



**2024-2025 MCC Governing Board
Regular Meeting
December 4, 2024 7:00 p.m.**

Board Members PRESENT IN-PERSON: Kristina Groennings, Chair; Katie Gorka; Doug Jeffery; Peter Pin; Gloria Marrero Chambers; Michael Monroe; Kathleen Cooney Porter; Anna Bartosiewicz; Aaron Stark

Board Members ABSENT: Ron Keesing; Sonya Thott

MCC Staff present: Betsy May-Salazar, Executive Director; Holly Novak, Executive Assistant; Matthew Hockensmith, Comptroller; Sabrina Anwah, PIO; Mike Fisher, General Programs Director; Sarah Schallern Treff, Performing Arts Director; Danielle Van Hook, Youth Theater Director; Jennifer Garrett, Technical Director

Guests: Deb Bissen (MPA); Glenn Yarborough (Friends of MCC)

CONVENE MEETING

Chair Kristina Groennings convened a Regular Meeting of the Governing Board of the McLean Community Center on December 4, 2024, at 7:09 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.

APPROVE MINUTES

The first order of business was consideration of Minutes of October 23, 2024 Regular Meeting. No changes were requested; accepted as written.

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

Sonya Thott and Ron Keesing were absent.

CHAIR’S REPORT **remarks by Chair Kristina Groennings – mentioning three key points:*

1. Thank you to Betsy, staff and board members for the holiday reception this evening. It was very nice.
2. Reiterating importance of “Be Visible” (refer to list of upcoming MCC events). There is a lot going on here at MCC in upcoming weeks. Board members are asked to attend as many events as possible:
 - *50th Anniversary Celebration Kick-off – January 4. It would be awesome if everyone can be there.
 - *Holiday Arts & Craft Festival (Friday, 12/6 – Sunday, 12/8). Kristina will be volunteering - helping to administer the Fall Community Feedback Survey to attendees.
 - *Saturday, December 7 – at 9:00 a.m. Grand Opening of new MCP Pavilion
 - *Sunday, December 8 – Winterfest Parade (2:30 – 5 p.m.) As a sponsor, it’s a great opportunity for MCC to be represented. We have a few light costumes and headdresses; Mike Fisher is decorating his truck. We have a banner that highlights MCC’s 50th Anniversary. We are organized and we just need everyone to show up!
 - *Sunday, December 15 – L’chiam II – A Tribute to the Jewish Legacy of Broadway (and Christmas)
 - *Sunday, December 21 – It’s a Jazzy Christmas!
 - *Sunday, January 12 – Junwen Liang – a phenomenal pianist at The Alden. I encourage you to check that out!
3. Appreciation for collaborative teamwork: As we wrap up this year, I want to thank the board for all we’ve accomplished

together; in particular, how well we have worked together. That isn't necessarily 'normal.' By the nature of these being elected positions, contested positions, in a highly political part of the country, in what has been a politically charged time, friction among this board would be expected. This wasn't meant to work so well – and yet it has. Somebody said that this is one of the most collaborative and well-qualified boards. That is meaningful and it's a great example! And it's essential for us to be able to best serve the MCC and our community. So, this is something to celebrate as we wind down this year, and hope that we can continue that into the new year and future boards.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT **remarks by Executive Director Betsy May-Salazar*

I think this has been an amazing board this year and we have accomplished a lot! Going into our 50th anniversary year, we are trying to package our programming so that you can easily see it and pick-and-choose what you want to come to.

Upcoming Invitations

* 'Tis The Season postcard

* MCC's McLean Holiday Art and Crafts Festival takes place this weekend, Friday, December 6 – Sunday December 8. It is a wonderful festival and terrific shopping opportunity. Hope to see you!

* On Saturday, December 7 at 9 am you are invited to the grand reopening of the new McLean Central Park Pavilion.

* Sunday, December 8 is the Winterfest Parade. MCC is a sponsor and will be represented. All Governing Board members and their families are encouraged to come and march in the parade. (parade route specific details were explained)

* On Monday, December 16 from 5 – 7 pm. Supervisor Bierman is hosting a Holiday Open House at the McLean Government Center. He has asked me to share the invitation with all of you.

50th Anniversary: After three years of solid planning, our 50th Anniversary Year-long Celebration is almost here!

* **BIG Kick-off event is on Saturday, January 4 in The Alden Theatre.** This is going to be a really great time for all board members to be present. We are hoping Supervisor Bierman will present his official BOS Proclamation in honor of MCC's 50th.

* History Talk with McLean historian Carole Herrick. She will be talking a little bit about McLean and the start of MCC – providing the history of how we came to be. She is an engaging speaker and everyone will really enjoy it.

* Premiere of MCC 50th Anniversary Video. The videographers shaped it and chose who would be highlighted from a list of many possible names. They have some very nice thru-line stories in the video that we will all be able to appreciate.

* McLean Project for the Arts galleries will be open (leading up to the event) at 6 p.m. and also during the reception.

* A really lovely reception afterward hosted by Friends of MCC. This will be in the entire lobby space with balloons, champagne, light fare and celebratory toasts.

* Invitations were sent this week (by e-mail and U.S. Mail). Feel free to spread the word about this event and plan to attend with your friends and family. We will share the invitation through all our normal channels. This is open to the whole community. The invitation does request an R.S.V.P. because of size of the theater and to calculate catering. But we expect to be fine with having enough capacity. We are sharing the invitation widely with the community.

It's a perfect way to start off the 50th Anniversary year with the history... the video... and celebration! Then throughout the year we will do something related to 50th Anniversary at every MCC event. It's nice to be at the point where we are 'delivering' and enjoying! MCC staff is encouraged to be present and enjoy (hopefully with little amount of work needed at these big events), so they can just be here and be able to experience it - because this is 'their home.'

Operations

- **We are delighted to announce the hiring of a Deputy Director: Jonathan Melendez.** This is a newly-brought back position (it has been unfilled for a quite a while). Timing: starting December 16. I look forward to introducing him at our January 29 meeting. Mr. Melendez comes with a wealth of experience over many years in various roles in Fairfax County's department of Neighborhood and Community Services. He has worked both in a teen center setting as well as with county-wide initiatives related to youth, and many different initiatives. I think he will be a very great addition to our staff, and we are excited to welcome him!

- **Old Firehouse Center renovation is set to start in January 2025 - which means the OFC team and programs will be moving over here.** They will occupy two rooms on lower level of MCC facility, where they will run the After School program. And as much programming as we can keep going that normally happens at the OFC will be happening here. The goal is that those operations start here on January 1 (whether or not the renovation actually begins then). The purpose of announcing January 1 is to communicate a clear message to the kids and families about what is happening.
- **OFC renovation timeline:** likely several months. We intend to be back in the OFC building before summer 2025 – hopefully sooner. It depends on the actual start date; bids are due on Friday, 12/6. Early next week they should know who is being awarded the contract. The shared timeline shows the intention for the contractor to start work relatively quickly.

Committee Meetings

- Wednesday, Dec. 11: Capital Facilities; Elections Committee will meet. All board members are welcome to attend.

PROGRAMS & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

**remarks by Chair Anna Bartosiewicz*

Similar to the Fall Customer Feedback Survey last year, we are distributing QR cards for survey responses. Anna Bartosiewicz and Ron Keesing came to the Antique Show and helped to distribute QR code cards. It's a really great way to connect with people while getting them to fill out the survey. We are trying to spread the survey out there. People are also more aware of it, and we are getting participation.

ACTION: If you can volunteer your time at any MCC events, just to stop people and ask them to fill out the survey (5 minutes), it's a huge help. Please sign-up and help out.

*Summer Concerts – will move to Thursday evenings starting in June. Emphasis is on family-friendly concerts, as well as building-in additional activities around the concerts. Marketing: FCPA *ParkTakes* will include an ad for MCC on the back cover! Concert venue will be the new pavilion. Music will feature some tribute bands; the schedule will be publicized in early 2025.

Question: Why are the concerts now on weekday (Thursday) evening rather than Sunday afternoon?

It was incredibly hot this past summer in mid-afternoon and attendance was very low. We compete with many other options nearby. We want to move it to evening when cooler. Weekday seems the best option; we are going to test it out. Thursday is a good day: people are taking Friday off and may wish to attend a concert on Thursday evening. Thursday is the new Friday!

*Seniors in Action – the most exciting update is that there has been a structural change in the program: no more fee for membership. SIA will continue to have many free offerings and SIA members will receive weekly activity updates on the daily offerings. It is now on a registration basis for certain activities – such as the in high demand SAIL exercise classes. The price continues to be low, and attainable – but now folks can come register for whatever they are interested in. Hopefully, SIA continues to grow!

THE ALDEN SEASON PLANNING PROCESS

**remarks by Perf. Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff and Youth Theater Director Danielle Van Hook*

The purpose of this presentation on The Alden season planning process was for the board to gain insight into how programs are selected and how planning is done.

PROGRAMMING FOCUS: Sarah Schallern Treff, Performing Arts Director mostly does 18-over (adult) focus.

Danielle Van Hook, Director of Youth Theater Programs, focuses on people age 18 and younger. Danielle also supervises all programs involving performing arts and youth: Spring production; Unruly Theater Project improv group; Macdonald Scholarship Competition.

TIMING: In terms of selecting and compiling the performance season, the actual planning starts about 12-18 months in advance. Sometimes 5 years in advance. If something really great comes up, we might do it in less than 12 months.

INDUSTRY CONFERENCES: We look for acts by attending booking conferences such as Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP). That's just one way that we discover acts to bring to The Alden.

COORDINATING WITH ARTISTS TO APPEAR: In putting together a performance season for The Alden at MCC, there are

three different ways we coordinate dates and timing with artists:

1. Fitting in with artist tours (ground-routed – driving a linear line from city to city). In order for that tour to break even or be profitable, it needs to have a certain number of booked dates. One of the great things about artist tours is that the high costs they incur for shipping of materials (set; equipment) – gets divided up in the fee across all venues.

2. We also do “Runouts” – the artist comes from wherever they live just to perform in our venue (The Alden Theatre). Some artists are more economical to do the runout because of our ideal location being near NYC. Many colleagues who work in the Midwest remark with surprise about what we are able to pay for particular artists (more affordable rates!) – mostly due to the blessing of our ideal location.

3. We also work both with agents and agencies as well as independently represented artists. We have in our contract an ‘exclusivity’ – with a certain [geographical] radius and a certain amount of time, that artist will not book themselves at venue nearby that would capitalize on the audience that they have in this region. MCC is blessed that there are normally more than 386 people who like an artist! But it is still something that can ‘mess up’ a deal if they are already going to be somewhere close by and that other venue is not going to budge. George Mason Center for the Arts competes with us – every time we like a particular artist, they mention that they are already going to George Mason! Capital One is its own thing; we do not book the same types of acts. The Alden does not have ‘long’ runs.

GOAL: Our goal is to find shows that combine to create a balanced, interdisciplinary and diverse season. And that the season looks different, year-over-year. Sometimes we view how a season is planned and realize: Wow! It is really ‘music-focused.’ We attempt in the next year to schedule more dance or theater offerings. We try to find that balance overall. And one of our biggest goals is that **not every show is for everybody, but everyone should be able to find at least one thing that feels comfortable for them.** Hopefully over time, they feel more comfortable taking risks. We want to make sure to **represent different genres of the arts.** And within those genres, there is so much diversity of options (such as three very different types of jazz shows).

APPROACH: Sarah and Danielle work in conjunction to build the performance season. There is a lot of overlap – especially with Danielle’s programming because the grandparents bring their kids to the kids shows. Danielle does a great job to make sure that all ages enjoy the performance. Not all the adult shows are for everyone. The fact is that adults are a big part of our population, so we also serve them.

The following aspects of season planning relate directly to MCC’s Strategic Plan:

***CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT THROUGH FEEDBACK/ANALYSIS:** We also look at past ticket sales and survey responses to guide in building a well-rounded program. We look at how specific artists sold? How particular genres sold? After every performance we send out a survey - to gauge interest and satisfaction. We always have people coming up to us after the show (immediate feedback). Huge majority are positive remarks: You have to bring that artist back! People are honest – we get a lot of positive remarks from the surveys. But we also get things that are not so positive that we can work on to do better in the future. For “Jazzy Christmas!” we took some comments from the audience last year and that has changed; it will be a little different and better this year.

***EXPERIMENTAL COORDINATION WITH SCHOOLS:** We also look for shows that have a 60-minute version of their piece that can be presented for schools. This year we piloted an expansion of shows that MCC is programming specifically for schools. We found artists who have a 60-minute version (once or twice in the morning) and then a full show in the evening. We’re learning that that’s exhausting! But it is a really wonderful way to serve two to three times as many people in a much more economical way, because the largest cost of what we’re doing is getting artists here. It really gives us a great way to build relationships with the local schools and to bring more arts into education. **Next season, we are looking at ways to keep it where we are now and build on it by taking lessons learned from this year – to make that program better and hopefully to make that a part of the way that we do business in the future.**

***EXPANDED AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE:** Whenever possible, we do pre-and post-show experiences with the artists (‘meet-and-greets’). It’s an important part of a child’s full experience of a performance: to be able to be meet the artists afterwards. We love being able to bring more artists into connection with the community. If the artist is available, we offer workshops with our MCC-related family: SIA; dance classes; Unruly Theater Project; SPARC; as a way to teach an art style or to talk about a culture. **We try to find a true connection with whatever the interest of that group is and what the artist is doing.**

Following are specifics unique to MCC's contracting with performing artists:

CONTACT WITH ARTISTS/PERFORMING ARTS INDUSTRY RESOURCES: APAP conference – we see shows and meet with agents and managers. Over four-five days in NYC in January. They have showcase performances (15 minutes). You walk through small conference rooms with stages and performance demonstrations. All of NYC is part of the conference (we can attend a full-length performance at a professional venue). That gives us a good idea of what's out there, and also provides opportunity to build relationships.

Meeting with agents allows us to build relationships over the years: we trust what agents recommend and they know their artists will have great experiences here at MCC. The agent & presenter must have some trust between each other. The agent believes in this particular artist, and they believe it's the right fit for MCC and we can trust them. In 17 years here at MCC, Sarah remarked there has only been one instance where she took the advice of an agent that she trusted and was disappointed.

Seeing a showcase live is vital. A live show has an energy that is totally different than watching something on video. It also helps us sell the show internally and externally: we come back from a conference and discuss with each other. Then we talk to MCC staff leaders and to the marketing staff so that we're all on the same page, so the audience knows why we are booking a show, why they should attend, and what's amazing about it.

Agents and artists 'cold call' us; and we vet them to determine if they are bookable. This is much easier if you have relationships established. We get about 24 e-mails per day that are 'mass' communications from agents. We look at those messages to determine which are of interest to research more thoroughly.

We see performances on our own time. Patrons and colleagues suggest artists. Many times, after a show people will mention other performers for us to look-up later to research further. Colleagues in the industry will let us know of good performers. And our MCC colleagues will too! Mike Fisher a few years ago suggested a wonderful fiddler from West Virginia – he was awesome. We are always receiving a lot of feedback.

OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE - SCHEDULING. We might find a show of interest that is happening in August or in April – and MCC's only option is April 6. If that night is not available, we either kick it down the road or we never get a chance to bring that artist. In this time of year into Spring, we are doing this 'juggling' of hoping that other venues don't drop out (which would ALSO cancel our date). We also must juggle artists' tours with all of MCC's blackout dates (MCC events). We don't want to compete against ourselves. The Alden doesn't want to be taking an audience away from something else (such as Antiques show or Holiday Arts & Craft Show), in addition to it being logistically impossible. If the artist only has one date as an option, that's a challenge. We often have an artist that we really want but it doesn't work out.

We also leave space in the calendar for several weekends in the year for McLean Community Players; and other rentals from McLean-specific groups. We also host dance recitals of our MCC dance classes here and other dance schools in McLean.

Question: You said the biggest constraint is scheduling. Does that imply that there are many qualified acts that you all want to bring here but there are scheduling constraints?

Yes- there are only so many weekends. We have been experimenting with Fridays and even during the week, because there's a lot of competition: birthday parties; soccer games; school events especially on weekends. Part of the challenge is finding the right date (working around the artist's schedule; balancing with other MCC events). We had a group in May that we really wanted to coordinate – but it was the artist's one 'black-out' date (his daughter's graduation from high school). We must negotiate hard for particular dates! But now we can offer doing a school show. Especially during Fall/Winter it's a challenge for us (Antique Show; Holiday Arts & Crafts Show) – they take up whole weekends where we can't do anything. And then there are holidays and high holy days being on weekends - that is a problem. This weekend (Dec. 6, 7, 8) would be perfect for holiday programming - but it's Holiday Arts & Craft Show, which is MCC's priority to serve the entire community; and its awesome.

TECHNICAL PREPARATION/TURN-AROUND: We must ensure there is enough time between each event to turn the theater over – it's not like regular spaces. Setting up for a dance performance is very different from setting up for a musical performance. Our technical crew is only human (they have only a certain amount of work hours per week). They must balance all the priorities, as well as realistic elements of labor and the number of hours that it takes. It may seem like 'nothing is happening' in the theater. But it's a lot! "Usage" could be an afternoon birthday party in Community Hall turning to a wedding in the same evening. That's a lot of work to turn it over. Yet, that is much easier than turning over two

different music performances in The Alden Theatre – there’s a lot that goes into it. Also, a theater is a dangerous place – and it gets more dangerous if the people in charge of technical stuff are exhausted. It’s very important to preserve the alertness of our tech staff in their long days.

TECHNICAL RIDER: The technical side (and the tech staff) are essential to the planning process! Before contracts are signed, our tech team goes over the tech rider to determine feasibility, scheduling, equipment we either have or would need to rent. How much is it going to cost? Is it within budget? Scheduling: one of the challenges we have is that Jennifer Garrett and her team try to make everything work. Even if the schedule is really tight, they figure out a way to make it work. There is pressure for us to do a lot in the theater but we have to take into account that these are human beings!

Hospitality is included in the rider. Physical dimensions: Is our stage tall enough? We can’t do cirque performances because of the height requirement of the performance space. Musical instrument or equipment rental (scheduling the pre-set; load-out requirements). Sometimes the staging requirements needs more negotiation. Example: summer concerts will not have theatrical lights in the pavilion. The artist may need to bring in their own lights (if the contract amount is higher).

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY: In every way that we work with artist or any kind of performing group, we follow ALL Fairfax County purchasing requirements. This year (after working on it for two years with the County Attorney and Risk Management) we began using an approved contract template that puts us fully in line with every other aspect of the county vendor contracts. It was challenging, largely because the ‘product’ (hiring a performing artist) is a lot different than buying streetlights! Also, because a lot of the other things that are ‘procured’ in the artist contract feels somewhat unnatural. **But it’s a big part of what we do: making sure that we are accountable and following all those many guidelines that protect the county as well as protect the financial trust that MCC has.** It really helps us with the financial management to be good stewards. Before we had the template, we had a short rider that we would attach to contracts -but would get artist contracts that were 30-40 pages long – and we had to go through meticulously and cross out all the things that Fairfax County would not allow; take out all the liability. It was time-consuming. The new contract saves a lot of time. I’ve had conversations with artists and agents about some things and they remark: “Oh – we haven’t done that before.” But truly, it’s now boilerplate for most of the industry; and it’s a big timesaver.

ROLE OF GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS: How can Governing Board members help? This is a “Call to Action:”

1. Bring a friend to any of our shows. Word-of-mouth is always the best marketing
2. Share your new “behind the scenes” knowledge. Share what you find interesting to help build a better understanding of The Alden.
3. Connect us with groups who like to plan outings together (church groups, scout groups, birthday parties or group sales). We are doing a lot more group sales now than we used to. That’s more of a trend now – people want to do events together with their social group. People came dressed up for “Sugar Skull” performance; they had a really great time in the lobby beforehand. We have a space that lends itself to this: free parking; tickets easily reserved at the Box Office. MCC is a convenient, user-friendly location.
4. If you have any connections in the hotel industry, let us know. That’s a significant expense we face and a real way we can improve the bottom line through savings on hotel costs. We work with Staybridge and they give us a really great overall rate (for overnight stay of the artists). Our colleagues in the industry will have connections with other hotels. We would like to receive reduced rooms or free rooms for artists: ‘preferential’ rates.
5. Or if you have any other connections you think we should know – we always love to meet people. Send an e-mail to Sarah Schallern Treff – and she will do research on it.

Question: Have you ever done a ‘battle of the bands’ locally... or ‘McLean’s Got Talent’?

In 1990’s there was a regular ‘battle of the bands’ at OFC. We had a talent show in conjunction with the Block Party for a long time. We partnered with Bach to Rock for several years to basically host their bands who were all immediately local students. We’ve tried to have local acts at McLean Day event. Battle of the Bands fizzled – not as many bands were signing up anymore. Maybe in a few years it will come back – if the interest and the talent is there.

MCC IS DIFFERENTIATED FROM OTHER COMMUNITY CENTERS – THROUGH CULTURAL FOCUS:

Question: Community centers come in all different shapes, configurations and sizes. Growing up here, I knew that we had a real emphasis on getting great talent and performances. How does MCC stand in the nation compared to bigger forums? Are we more unique in terms of our emphasis on performances and how many we do – in relation to other community centers?

Yes – we think so. For a community center, yes - we convene most often with folks in the performing arts. Often, they are more associated with a college or university. Or perhaps are a part of a library system in a city. A ‘municipal’ performance center looks very different across different places. Some places are more like Wolf Trap (outdoor amphitheater style); other places are a lot smaller. What’s interesting is that our colleagues in the field understand many of the challenges MCC has – especially the scheduling. But at the same time, there is no one else that has the same size stage (uniqueness’s) and capabilities! Even geographically – where art centers are located presents both challenges *AND* opportunities. Sometimes when people think of McLean Community Center, they don’t think of a high-level type of programming in our industry. But I think of it as a strength because we actually incorporate arts programming (we already have the infrastructure): space for classes; a kitchen; and things that other people would like to have! There is much emphasis in our industry on number of seats, and bigger... better. **But MCC’s real area to shine is about bringing super-unique experiences that you’re not going to get at the Kennedy Center. Or, that you are able to arrive to easily because and the parking is FREE!**

‘Community center’ nomenclature in the recreation industry is considered like a “rec center.” MCC’s direct comparison is Reston Community Center. We have opportunity to offer some ‘extension’ opportunities with classes and other groups. FCPA will have outdoor concerts, but they don’t have a kitchen, or the art space (gallery). **We bring a lot of dynamic resources together in one place – and that is really where we shine, what MCC’s strength is, and what sets us apart from others in the industry.** As compared to Reston CC - they have a pool (more of a rec center). **The fact that we have partnership with MPA brings that level of our visual arts programming (very strong and well-known) – and brings awareness that MCC is truly a cultural arts center – as a community center with cultural arts focus.**

Sarah Schallern Treff previously worked at JCC in Rockville, MD. From a perspective of private/non-profit community centers vs. government, MCC is very unusual. A majority of Jewish community centers will have an arts program, whereas it’s maybe not as important (especially in Parks & Recreation) for government to offer that. MCC is unusual and we are very lucky to have a community that values it so much!

YOUTH AMBASSADORS – PROGRESS UPDATE **remarks by Aaron Stark and Mike Fisher, General Programs Director*

Orientation meeting: We had our first Youth Ambassadors meeting last week (a good turnout). We discussed exactly what a Youth Ambassador is, and what our experiences will look like over the next couple of months. We showed the intro video for the MCC. That first part of the introductory experience went really smoothly.

Tutoring program: We transitioned into our first tutoring program session. That went less well – no one came! Twelve Youth Ambassadors were in attendance. I tutored my friend for the SAT. It was not the best showing. We are still going to continue trying with the tutoring program. We will probably try to expand our marketing: now that we have the Youth Ambassadors, it should actually be easier to get the word out about programs.

Environmental Stewardship: This Sunday, December 8, we also have our first environmental clean-up program. This is guaranteed to be in some part a success because we will have the Youth Ambassadors. Picking up trash at MCP (12 noon to 2 p.m.) meeting at basketball court with Youth Ambassadors + community volunteers who wish to show up at that time. Everyone here in this room is welcome to join us. We will wrap up just in time for the Winterfest parade.

ACTION ITEM: It would be great if any of you come out to help us. It will be a great family experience to have kids picking up trash! I look forward to that on Sunday.

Please help us advertise this. One of the Youth Ambassadors made a flier (Mike Fisher will send it to the board); Youth Ambassadors are now pushing it out. We will push it out with PIO.

Comments by Mike Fisher: This flier was self-generated and is fantastic! Sonya Thott and Aaron Stark are ambitious! They had plans already when they got to me - wanting to do tutoring and wanting to do this environmental stewardship program. We applaud them! It was an uphill battle on that first event (tutoring) because we didn’t have the Youth Ambassador group with us yet – which is one of the biggest ways we are able to advertise directly to the population we are seeking within the schools. Every program from now on will get better but we absolutely could use your help to advertise it, or helping us at the litter clean-ups.

ACTION ITEM: Mike Fisher will share the flier out – to share with your neighborhood ListServes.

Suggestions to enhance the tutoring program:

Question: I can’t imagine hardly any family who wouldn’t love this tutoring. Did you ask the families that you know: If they could do

tutoring – why wouldn't they do it? It seems like maybe it's not just marketing, but maybe something could be off in how you're offering it that may be holding them back. For example, if I have a child who needs tutoring, I'd be hesitant to send him there if I don't know the quality. Or that it will take an hour just to bring him up to speed and they won't be comfortable. I don't know what would be the issue that may hold somebody back – because it's a great program. And it sounds like you're doing some good marketing. So, maybe there is a question or two that could be asked to just get a sense of the tutoring could be improved? What would you love to see? How would you like to see it? Maybe figure out how to improve explaining to parents how it would look?

Comment by Mike Fisher: That's a great concept. Aaron, that is something that we should push out to the Ambassadors. Have them start speaking to their peers about it and see how we can get some organic responses about what the outlook is in the community? At OFC, we have struggled to do tutoring programs outside of just those program members who show up and get their homework help through the program (they are already attending every day). Should we be offering tutoring in the schools? Or if something were easier with transportation? There are things we can look at to try to tweak the program. We will do that – talk to the Ambassadors and have them talk to their friends and see what comes back.

Opinion expressed: Also check with PTA: engage with parents who might facilitate students coming to the tutoring.

Mike Fisher has some direct contacts with PTA's and at the schools. He tries to leverage all the contacts he has. Some schools are more open and welcoming to outside information than others.

Chair Groennings thanked Aaron Stark for envisioning the tutoring concept and this excellent presentation tonight!

OLD /NEW BUSINESS

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

1. January 4 event: *Question: Regarding 50th Anniversary event on January 4: did we decide if we are doing a reception beforehand?* We are only doing one reception (afterward). Before the event, MPA Emerson and Atrium galleries will be open from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Winter Block Party will be all day onsite at MCC – then a quick turnaround to set-up for the evening party!

2. Fall Community Feedback Survey:

We have cards at the front desk for Fall Community Feedback Survey (with a QR code). If you are out and about, please share those cards with your friends – it's a direct link that people can respond to give their feedback.

3. Winterfest Parade – Sunday, December 8:

Grand Marshall for the Winterfest Parade is Glenn Yarborough who will lead the parade.

Pre-activities: 2:30 to 3:00 p.m. Call time for board members: closer to 3:00 p.m. Enjoy pre-show entertainment at Langley Shopping Center. MCC's banner & truck will be waiting near Madison Deli on Beverly. When the parade starts, we will go from Beverly to Fleetwood to the corner of Papa John's and then come down Old Chain Bridge Road (the actual parade route). We have a lovely snowman onesie and light-up headgear. Betsy May-Salazar will be at the pre-event and you will see Mike Fisher in the truck on Beverly.

4. Opportunities for board engagement:

Look at the Sign-up Genius for board members engagement at the Holiday Arts & Craft Show and Milk & Cookies with Santa (Dec. 14). We will be expanding the Fall Community Survey through January events – we will share more dates that board members can come and help with engaging with the public - keeping the survey open through end of January 2025.

5. Raising community awareness about human trafficking:

A board member was approached by someone who works in human trafficking awareness. How might they be able to address the community? Is there someone they could talk to about what that might look like? It is particular to Fairfax County. It is focused on awareness that human trafficking is happening in the community.

Comment by Betsy May-Salazar: Maybe this is something Safe Community Coalition would be interested in. We are partnering with them on a lot of social issues programming. You can have them share something to Betsy and she will try to connect, and we also definitely have county support on a lot of those issues that we can focus on.

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

UPDATE – MCLEAN PROJECT FOR THE ARTS

**remarks by Deb Bissen*

- *We are continuing our print exhibit. Our Assistant Curator and one of the artists will be talking on January 4 about the exhibition. It's a great way to encourage people to come into the gallery to see what MPA is about.
- *January 16 – new fiber exhibition (loosely quilt-based) – we are excited to be presenting that through February 22.
- *McLean and Langley pyramid youth art shows (throughout March 4 – 26).
- *Spring solos & summer art camps.
- *We invite all of you to come up to the gallery: M – Sat 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. We love to have visitors! We will open the gallery all day on December 15, when there is a performance in The Alden. We are trying to open the gallery in conjunction with Alden shows, when we can have an MPA volunteer who can come to staff the gallery. Hopefully that will be ongoing.
- *In conjunction with Holiday Arts & Craft Show galleries will be open. We will have a print sale which started tonight. People who like to buy Arts & Crafts hopefully also like to buy prints.
- *People are registering for winter/spring art classes. We have a lot of great teachers, and some new offerings: 3-D glass (stained glass workshop – one day). It's a chance to do something creative even if you don't consider yourself an artist. So, look for that – it's a fun way to add some creativity to your life.
- *Ramp gallery: Children's Art Walk (always a part of MPA ArtFest). About 20 of those works will also be displayed at Dulles International Airport opening in January 2025. We are excited to have the community art visible at Dulles International Airport.
- *ArtReach program: how MPA shares our work with those in the community who might not otherwise be able to access arts education. Tomorrow we will host another group from Second Story Safe Youth Project – it's always really exciting to work with kids – they enjoy seeing art and doing an activity. We host Title 1 Schools in Fairfax County when they are available to come. Our ArtReach Director works with Longfellow Middle School and McLean and Langley Special Ed. programs. We are glad to share our expertise with these kids in the school system. There is always a lot going on, and we are happy to host you whenever you want to see an exhibition! MPA will be at the Winterfest Parade with an art activity (at pre-activities from 2:30 to 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 8).

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. Anyone having requested in advance to speak was pre-verified as being a Small District 1A-Dranesville resident. Each person was allotted three minutes to speak.

No public attendees present requested to speak.

Written comments:

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

ADJOURNMENT

With all matters of business thus concluded, Chair Groennings thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Holly Novak - Executive Assistant
