

2025-2026 MCC Governing Board
Regular Meeting + Public Hearing on FY2028 Programs
March 25, 2026 – 6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

- Board Members Present:** *in-person:* Doug Jeffery, Chair; Gloria Marrero Chambers; Michael Monroe; Ron Keesing; Peter Pin; Kathleen Cooney Porter; Venita Wang
- Board Members Absent:** Anna Bartosiewicz; Katie Gorka; Liz Lawson; Katie Myshrall
- MCC Staff Present:** Betsy May-Salazar, Executive Director; Jonathan Melendez, Deputy Director; Holly Novak, Executive Assistant; Matthew Hockensmith, Comptroller; Mike Fisher, Special Events Manager; Sarah Schallern Treff, Performing Arts Director; Jessica Wu, PIO; Erin Bieger, Instructional Programs Manager; Mary Carter, Special Events Assistant Manager; Katie McGovern, Customer Service Manager; Willie Montgomery, Special Events Assistant Manager
- Guests:** Deb Bissen (MPA); Lori Carbonneau (MPA); Kevin Kierce (MCA); Raj Mehra (MCA); Martin F. Smith; Michael Solomon; Jim Lawless (Friends of MCC); Pascale Siegel; Rebecca Czarniecki

CONVENE MEETING

On March 25, 2026 at 6:31 p.m. Chair Doug Jeffery convened a Regular Meeting of the Governing Board of McLean Community Center. The meeting included a Public Hearing on FY2028 Programs focusing on advance planning for two fiscal years ahead. A courtesy announcement was made about the meeting being audio-recorded for purposes of Minutes. Chair Jeffery explained the opportunity for public comments about *future* programming during the Public Hearing, and for remarks of *general* nature (pertaining to current fiscal year FY2026) occurring later in the meeting during the “Public Comment” segment. No changes to the agenda were requested; it was adopted by acclamation.

CONVENE PUBLIC HEARING ON FY2028 PROGRAMS

Programs & Community Engagement Committee Chair Gloria Marrero Chambers opened the Public Hearing on FY2028 Programs. This annual forum looks forward to the future, allowing tax district residents to provide significant input on the trajectory of meaningful programming at MCC in FY2028.

Overview of Community Feedback Survey **entire presentation is shown at end of Minutes*

Produced annually in the fall, the Community Feedback Survey was recently completed (325 respondents; 77% are tax district residents). This survey was initiated a few years ago to provide more cyclical time for feedback from the community and to develop a breadth of information to ground the annual public hearing on programs through the perspective of a larger response pool. This provides important context for individual comments expressed at the public hearing. Consistent with MCC’s Strategic Plan purposes and goals, we continually analyze and focus on gaps and how MCC can improve.

DISCUSSION:

- *Some tax district residents remain unaware of what MCC offers despite extensive promotional efforts, including receiving the Program Guide (mailed to every household).
- *A few respondents gave a reason why they are not satisfied with MCC programming (via written-in comments). Often, the reason expressed is tied to: ‘I don’t want to pay the tax’ (principle of having to pay taxes).
- *Total response rate for the survey was roughly less than 1% of total residents in the tax district; that’s a low number. The number of responses is consistent with last year. Understanding that it’s an annual survey may not be clearly perceived: 1,200 respondents first year; 315 last year; 325 this year. Some people may feel like they filled it out already. We are trying to convey the message that it’s an annual survey measurement specific to the public hearing on programs.

We rely on Governing Board members to share by word-of-mouth and social media to emphasize the importance of participation.

The survey presentation was followed by an opportunity for tax district residents to express comments specific to FY2028 programming, led by Programs & Community Engagement Committee Chair Gloria Marrero Chambers. It was announced that as individual residents share their thoughts and ideas, Governing Board members and MCC staff will not be responding in-the-moment. All comments will be taken very seriously and staff may follow-up with a written response, if appropriate.

Written comments – No written comments were received in advance. During this meeting, no written comments were submitted for the record. Written comments about FY2028 programs will continue to be accepted through Wednesday, April 1 and they will be included in the Minutes record. As of the April 1 deadline, no written public comments were received.

Verbal comments – Those attending were invited to express comments, by first stating aloud their residential address to verify if they are a tax district resident. Each person was allotted 3 minutes.

Small District 1A-Dranesville resident (adult)

I'm following up on what Doug Jeffery alluded to: the survey goes out every year. How does it go out? Because I do not recall ever getting it. The response rate was .625% - that's really low. So, I'm wondering if the reason the response rate is so low is because the survey itself is not being promoted in a way that residents are aware? If it goes out, are we just missing it? I get the Program Guide but I don't recall seeing the survey.

Small District 1A-Dranesville resident (adult)

You are matching census data to the survey demographics, right, as opposed to attendance? In that case, it might be a little different. I don't know if you guys are working on improving that data? You talked about what's "added." Is there anything that is being "subtracted?" I'd also be interested in understanding the pricing strategy for the various offerings. In the budget, some are money makers; some are money losers. And I don't know what your philosophy is that's driving that.

Small District 1A-Dranesville resident (adult)

I'm a long-time resident and long-time supporter of MCC. I just want to comment that the difference between the summer concert series and the year before was like night and day! It was phenomenal! So that is going to keep on building that crescendo so that every summer we'll have a better concert series. You'll have a better draw. That's also a great time: we have people who come to a public event [concerts in McLean Central Park] – and actually have a survey there so people can respond in-person. You want to have personal contact – that's what we really do. That's what you guys always do - have it at public events; but that's an opportunity that we should not let go by the wayside. Thank you.

Executive Director May-Salazar responded: Thank you so much for your comments.

ADJOURNMENT OF PUBLIC HEARING ON FY2028 PROGRAMS

Thank you for contributing your opinions and ideas about future programming at MCC. MCC has always been a reflection of the community and we deeply value your input. The Public Hearing on FY2028 Programs was adjourned.

Board Chair Doug Jeffery proceeded to conduct business matters of the Regular Meeting agenda.

APPROVE MINUTES

Minutes of February 25, 2026 Regular Meeting were reviewed. No changes were requested; accepted as written.

MOTION: To approve Minutes of February 25, 2026 Regular Meeting.

Approved by a vote of seven: Gloria Marrero Chambers; Venita Wang; Doug Jeffery; Michael Monroe; Peter Pin; Kathleen Cooney Porter; Ron Keesing – all voting "AYE."

Katie Gorka, Liz Lawson and Katie Myshrall were absent

CHAIR'S REPORT

**remarks by Board Chair Doug Jeffery*

Three things inform us effectively about the community's interests:

1. annual survey: the survey results presentation was fantastic. It's already a very robust, routine opportunity to gather input.
2. Governing Board meetings. Thank you all for coming out tonight and thank you to all who spoke comments. Hearing the wants and needs of the community is central to the purpose of what we do here; it's very important. Tonight is unique as we hear directly from the public for a longer length of time but there are always opportunities for public comments at our monthly meetings. The Board and MCC staff take those comments very seriously. Please continue to attend and speak up.
3. Attendance report: building-out additional information on attendance; consolidating into a single report and matching it against staff expectations for various events.

These are essential ways to understand what the community likes and what we want to continue to build on, as well as what things we can tweak for improvements. The effort and process of continually hearing input from the community and making adjustments is very important and is ongoing (by staff and Governing Board).

MCC upcoming events:

- *2026 Governing Board Election cycle is underway, heading into the new 2026-2027 Governing Board term!
- *We also have our typical events for spring that you all look forward to.
- *Some unique events are on the schedule for U.S.250 celebration.
- *Regarding MPA, the exhibit upstairs in Emerson Gallery featuring youth artists in our community is fantastic!

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

- *Fiesta del Sol was an amazing event! 1,275 attendees (estimated). It was lovely! Plaza was packed; band music was flowing, it was full as soon as it opened. Every parking space was filled by 5:45 p.m.; but it seemed to flow - no one complained about parking. People were very happy! It was a noticeably younger crowd (young adults; couples dancing).
- *Spring Show (Wizard of Oz) – produced by McLean youth; cast, directing, set design by our Alden team. It was a great show! It was amazing to see the sets, costumes and how it all came together. I encourage you to attend in future years.

*Follow-up to questions about the survey methodology:

1. Why the topic of "Be Visible" is so important is because we do robustly promote the survey opportunity: QR code; weekly updates in e-newsletters; postcard was sent to every household; in social media; at events with staff walking around with iPads; in the Program Guide. A lot of work went into it but there is just so much information out there, and so many vehicles where you are receiving information, that it just gets lost. The conundrum is: How do we reach people (beyond what we are already doing)?
2. Other comments about the survey were very good. That analysis is continually happening at various internal meetings throughout the year (staff meetings; MCC Governing Board committees).

MCLEAN PROJECTS FOR THE ARTS PRESENTATION **remarks by MPA Director of Communications & Public Affairs Deb Bissen*

- *Youth exhibit: We had great turnout for the opening reception. It's wonderful to see the work of the talented young people in this community (exhibit runs through April 9). Beginning last year, The Youth Shows in the Emerson Gallery has been open at all times when MCC is open – fully accessible.
- *Spring Solo exhibitions at end of April (one artist in atrium space; two artists featured in the main gallery); opening reception on Saturday, May 2. MPA is trying to offer more Saturday receptions (less traffic inconveniences).
- *Summer art camps for kids of all ages – in the gallery spaces and DuVal Studio. MPA also has CIT (Counselor in Training) where parents can pay to have their kids to gain experience which is applicable for future jobs or college applications.
- *MPA has similar challenges to let people know about everything that's going on, so we are working on more promotion of registration for summer art camps and classes through our social media. We also bring things over to the library to make parents over there aware of our kids' programming.
- *ArtReach is going great – Director Sharon Fischel has a new program with a Title I school in Herndon (suggested by Supervisor Bierman's staff). We also work extensively with Franklin Sherman Elementary school and McLean H.S. Special Ed. Department. Beech Tree Elementary (Title I school) will be coming to see the Spring show exhibits.

**remarks by MPA Executive Director Lori Carbonneau*

MPA was founded in 1962 – continuing a mission of connecting art and community and finding ways to bring us together.

Since the beginning, the idea was to help to bring in artists from throughout the region and throughout the world, to create conversation around art. We partner closely with McLean Art Society by having space here (working with Executive Director May-Salazar on that). McLean Art Society has a very different calling: to support each other in their art, and local education. MPA functions as a non-profit gallery in the DMV region vs. large national museums in Washington, DC that display extensive historical art collections; also different from 'for-profit' galleries with a motive to sell what is marketable.

Purpose: MPA offers blank walls to fill with the work of artists working today. Demand for that is significant: for the Spring Solo show 250 artists applied – an astonishing number! MPA is important to the region's art community; the Emerson Gallery upstairs is a beloved spot. For strictly painting shows every other year, we put out a call and 250 artists apply; the work of 40-60 curated artists is displayed. MPA also has a long partnership with Washington Sculptors Group. The Emerson Gallery is renowned for how well it shows 3-D work: the illumination in daylight hours is amazing through the ceiling skylights. "ArtReach" is our outreach program – continuous over 35-years (founded in 1962).

Newly-revised MPA mission statement:

MPA is the leading contemporary visual arts non-profit organization dedicated to connecting art and community. Our community is rooted in the mid-Atlantic region. Our mission is to serve artists and the public by exhibiting work of emerging and established artists, fostering the understanding of contemporary art and offering art education and instruction for people of all ages and potentials.

History of MPA's association with MCC:

MPA has moved several times over the years. The reason this is called the "Emerson Gallery" is that one of our first galleries was on Emerson Street (small white relic building with a faded sign "McLean Art Center"). In mid-1980's MCC Gov. Board and MPA Board started talking about MPA coming in together. In 1980's, 1990's, MPA undertook two capital campaigns to help build out the Community Hall to free-up space where MPA is now including the ramp, and subsequently to build the DuVal Studio.

MPA has contributed to the structure of the MCC building as well as having an ongoing management agreement to share revenue from the art classes offered here. We have a wonderful working relationship with Betsy and the whole MCC staff team. **We are excited about continuing the relationship and finding new facets as we contemplate expanding. To be very clear: MCC is MPA's forever home. We are very grateful for that – and the partnership and for the anchoring that it is, both locally and in the arts community.**

As MPA has grown organizationally and institutionally, there are opportunities to add even more Operating revenue to our overall business model. We have about 10 - 15 staff.

Concept of a new arts & education center:

In November 2017, FCPA asked MPA to consider a vision for the Liebowitz home and Clemejontri Park. Though we received all the approvals needed through the BOS, FCPA –getting a lease was a problem. At the same time, Paul Kohlenberger (Greater McLean Chamber of Commerce) mentioned an available empty space in downtown McLean. This new location was intriguing: to be in walking distance from MCC in the heart of downtown. McLean Revitalization Corporation got excited about it in terms of the work that could be done there. Fairfax Co. Economic Development Authority got excited and helped invest (along with MCC) in the idea of how to revitalize downtown McLean.

1. Three new galleries will complement Emerson Gallery and Atrium Gallery at MCC including an exhibition space right-sized for a 1-2 person exhibition, and a black box gallery; light, video, digital, film). Both spaces are enabled with broadcast and sound for artist talks. **MPA is excited about having versatile spaces to showcase various kinds of art; in those spaces, we will be able to do art films; music; partnering with The Alden to be complementary and not competing.** We will cross-promote and program there, including a 'happy hour' concept combining food and art.
2. Introducing a new medium: ceramics. Two big professional kilns (10 wheels) were installed this week. You can either take ceramics classes or be a "member" of the space. Having wheels and kilns is a big deal (a consistent operating model for MPA). We will do work with students here at MCC and then be able to transport them to fire in the kilns.
3. Café Monet restaurant/catering: Signet building in downtown McLean had a vacant 6,100-foot space that was intended to be a restaurant. It was considered off a main thoroughfare and lacking sufficient traffic to sustain a restaurant, and no parking. MPA's subdividing it into three galleries, a studio and a café actually a right-sized

concept for that space. Café Monet – will be open from breakfast through dinner 7 days a week. The menu is amazing! MPA bought it 18.5 months ago (September 2025) and we anticipate in two weeks' time, to be in our final inspections and have a certificate of occupancy. Tentative ribbon-cutting on April 30 at 11 a.m. We would love you all to be there! MPA's approach is to work with local vendors for food items and sourcing of décor and furnishings – thereby supporting as many local organizations as possible.

Acknowledgement of MCC's significant monetary gift:

MCC is designated as a "Community Steward" due to a sizeable financial gift contributed in 2025. MPA is pleased to be 95% to goal (ahead of budget of the actual build-out costs); \$2.3M to purchase it. As an organization, MPA is very happy about having an asset for decades to come. We hope to close in the next 30-to-60 days before getting into full operation.

ENVISIONING MPA and MCC WORKING TOGETHER IN NEW WAYS:

* Colorful, creative crosswalk between MCC and MPA downtown... 4/10 of a mile. It will go live on MPA website.

ACTION: Betsy will share with MPA the presentation from CFC meeting on March 11 showing the walking path.

* Public Art – Nancy Sausser was included in curation of QB sculpture and mural. MPA would love to refresh the sculpture in MCC courtyard.

* MPA café will have a liquor license and this will be an opportunity to have off-site events.

* We will have a very established and well-run operator (catering off-site for MCC will be possible).

* Joint programming opportunities.

* Pocket park (3/4 acre) is near Signet building – MRC has talked about enlivening that space with movie nights.

Question: How do you think about that pocket park vs. McLean Central Park? Or is it just a matter of size difference?

The two spaces are very different. Perhaps the Washington Sculptors Group would like to do outdoor installations, such as a seasonal installation there. We also imagine an ice cream pushcart; picnic baskets for Sunday in the park. There is great little shade-casting pagoda where you could do a concert in the park. When MPA was buying-into the space, we spent time with other property owners and they got excited about the idea of programming in it. That's a very different thing than what McLean Central Park is.

*ArtFest (annual program in MCP) may not happen in Fall 2026. Executive Director May-Salazar has been gracious about being flexible to stay in conversation about it; MPA will evaluate. While ArtFest is complementary and a favorite annual day in McLean for all of us, MPA staff are currently stretched thin.

Summary: We are very excited! MPA's board members and the artists from across the region who exhibit here consider it the most significant artistic contribution in the region in 50 years! ArtsFairfax director Stuart Holt is also very excited about it as an enhancement for the entire county. MPA really appreciates the opportunity every day to be part of this space with you all [at MCC]. We appreciate your leadership and community stewardship.

CAPITAL FACILITIES COMMITTEE **remarks by Vice-Chair Michael Monroe; 3/11 was a 'working meeting' (quorum not present)*

*MCC staff gave an update on the OFC façade and interior renovations, energy-efficient lighting, digital sign (MCP) and The Alden Theatre improvements - noting minimal impact on programming.

*Future projects at MCC facility were discussed: landscaping; courtyard redesign; parking lot repaving; DuVal Studio roof replacement, with next steps outlined.

*The committee reviewed options to improve MCC's connections to downtown McLean. There was a long discussion about how to connect this area to MPA's new downtown location and the best way to make it walkable to downtown McLean. It was a very productive meeting, looking at a map display and a great collaborative conversation. In a way, we are making it "one McLean" uniting and connecting all the different groups centered on downtown McLean.

Rising to the top is that **a crosswalk is imperative now with the increased volume of people coming into the park and trying to walk across Route 123.** Options being considered for a crosswalk are either Elm Street or at Ingleside Avenue; but it appears Elm Street may be the stronger version. We mapped out what it would look like to walk from here to there. We will take that forward to Supervisor Bierman. We want to keep the sidewalk request discrete and clearly aligned with what VDOT will understand. We agreed to draft a letter supporting a push-button pedestrian crosswalk, coordinating with MPA and local authorities.

ACTION: Vice-Chair Mike Monroe and Executive Director Betsy May-Salazar will develop a letter to present to Supervisor Bierman in support of the efforts that are already taking place.

MPA's signature will also be on the letter: As part of this cultural civic area, this is very important to MPA, especially with the new secondary location in downtown McLean.

DISCUSSION:

***challenges of working with VDOT** *Question: Besides VDOT, do we anticipate any challenges on that?*

It's been working its way through. A study has been done (that VDOT requested). Route 123 is a VDOT road and VDOT has to approve it. Our understanding is that they don't easily approve a push-button crossing and the fact that Rt 123 is a major thoroughfare is a factor. We will need to make the case of how this is our walkable community and we must be able to walk across that busy street.

***suggestion to also include a bike lane**

Question from a public attendee: Will it work together as a crosswalk and a bike lane? Because we had an issue with someone getting killed in that area who was on a bike. Sometimes, if you tie that in together you are serving two different situations that can be combined together. We are not sure about work on a bike lane on Route 123. We will explore and follow the lead of what the study is doing so that we do not introducing a new variable. But we can ask the question.

***other community groups likewise focusing on this issue**

Comment by MCA representative: MCA has been working on this issue –and working with VDOT is a very painful process. Anything MCA can do to reinforce what you want to say would be helpful.

Clarification by Executive Director May-Salazar: Glenn Harris, of MCA, explained the history of MCA's work on this and guided us to this point (giving full background on the issue). Since MCA has made a strong statement already, it behooves MCC to have our own separate statement apart from other local groups. Supervisor Bierman is supportive and we will share a DRAFT with his office prior to submitting to make sure what we are writing is useful.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: FY2026 MID-YEAR UPDATE **remarks by Treasurer Peter Pin*

Treasurer Pin thanked members of the public attending and giving comments. And also MPA for the excellent presentation. It is exciting – we are very happy to see the revitalization of downtown McLean and MPA's new installation.

Comptroller Matt Hockensmith presented the numbers at Finance Committee meeting on March 11, showing where we stand to date. At a very high level, MCC is in good shape; we are exceeding revenue budget. Comptroller Hockensmith and Executive Leadership team hold monthly and weekly reviews with the staff departments. It's a very good tight control: if things are popping up, they have a way to manage it. It's well done using best practices. Thank you to Comptroller Matt Hockensmith and your whole team!

As you drill down this year, we are exceeding revenue budget, driven somewhat by the tax revenue base and associated interest. We are looking healthy from that perspective. If you look at the detail, revenues and budget items come in at different times. We are going into the budgeting cycle now for FY2028.

There were three mid-year adjustments:

1. HVAC repair - \$25K
2. Increased expenses for some class programs, which is offset by higher revenue
3. Small adjustment for headcount to summer camp staff

Overall, MCC is looking healthy.

Clarification by Comptroller Hockensmith: Treasurer Pin has summarized it all. Finance Committee 3/11 meeting Minutes will go up on the website. Mid-Year FY26 reflects the strategic plan goal of modeling sustainability in all the programs we have, and good stewardship of our fiscal responsibility. We are turning our focus to closing FY26 out in June and already starting the FY28 budget process.

OLD /NEW BUSINESS

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

1. Request for MCC branded merch for Governing Board members (such as sweatshirts)

Question: The OFC sweatshirts look great! Do we have branded merch for MCC that the Governing Board members can also have? Right now, it is MCC staff branding. We would need to decide if we want branded merch to go beyond staff. For safety of working with kids, OFC staff must wear branded shirts at all OFC events.

ACTION: We can explore something MCC branded that goes to the Governing Board members.

2. 2026 Governing Board Election: Board Secretary Ron Keesing noted that several candidates for 2026 Governing Board election are attending tonight. He thanked them for taking the time to put themselves forward as candidates and spending time observing this Governing Board collaborative meeting. Chair Doug Jeffery asked the candidates in attendance to raise their hands, and he also thanked them for attending.

Executive Director May-Salazar announced that the informative brochure with all candidates' statements is nearly finished by the PIO team – 12 adult candidates; 6 youth candidates (4 from McLean H.S.; 2 from Langley H.S.) Absentee Early Voting starts April 1.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

In-person comments: Chair Jeffery invited the public to introduce themselves and give verbal remarks if they wished. Governing Board members will not be responding in-the-moment. The staff may follow-up with a written response if appropriate. The individual must first state aloud their residential address to verify if they are a tax district resident. Each person was allotted three minutes to speak.

No one attending requested to speak.

Written comments: Individuals submitting written comments to be shown in these Minutes were pre-verified as residing in MCC tax district.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jeffery stated that all business matters were concluded. He thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Holly Novak - Executive Assistant