘presence’ from MCC – such as a float. We will reach out to the board to see who would like to participate.

ACTION: If anyone wants to be part of this ‘float-making’ effort, please inform Chair Groennings.

4. Special thanks to Lori Carbonneau and Nancy Sausser for a great tour of the “Sculpture Now” exhibit this evening upstairs in Emerson Gallery, and an explanation of the new exhibit spaces in McLean that MPA is opening up.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

**remarks by Executive Director Betsy May-Salazar*

Reflections on "The Remember Balloons" world premiere: It was truly lovely and very well-attended. **This is an example of experimentation for MCC: How we can be involved at the beginning of an idea and make that project possible.** The Alden technical staff facilitated a technical residency in Spring 2024, which is what allowed this performance to come to fruition. The joy and excitement was evident in the artists, author, and illustrator at the after-party. It was very special for our community to be able to participate and witness this world premiere.

***Significant community engagement:** workshops with the author and illustrator during the day at Dolley Madison Library and at MCC, as well as with the choreographer and his family. People attended who were very moved by the book and were coming specifically to see it. There was an after-party with cake pops and cheers! Throughout MCC interior spaces and in the workshops, there was opportunity for people to write their own memories on balloon stickers and place them on the window walls.

***Nuanced process in writing a children's book:** There is a 'curtain' between the illustrator and the author. Usually books are not written and illustrated in tandem: a story is written; then the illustrator is selected by the publisher. The illustrator is telling their own story – an artist's interpretation of what they see in the book. It becomes a whole other additive story. To create a dance performance based on the book takes the author and illustrator's interpretation one step further.

***Public benefit – gaining understanding in how to deal with dementia:** In the community engagement session, people spoke up: "Thank you so much for writing a book that brings joy to the process of dementia and aging." It was satisfying to recall amazing memories of my relationship with my mother as she struggled with memory loss: there was a different connection and a different joy. With memory loss, we could just sit and be together and not have to get into anything. We could just be silly! There are many layers to it; people were able to feel that complexity through the story.

We're excited to consider how we can continue to do projects like this – working with an artist to allow something to come to reality. And how to interweave that with our community so that both the artist and the community are getting something out of the relationship through direct creative process.

***Specialized promotional/marketing efforts = reaching "layers" of audiences, participants:** It was a huge, coordinated staff effort to promote the premiere. Two days were set aside for school groups. We reached out to senior citizen homes, dementia centers (small groups were brought in to see the first performance during Friday daytime). We were able to invite special guests: Fairfax County officials and Board of Supervisors; Lori Carbonneau (MPA), who viewed the performance during the day. All those layers really helped. Many MCC staff got involved, helping much more than typical, to market the performance and establish connections with the community. It all paid off! **We hope to model this promotional success in coming years: meaningful targeted marketing efforts > accomplishing effective advance.**

NEXT ITERATION: The original musical score is now on Spotify; it is by an amazing jazz musician. The show is traveling to several cities. Another version with full orchestra is being developed (kick-off in Spring 2025); the two different shows will travel simultaneously. Executive Director May-Salazar would welcome the performance at MCC with full orchestra!

Discussion:

***affirming the passion of talented MCC Performing Arts staff:** I just want to say "thank you" for the passion of the staff to bring it to production. I know you spent a long time working on it. Executive Director May-Salazar complimented Danielle Van Hook for shepherding the entire project. Danielle saw the vision of choreographer Dominique at various performing arts conferences and was able to pull all of that together.

***significance of hosting a world premiere at MCC:** It was the world premiere and from here it goes across the country! To launch it here was amazing! The production behind it - I know they had their own people, but it was all based on the work that everybody was doing here. So, it really was a 'showcase' for The Alden Theatre.

***topic of dementia brings people together:** It's a tough subject that brings everyone together.

***outstanding quality of the performance; artists expressing their creativity:** That was a lot of passion expressed by the author, composer, choreographer and artists. The production was fabulous! I didn't know people could dance like that with jazz! The quality of the performance was really remarkable.

***contributing significant public benefit: It's a nice example of we as a community with resources being able to help get something like this off-the-ground that can then help benefit many more people. That's a great thing for us to do as a community.**

**practical help for our inter-generational community to better deal with a difficult mental health issue (dementia): It was so helpful for all of us at all ages to find the ‘joy.’ It’s the conversation that validates emotions – since you’re not the only person going through this. Danielle Van Hook’s introduction gave permission for the audience to feel and share emotions: ‘You know, this might be tough and it’s OK to have emotions. It’s OK to laugh and it’s OK to cry.’*

***appreciation for our talented MCC Performing Arts staff: MCC contributes to the artist’s achievement of their performance vision!** In a glimmer of a conversation about this project, Danielle jumped in and said: What do you need? How can you get this off the ground? MCC provided what they really needed:

1. *A place to do a technical residency / workshop.* In MCC’s technical capabilities and staff’s professional expertise, there is huge value in that as to what the artists needed.
2. *The artists were asking: How do we bring the community to that conversation too?* In Spring 2024 they did a few workshops with different groups (leading us through exercises, reading the story, sharing memories and ways of talking/inter-personal connection). They worked with SIA, MCC staff, and with families who came in.

Another dance group is coming from Memphis for MLK Day - performing his speech. They are working with our dancers in our classes and they will be integrated into the upcoming performance. This is another example of how artists have something they are envisioning, and they work with the community to involve them into the production. Then those kids are able to put on their resume that they were in a professional production and worked with professional artists! **That’s a whole other way of looking at our programming: How MCC events can be integrated with the community.**

APPROVAL OF FY2026 BUDGET PROPOSAL

MCC’s proposed budget for FY2026 received extensive review in several meetings of MCC Finance and Capital Facilities committees during August and September. A ‘meeting-of-the-whole’ on September 4 (entire MCC Governing Board) focused specifically on FY2026 Budget. The public was able to observe and contribute feedback throughout the entire process: expressing comments at a Public Hearing on FY2026 Budget held on September 25, and an extended period of opportunity for written public comments continuing through October 14. Based on this thorough review of the proposed FY2026 Budget, the Governing Board is ready to vote on a MOTION to advance the proposed DRAFT MCC FY2026 Budget to Fairfax County.

MOTION: The Governing Board approves the DRAFT MCC FY2026 Budget Proposal as presented at the Public Hearing on September 25, 2024, and directs staff to submit this board-approved FY2026 Budget Proposal to Fairfax County on or before October 31, 2024.

Approved by a vote of ten: Kristina Groennings; Sonya Thott; Katie Gorka; Peter Pin; Doug Jeffery; Michael Monroe; Aaron Stark; Ron Keesing; Gloria Marrero Chambers; Kathleen Cooney Porter— all voting “AYE.”
Anna Bartosiewicz was absent.

Comptroller Matt Hockensmith’s outstanding work on the FY2026 Budget addressed all feedback received – presenting a comprehensive financial presentation that is logical and engaging to the public. The goal is for Small District 1A-Dranesville taxpayers to have a clear understanding of MCC’s financial and programmatic operations - to see the value of their tax dollars at work.

MPA UPDATE: EXPANSION IN DOWNTOWN MCLEAN **remarks by Lori Carbonneau, Exec. Director -MPA*

Thanks to Betsy for the initiative to arrange opportunities for staff and Governing Board [to view the sculpture exhibit]. We’d love to welcome you regularly throughout the year. Tonight, I will share a bit more in-depth about MPA, an update on our project in downtown McLean, and our ongoing collaboration with MCC.

McLean Project for the Arts was founded in 1962. We are a 501(c)3. We have operated in this space by way of MCC Governing Board and MPA’s board together through 1980’s and 1990’s. The initiatives were very much aligned about what the arts brings to the community. MPA has been fundamental in this building – we raised money to build the Community Hall; we raised money to build DuVal Studio and then to outfit and beautifully build-out the Emerson Gallery upstairs. We feel some real stakeholder grounding here, as well.

The continuum of art in DC is anchored by fabulous museum institutions downtown. On the other end of the continuum are

commercial galleries. The arts institutions downtown show from their collections: tremendous, world-class; generally, not by living people. And they basically display 3-5% of an entire collection. In commercial galleries, their business model is such that it must be saleable. MPA has a somewhat 'sacred spot' in that continuum. Because of MCC's support and the monies we raise, MPA is able to show the work of artists working today in our area (defined as mid-Atlantic: broadly -Wilmington, NC to Wilmington, DE; more narrowly - Baltimore to Richmond). In our mission and in our MOU we have a very strong commitment to show McLean artists. We raise money to do programming and have displayed the work of 4,000 artists! MPA is led by a board of 45 and an advisory board of 45. Our Board Chair, Pamela Danner, was on MCC Governing Board when MPA was invited in; so, we feel very integrated with MCC.

We have three elements of our operating mission:

1. exhibitions (6-8 during each year);
2. We are the partner to do visual arts programming (DuVall Studio) at MCC.
3. We have a very strong commitment to outreach called "MPA ArtReach."

It was started 30 years ago by the woman who still runs it, based on a similar program at The Whitney in New York. It's an opportunity to co-curate, with Nancy Sausser's predecessor and now with Nancy, a professional art exhibition curated with an eye to the Standards of Learning such that we can illuminate different parts of the curriculum for Fairfax County students. It started with FCPS; we serve about 2,500 individuals per year. It has grown to have a very strong component of Title 1 schools (MPA pays for Title 1 school buses), and individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities through the schools, as well as through partners like SPARC Solutions and ServiceSource (disability community). And also, with adults in public and private senior citizen communities. It's an excellent outreach program.

All of that is in the milieu of: How do you "build community" through art? ArtFest is a perfect example because of our status as a 501(c)3 and also because of our inclination: we are very much committed to being non-political, non-partisan and are very clear that we don't put 'provocative' work there. But we DO offer contemporary art, which is defined as: individuals who are living today - in this moment, working with the mediums, methods, messages and materials of today.

Expansion of MPA in downtown McLean: Ten years ago, we had our very first website; we didn't have a database. We had print newsletters that were sent out twice a year. Outreach was done through Rolodexes; and it was run by smart, very well-intentioned business staff, always in support of the professional exhibitions staff with curators. MPA has always heavily invested in curators. Over time, in order to carry on that work we have needed more of an infrastructure. We have built those skills. We also have grown in some important ways: 10 years ago we served about 350 students in DuVal studio; now nearly 800 students. We have carried on our exhibition programming and our outreach has grown tremendously. We had a huge inflection point with COVID-19, where we went from just focusing on students, to focusing on these communities who were desperately lonely. We had 250 people on calls through the week, going through exhibitions and going through materials online. The online part of it has slowed down, but the communities' interest is still there.

When MPA puts out a call to artists, we will get 200-300 artists who want to be in our shows. From a 'mission' perspective, there is a very strong interest to have more total wall space. From a 'business' perspective: it's very important to us to be able to build some operating revenue. We've doubled our classes, which is our basic source of revenue. When we started ten years ago, it was \$68K - \$78K per year. It will hit \$220K per year (which is awesome!) but our budget has grown from \$485K a year total to about \$1.2M. That's heavily dependent right now on development income. In any non-profit, you only have about 2-3 months of cash in front of you at any one time, which makes it very hard to invest; very hard to plan sustainability. Moreover, we can't offer any benefits to our staff. Therefore, this is an opportunity for MPA to have a 'sister site' where we have more wall space as well as opportunity for operating revenue: through having a café on site and through having a ceramics program to complement what is offered at MCC. It will also be a site where MPA can host events; we can sell art; we can offer hospitality – in a public space that is more comfortable.

The project was launched in 2018, first conceived of being at Clemijontri Park – the idea of an additional arts & education center. But after several years of work with architects, land use attorneys, and approval from FCPA... we never got a lease through Fairfax County Attorney's office. At about that same time, Paul Kohlenberger (president of Greater McLean Chamber of Commerce), suggested: "What would happen if you did this in downtown McLean?" He walked us through the space [at The Signet]. We realized this solved two big issues that we had at Clemijontri: MPA wouldn't own the land; it was

not in the middle of downtown McLean. We LOVE that this new location is ¼ mile from MCC – easy walking distance (especially if we get a crosswalk). It accomplishes the mission as well as extends it into an environment where we can build even more community. The project will have two galleries, a ceramics studio that will have both classes and membership (which is a natural part of a ceramics studio). From our perspective, it's interesting: ceramics studios in Reston, Alexandria and one in Arlington all have 200-500 person waitlists. Therefore, we feel pretty good about the demand. The advantage is that it's a "capacity utilization" phenomenon: you can actually make money when you're not teaching a class since we will have the capital equipment. It will have a beautiful outdoor patio and it is proximate to a ½ acre park. We have talked about how that will be programmed together. We're excited about it being a lovely complement.

Continued partnership of MPA and MCC: It's really important to me that I leave you with an understanding that the two galleries we're going to do at Signet are absolutely complementary with what is here. Our Atrium Gallery is great for showing an 'emerging' artist. The main gallery – which will be called the Asmine C. Escandra Gallery (in honor of one of our ArtReach artists who went on to become a professional artist) – will be ideal for one or two mid- or late-career artists who are more established. Emerson Gallery at MCC will be good for continued large shows with large numbers of people going through. The "Installation Gallery" will allow us to do light.

It's a joy to be part of the extended MCC community! I appreciated the wonderful statement of commitment to arts that Betsy shared tonight and has ever since she and I started working together. For ArtFest, we just walked MCP to get an idea of what the new footprint will be. Our artistic director Nancy Sausser was working with Betsy in these last few days on the public art jury. We love working with our teams in collaboration.

Discussion:

Question: When is it opening?

We anticipate this time next year - Fall 2025. We closed on the purchase on September 13, 2024. Within 6 months we have an expectation of getting the drawings through permitting and then it's about 6 months of construction.

Question: Are you putting in a café? Yes, we are putting in a café. At the Signet (new building) there are 124 residents; it was built as a commercial condo so it's considered 'mixed use:' 1 commercial unit + 123 residential units. This space has been vacant ever since it was built. It was sold to all those folks upstairs with the expectation that it would be a "white tablecloth" restaurant – yet it's still vacant (which has interesting implications for the property valuation). We sense demand upstairs and in the outdoor walking area for a café, and it will be part of what we do for hospitality for events.

Question: So, will the café be inside your space?

All the glass area is gorgeous, but horrible for showing art! We had to think it through carefully because you can't have that much light around artwork – it really affects how you install, as well as it would be deleterious to the actual art pieces. The gallery will be a type of 'geode' in the middle - enclosed by walls, with light control and sound control. To make the area outside that gallery attractive, the atrium area will be a café – with a kitchen nestled between it and the ceramics studio, which also has access to outdoor light.

Connection with MCC: *Clarification by Executive Director May-Salazar:* For those of you who have followed the McLean Downtown Revitalization, this area is now the center of what's being revitalized (across from Elm Street (large medical building); Mars building is being redeveloped. The space next to that is being torn down between Elm and all the way to Old Dominion - a large, multi-purpose space with a walkway and artwork – it's all being built-out in that space. That's going to be prime as "the center" – especially with another café there. The good thing for MCC is that it pulls all of that closer to us here. And the McLean Central Park has just been redeveloped. Truly, the next step is: How do we make this a logical extension? Supervisor Bierman is helping to look at how can we get a safe crosswalk so people can get dinner out and walk over to the park for a concert –not driving over. It's the first step that will make a really cool connection.

50th ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

**remarks by Executive Director May-Salazar*

We are kicking-off the whole year in the beginning of January 2025 for MCC's 50th Anniversary. An overview of key dates was shown – with a mention that we will be rolling the 50th Anniversary through every program during the year – by way of branding, social media, and all various ways of marketing.

The first event is on Saturday evening, January 4 (history talk & video premiere). We have a commemorative tree planting;

two community art projects (one unveiled here when installed; mural unveiling at OFC Block party in September 2025). Our culminating event is our Community Celebration that will be here at MCC on October 18, 2025 – which is as close to the date as possible to when we actually broke ground 50 years prior.

Several projects to be launched will ‘live on’:

*video: It’s looking fantastic! Several people have been interviewed and are on B-roll. The videographer has been at MCC events. We’ve seen one rough cut; it’s great! It’s a true combination: intended to be celebratory but with a good balance of touching on history: talking to people about the founding, the vision; talking to kids who have gone through the programs; talking to parents of kids who have gone through the programs and what it means to them. We will be getting a second DRAFT soon; we will review 3-4 times until it’s finalized. The goal is to be done by end of 2024. The video will be premiered on January 4 and then it will live on the website. We will also roll it out on screens at events throughout the year.

*historical timeline: we have been working on this diligently. A physical timeline exists for the first 25 years. We’ve digitized that and are able to use many components. We’re moving to an electronic timeline, to live on our website. We are also getting a kiosk that is completely touch-interactive to have in MCC where people can come and dig-in. The idea is that it has a lot of “layers” so you can go where you want and explore different directions in the timeline. With it being electronic, we’ll be able to update it as we wish. We can add things in further back; we can easily grow it so that it becomes a ‘living document’ rather than something that ended on a certain date and then is rendered out-of-date.

*“My MCC Memories” We really want engagement with the community all year long to help make people feel like this is ‘their’ anniversary. We want them to share their memories, their thoughts, their connections. We’re developing “My MCC Memories” on a platform called Kudoboard.com. It’s basically a ‘scrapbook’ – a way for people to upload images, upload stories, whatever they want – and it will populate this website in a dynamic way. We will be able to review before posting to ensure everything is appropriate. It will grow over time. We are still working on the ‘look’ of it. Once we have that, we will do a ‘soft launch’ with board members, 50th Anniversary Committee members to get all of your input so that we get it to look the way we want it to. And then we will open it up to the public overall and keep emphasizing that this is a way to build this over time and really start to capture things.

*reaching out to people and groups who have long been associated with MCC:

Question: How are you able to get to people that have been here for years but have moved away now? Are you able to reach them?

We are able to reach certain people. Holly Novak has a list she’s compiled of past board members. We have our ‘current’ world. And then it is also word-of-mouth. We have a list of civic groups (MCA; Friends of MCC; McLean Community Foundation) – we’ll be using them to try to reach their connections to contact as many people from the past as possible. There are people on our committee who call in from Florida! It’s a bit organic, gathering information from every direction.

*marketing: The marketing is ongoing. PIO office has been tasked with all of this. They are doing a stellar job in working on a comprehensive marketing plan across-the-board. We’ll be doing advertising on social media throughout the year, including snippets from the video once it’s final.

*Resolution from Fairfax County Board of Supervisors: We will arrange with Supervisor Jimmy Bierman to request a BOS “Resolution” commemorating MCC’s 50th Anniversary.

*two public art projects: 1. typographical sculpture at MCC 2. Community mural on the back wall of OFC
Call for artists went out in early summer; applications were due in early August. We vetted that down and had two different juries (one for each project) > viewing all submissions to narrow it down to four artists [for each project]. The mural jury met all day on 10/21 doing interviews with each of the four artists as they presented their work. Typographical sculpture jury met today (10/23): we went through four very different projects as they came in and presented to us. We selected our “top” artist for each project. We will vet the references and come to a firm decision by the end of next week. The community mural is truly an ‘engagement’ piece with the community. The artists were asked to tell us how they would approach community engagement. In some cases, it was helping to shape the whole concept AND/OR a ‘paint day’ for the community.

Question: Are these local artists? It was a mix. It was open to anyone. We put a preference on local artists. I’m not sure if any of the final artists ended up being local artists, but they were in the mix being considered.

Question: I’m curious who was selected to be the jurors and how did that selection work?

The juries were made up of a combination of experts, committee members and staff members:

Mural project: Lisa Mariam (who oversees the project from the committee-level and is an expert in public art from her career); Nancy Sausser (curator from MPA); Betsy May-Salazar (MCC Executive Director). For the mural project we brought in a woman who oversees Fairfax County Mural Initiative (countywide specialist who works with murals); Andrew Carter (OFC Manager).

Typographical sculpture: Nancy Sausser, Betsy May-Salazar, Lisa Mariam, and Danielle Van Hook – who oversees Youth Performing Arts. We also brought in a gentleman who is the lead public art manager for WMATA. He oversees all the public art you see at throughout METRO across the DMV. He was an amazing resource in looking at the way the budgets were presented... the logistics... and the materials... all of the technical aspects that need to be considered. It was a great group of jurors.

Question: Where will the art pieces be displayed?

Mural will be on back wall of OFC: the wall facing the alley side. We chose that wall because it's downtown. We wanted to contribute to downtown McLean's placemaking initiatives: MCC is staking our ground that this is *the* place to be. That wall is a solid wall without any windows breaking the space and it will be more visible if Giant remodel happens - which is supposed to be moving back – so it will be more of a visual. And, it's encompassed in the way we do our festivals at OFC: we block that area and the mural will then become part of our programming. We had talked about potentially the other side of the building (facing Giant parking lot) but that would really never be involved in MCC programming. This makes sense to us; the scale is nice and will bring some 'life' there. The sculpture will be positioned on MCC plaza entrance (library side).

*Kick-off event: History Talk & Video premiere: A history talk by Carole Herrick, a well-known McLean historian who has published several books, including one about MCC. We're planning a partnership with Friends of MCC; they are graciously helping to sponsor the reception for this, as well as McLean Project for the Arts. We plan to involve some of our folks who used to be part of the MCC team who are no longer in this area: Clare Kiley was a staff member here for a very long time in various roles (Deputy Director, other positions). She has agreed to introduce Carole Herrick, so that's a nice connection. George Sachs was Exec. Director for several years. If he is able to attend, we will ask him to be involved.

We are planning a reception afterward: champagne toast, logo cookies, light refreshments. We're hoping Carole Herrick will agree to sign books. This event will be following the Winter Block Party held at MCC earlier the same day, so the 50th logo ice carving that will be created in courtyard will stay in place for the evening reception (on display and lit up)! It's a world premiere of our video!

*Celebratory Event - October 18, 2025: 50th Anniversary Community Celebration – it's really going to be a Big Party! We'll try to get the entire community to come. There will be 'dancing through the decades' (start current and go backwards to 1970's with dance instructors). For refreshments – small plates. An art project: a live artist documenting the scene (that painting will live on at MCC). We will have a video arcade room (similar to what is currently at OFC and part of our culture) – Pacman and retro! There will be a lounge downstairs (a nice, calming, laid back place to and relax); photo opportunity. The Alden Theatre will be continuously open, showing the video on loop and some version of MCC trivia. It's going to be a lot of fun! *Opinion expressed: We will need to consider crowd control if we are inviting the whole community!*

*Other events throughout 2025 50th Anniversary year:

Tree-planting and dedication (rolled into SpringFest in the spring). At OFC Block Party in September, we will have a dedication of the mural. The sculpture dedication will depend on the production schedule for the sculpture and will be held sometime in calendar year 2025.

*Independence Day Fireworks and McLean Day – we may be developing a history walk of photo boards. A version of this idea was done several years ago – building out something that could 'travel' for display at each MCC event. A QR code will match to a timeline so people can explore the history of MCC – to get people to see what's going on. Events like McLean Day and Independence Day Fireworks will evolve as we talk to our partners involved at those events – asking them to celebrate with us and doing something special at all those occasions.

ACTION: We are really excited! And really, the point now is for you all to help share this out and come!

Get your friends to come! Realize that there are many ways for people to be involved in this project.

We'll be looking at many ways to do social media, getting input.

Question: Anything in particular relating to veterans in McLean, in terms of input from that community?

The veterans have been involved, for sure. American Legion and VFW both participate in McLean Day. American Legion does “Flags for Heroes” placed on MCC property, similar to other areas in McLean. Each one is dedicated to an individual veteran from this area. The Alden participates in VetTix to push tickets out to veterans. Glenn Yarborough is the lead at all the veterans’ groups; he is very much involved in all our planning.

ACTION: We definitely can talk to them about enhancing McLean Day and how veterans would like to be represented.

ELECTIONS & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE **remarks by Chair Katie Gorka*

Holly Novak did an amazing job typing up these meeting notes; please read through them. I will explain proposed changes to the ENC Policies & Procedures that are to be voted tonight. We were really pleased with how the election went this past year. No issues or problems; it was super-smooth, largely thanks to Holly, who runs a very tight ship! We changed the procedure to offer youth and adult voting on Friday Night. We felt that was very successful.

SPECIAL NOTE: It is a really heavy volunteer obligation on all of us as board members. It’s a lot of work to get this election to happen. I encourage you all now to plan to attend McLean Day because we really need you there. Plan on putting your time in to support the election process. One of the fun and interesting opportunities is to volunteer to help the League of Women Voters as they carry out an amazing operation to process all the Absentee ballots that come in.

Fairly minor changes are being proposed by ENC:

1. We ran into a funny situation this year because Kristina Groennings who was chair of ENC wanted to run for the Board Chair position for the following year. Because of the way the rules were constructed, it created an issue that required Kristina to step down as ENC chair in order to run for the board chair seat. So, all we’ve done is to say that the ENC Chair could assign a Designee to oversee the board officers election process for the upcoming year if they want to run for Board Chair. That’s change #1, which makes sense. And because of that, we are removing a line: “... the Elections Chair may not run for the Board Chair.
2. We are changing the hours of voting and when it’s going on (previously 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.) Now it’s actually starting at 11 a.m. McLean Day itself doesn’t open until 11 a.m. and we found that people weren’t showing up early. So why make it early and add that extra half-hour?
3. Small detail: We’re changing the candidate statement. We previously allowed candidates to add an extra 350-word statement that could go onto MCC website. That created a lot of extra work for PIO staff. Now we’re just saying that candidate statements are 100-words only.
4. Three versions of ballots – now we have Last Name A-Z; Last Name Z-A; Last Name random. We changed the words to reflect what we actually did because it was worded unusually. It read as if everyone ‘got to appear at the top of the ballot the same number of times’ – but that’s not possible.
5. Duration of Absentee voting: Absentee Voting for this annual Governing Board election goes way back – it’s not COVID-19 development; it has been offered for different time span over the years. We have changed the language so that Absentee Voting is a minimum of 30 days. We’re thinking it could last up to 6 weeks. For our ENC meeting in December, we will discuss DRAFT “Key Dates” for the 2025 Election. And then at the January 29, 2025 board meeting, the entire board will see all the actual Key Dates for 2025 Governing Board election, including the designated period of Absentee Voting.

Those are the key changes that we’ve proposed. We are open for any questions about it. No questions or objections to the wording changes were voiced, and the board was thus ready to vote on a MOTION to adopt the proposed changes.

MOTION: To approve recommended revisions to Elections & Nominations Policies & Procedures as approved by ENC on October 16, 2024.

Approved by a vote of ten: Kristina Groennings; Sonya Thott; Katie Gorka; Peter Pin; Doug Jeffery; Michael Monroe; Aaron Stark; Ron Keesing; Gloria Marrero Chambers; Kathleen Cooney Porter– all voting “AYE.”

Anna Bartosiewicz was absent.

OLD /NEW BUSINESS

Chair Groennings opened the floor for any matters of old or new business.

Youth Ambassadors: *remarks by Aaron Stark and Mike Fisher

We're approaching our deadline for applications: October 31; 8-9 applications received so far. We hope to get more. It's not really a cause for concern right now but if there is any way the Board could help with that: if you know kids who are eligible to apply, please let them know of the opportunity. Please promote in any way that you can. We will start reviewing applications the week after (Nov. 4 or 5).

Question: How many Youth Ambassadors are you looking to appoint?

Clarification by Mike Fisher: We're flexible; there is no fixed number. We could probably manage up to 8-10 from each school; we'll see how many we get. Normally, we get between 15-25 applications. If you have the opportunity to grab something from social media and send it to your networks, or forward anyone to our website – the application and information are there. We absolutely encourage you to do that; more applications are welcome.

Sonya Thott and Aaron Stark are fantastic! I give them a lot of credit for coming up with both an environmental and tutoring program. I had nothing to do with those ideas! We are just trying to guide and see where it takes us and trying to build these things so that the Youth Ambassadors can help us support them and do a little bit for the community. I applaud these Youth board members for their foresight so far. It's more than just a 'teen party.' Good for you guys! Well done!

We have also been prepping some of the language for next year – trying to leave next year's youth board members more of a package/write-up about the Youth Ambassador program so it's easier for them to start out. We want to update the language to specifically reference that anyone who goes to private schools, TJ or other schools are welcome to apply for this.

Comments by Aaron Stark: Once we've made decisions and notified the Ambassadors, then we will move to the environmental program and tutoring program we're looking to develop.

Two proposed programs for Youth Ambassadors in 2024-2025

1. Environmental program: trash pick-up of MCP (December 7). We would like to draw in people from McLean (volunteer effort on a Saturday morning). Inspire environmental stewardship, encourage people to come. We're hoping to draw-in people from the surrounding McLean community – families and anyone who wants to help volunteer.

ACTION: If you would like to come out with your families to pick-up some trash on a Saturday morning, it's a good way to inspire environmental stewardship. Please tell anyone that you know to come out on December 7.

It was recommended by a board member that, on the environmental day, to be sure to reach out to the youth community groups like Scouts – they do these projects too and they need service hours. They might be good to rally other youth groups to do this. (Aaron Stark will look into this – thank you!)

Executive Director May-Salazar asked if we will be providing verification of service hours? We will be verifying service hours.

2. Tutoring program: November 23 and December 14 We are open to any age right now – hopefully 3rd grade to 8th grade is the target for who would need help, that the Youth Ambassadors and youth Board members would support.

The official age range is 3rd grade and up. It will be very clear that the tutoring will be done by high school students; so if you're a high schooler, you probably don't want to get taught to by other high schoolers!

Location: it will start in Swinson Room (downstairs). Depending on our space needs, we may move elsewhere if the group is large.

Dates: The first one is November 23 and the second one is December 14. It just depends on the availability of our tutors. As we start with primarily the Youth Ambassadors as our workforce, it will be difficult to get them to come in more than once a month. But if we end up opening it to tutors outside of the Youth Ambassadors, and we have a large pool of tutors and can schedule who comes in when, then potentially we could do it more than once per month. We will start with Youth Ambassadors as tutors but depending on the size of the group, we may need to expand to tutors outside the Youth Ambassador group. If we have a large pool of tutors, then we can look into scheduling it further.

Frequency: *Question: At this point, are you looking at this as a one-time session? Or a recurring session?*

Hopefully it will be recurring.

Outreach to students: *Question: How are we reaching the kids who are to be tutored?*

MCC newsletter; MCC social media; Youth Ambassadors social media; youth board member social media. If any of the Youth Ambassadors have any connections with the leadership in local schools, we will try to leverage those relationships to push it out into those schools. The same with the local elementary schools and whatever personal networks we can. It was recommended that communities have their own ListServe's – there are always people looking for tutoring. High school counselors in public and private schools would also know students who could use tutoring.

Summary by Board Chair Groennings: Great idea! Such a great idea! You guys have a lot on your plates, so thank you for contributing so much to this board and to the community center

Enjoyment of recent MCC events:

Opinion expressed: I went to my first PetFest! It was really cool! Touch-a-Truck also was fantastic, as usual.

Impressions of newly-rebuilt MCP playground:

Opinion expressed: I had a chance to see MCP new playground for the first time. MCC contributed to that financially. I've been to a lot of playgrounds around here – that is very unique! The different 'layering' of age groups, appropriate fencing for the little kids' usage. It was swamped on Sunday, October 20 mid-day! People were constantly coming and going – a big diverse group of people. The area was well-shaded. It was very, very impressive. And it sustains that level of attention! I think that's a really big deal.

Need for bicycle storage at MCP playground: This is a small thing – but it seemed like there were a lot of bikes – people didn't know where to put them. Park Authority should perhaps consider installing bike racks, especially if we are trying to encourage people to go between downtown and here. Big picture: It was awesome and well done! I just want to say "thank you" to the staff and MCC Governing Board who contributed \$money\$ toward the construction.

Comment by Executive Director May-Salazar: Will share the recommendation about bike racks with Park Authority. An official ribbon cutting will happen in near future.

ACTION: We will invite the whole Governing Board to attend as soon as we know that date.

Digital sign in MCP: We had further meeting with Park Authority regarding digital design project in MCP - moving forward. They removed some dead trees that were in front of our sign that were in danger of falling down. Our sign is so amazingly visible now! Now that the tree isn't obstructing the view, it's all the more reason to install a digital sign there.

MCC events in the newly-refurbished MCP venue: The options for concerts and events in that new space will be great! All MCC events (ArtFest; PetFest) must be re-configured because all the surfaces have changed. Now there is more space around where the pavilion is. It will take some redesign on how to use it. There is now the ability to enter from Ingleside (remove stanchions and bring trucks in for loading - food trucks; a place for port-o-lets). The design is really great! The adult version of the playground is an exercise circuit: 15-20 different exercises you can do (in the footprint of what was the old 'tot lot' by the tennis courts).

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

In-person comments: Chair Groennings opened an opportunity for the public to express remarks. Anyone wishing to speak was asked to introduce themselves and state aloud their residential address to verify they are a Small District 1A-Dranesville resident. If having requested in advance to speak, those individuals were pre-verified as being a Small District 1A-Dranesville resident. Each person was allotted three minutes to speak.

No one attending requested to speak.

Written comments: No written comments were submitted in advance, nor during this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Groennings thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Holly Novak – Executive Assistant
