

**2018-2019 MCC Governing Board - Regular Meeting  
April 24, 2019**

**MINUTES**

**MCC Board Members Present:** Paul Kohlenberger, Board Chair; Desi Woltman; Julie Waters; Elizabeth John; Lauren Herzberg; Carole Herrick; Raj Mehra; Terri Markwart

**MCC Board Members Absent:** Kat Kehoe; Megan Markwart; Alicia Plerhoples

**MCC Staff Present:** George Sachs; Ashok Karra; Holly Novak

**Guests:** Sarah Decker; Maria Federaro-Guertin; Barbara Protacio; Merrily Pierce

**CONVENE THE MEETING**

Vice-Chair Woltman convened the Regular Meeting of the 2018-2019 Governing Board of the McLean Community Center on April 24, 2019 at 7:32 p.m.

**ADOPT AGENDA**

The Agenda for the meeting was adopted by acclamation.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Woltman welcomed members of the public in attendance: 1. Sarah Decker – Langley Oaks Homeowners Assoc.; 2. Barbara Protacio (currently running for MCC Governing Board); 3. Merrily Pierce, McLean Citizens Association; 4. Maria Federaro-Guertin (currently running for MCC Governing Board). **Ms. Federaro-Guertin** voiced a concern, having noticed that things are different than last year's voting process. She questioned why the Ballot and Affidavit now go into the same envelope? Today in Montgomery County, Maryland, 80,000 students voted for the School Board. The students had to check-in; but no one knows whom they voted for. As a history teacher who instructs about elections, the MCC election method is concerning. **Ms. Pierce** similarly asked: When a person signs-in to receive an Absentee Ballot, you must show your identification. Why does the public have to again identify themselves with the Affidavit + Ballot inside the envelope?

*Mr. Sachs explained this year's innovative process:* The first personal identification step for Absentee Voting is to personally request and receive a ballot. The purpose of voter verification is that every vote being cast is valid: opening the envelope to verify the person's residency on the Affidavit. Last year: there was an issue of two different envelopes being confusing- ballots with Affidavits enclosed in the wrong envelope. Some envelopes arrived *without* Affidavits (missing the important residency verification piece). MCC staff could not open those improper envelopes, which were immediately disqualified. Many such mis-cast votes had to be discarded and were not counted.

**This year: Elections Committee determined to make it easier for the public and eliminate confusion – simplifying by color-coding (Youth/Adult) and enclosing the Ballot and Affidavit together in one envelope.** Mr. Sachs and Ms. Novak open the incoming envelope and pull out the Affidavit only – NOT the ballot. They verify that the resident lives in Small District 1A-Dranesville. Once qualified, the unviewed, folded ballot is dropped immediately into the locked ballot box WITHOUT looking at it. MCC staff is not looking at any ballots; the actual votes remain anonymous. All we are doing is verifying the address on the accompanying Affidavit. At McLean Day, when people go to the voting booth, they will likewise fill out their ballot, fold it, and put it in the ballot box. There will be no envelopes used on McLean Day. The League of Women Voters will give the person a ballot once they verify the person's address in the

tax district records, and that the person has not already voted by Absentee Ballot. At the end of the day, the McLean Day ballot box will be brought to MCC. The Absentee Ballot box will also be opened then and included in the total vote-counting effort by the League of Women Voters.

*Elections Chair Herrick explained:* Recognizing that the annual Governing Board election is a huge task load on MCC staff, an effort was made to streamline the process. Ms. Herrick also offered to sit inside and view through the glass windows to make sure that validation of Affidavits was being handled appropriately and above-board. This is how the Elections Committee decided to do it – Mr. Sachs and Ms. Novak are very trustworthy.

*Comment by the public:* Ms. Foderaro-Guertin remarked how she teaches her students that voting in America is very private and there is no connection with names. In other countries, there are intimidation tactics – where you get killed or slammed with violence depending on how you vote. In an open society with free and fair elections... where your vote is your own and no one can influence or change it...you shouldn't feel intimidated. In future years, how will this process be guaranteed as trustworthy when *different* staff people (not Mr. Sachs and Ms. Novak) will be handling this process? The level of integrity is only as good as the people who are handling the process.

*Clarification Ms. Markwart:* The over-riding thought process of the Elections Committee was realizing that voters in MCC Governing Board elections of the past were being disenfranchised by a confusing process: when they didn't send in the correct votes in the correct envelopes. It was further complicated with youth and adults voting on different Affidavits and Ballots. The decisions by this year's Elections Committee were a balancing act to make sure that peoples' votes indeed do count and avoiding the large problem of previous years when votes had to be discarded because people didn't put their ballot in the correct envelope or didn't include their Affidavit. Last year's committee had attempted to simplify by adding a one-page color-coded diagram into the election materials. Yet even this step-by-step diagram was still not correctly followed by the public. So, this year's committee made the decision to try a new color-coded envelope method. There have been no issues with ballots not coming back in the proper envelope. As a suggestion for next year's committee, maybe there can be a sticky adhesive so that that the ballot itself can't be opened. Cost-control was also a factor in decision-making: the colors of paper and envelopes chosen were in-stock at Fairfax County, so it didn't increase costs.

**The board had the same reaction and concerns about public perception and we are mindful. There is no unfairness; however, with government operations, the perception of integrity of the process is just as important as what actually happens.** On the other hand, we are also completely trusting the public to be truthful when they sign their Affidavit; there is no way to double-check it. After all, people could be picking up an Absentee Ballot for someone else... or signing an Affidavit for someone else. Absentee voting is subject to corruption. The board has the burden of carrying out an election with integrity; yet, we are trusting the public in many aspects of it. The method will be revisited every year to improve it; nothing is perfect. The public's concerns are well taken and express what people are aware of; this is important public input for decisions by the Elections Committee next year. Throughout this year's process, we are making notes for future improvement. It is worth clarifying to the public that this new procedure is helping to simplify the process. The color-coded ballots and envelopes have resulted in less confusion by the public and no disqualification of 'invalid' ballots (votes not being duly counted).

#### **APPROVE MINUTES OF MARCH 27, 2019 GOVERNING BOARD MEETING**

Ms. Woltman asked if there were any requested revisions to Minutes of the meeting on March 27, 2019, which was a Regular Meeting and Public Hearing on FY2021 Programs. There was a motion to approve the Minutes as written; it was seconded.

**MOTION:** That the Minutes of the Governing Board Regular Meeting and Public Hearing on FY2021 Programs, held on March 27, 2019, be approved.  
**Unanimously approved.**

## CHAIR'S REPORT / EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee did not meet in April. Mr. Kohlenberger confirmed that room signage plaques are underway. Depending on what comes out of the Program Committee meeting in May, the board may want to consider revisions to booking/rental policies. A potential donation policy is submitted for review among the preparatory materials for tonight's meeting. Mr. Kohlenberger will discuss this document with Vice Chair Woltman and make recommendations for further discussion by the board at the May 2019 meeting.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*Mr. Sachs submitted a written report detailing recent activities and accomplishments.*

**Internal Alignment:** Exciting things are going on here! The Summer Program Guide is being mailed to households now and are available at MCC. Congratulations to MCC staff member Jonathan Davis:

Mr. Sachs received a phone call from a resident who was very complimentary about outstanding dealings with Jonathan Davis. He was helpful and went above-and beyond her expectations in assisting with the room rental. Absentee Voting is going well – 112 adult ballots; 26 youth ballots have gone out. 56 Adult ballots and 12 Youth ballots have been returned. We are keeping up with the processing weekly. After verifying the Affidavit in the system, it is recorded that the individual has voted by Absentee. Computer printouts on McLean Day will show everyone who has already voted by Absentee Ballot, which is the check-and-balance process for in-person voting. Paving of the courtyard is underway and hopefully will be completed in early May. Alden Theatre staff has been outstanding in assisting organizations that were doing events in the theatre. The FY19 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter report shows what MCC has been doing cumulatively in the fiscal year.

**External Alignment:** It is a busy time in the Alden: Macdonald scholarship finals were held and the dance competition final is coming up. Two community group rentals were successful: 1. Safe Community Coalition on April 1 held a seminar on practical advice on dealing with youth anxiety; 2. "Voices of Spring" opera dress rehearsal. McLean Day booth spaces are all filled; carnival rides will be previewed on Friday, May 17 (2:00 – 7:00 p.m.) Letting people enjoy the rides on Friday night is popular idea! Spring Garage Sale – 1,130 people attended. April 20 – SpringFest had over 200 participants with an egg hunt outside; it worked out well.

OFC Spring Break trips last week received rave reviews from those who participated. People think these trips are wonderful – great staff and positive support of our McLean youth. The trips meet a true need for busy parents to give their kids worthwhile experiences over Spring Break. Our staff team is well-trained to handle emergency situations: the vans were coming back on Route 66 when they had a flat tire at 3:30 p.m. Staff moved immediately into contingency plans to handle the situation and continue transporting the kids safely: phone calls were made to the correct people at Fairfax County Motor Pool before close of business; the tow truck arrived promptly. They arranged another van to transport the kids; and an alternate van for the trip on the following day was immediately secured. All tasks were completed properly. Mr. Sachs is proud of the fact that OFC staff can handle sudden logistical challenges as they are trained to do. Nothing was cancelled for the trip the next day and everything went smoothly.

Zumba instructor Linea at OFC has kindly been working with SPARC kids at 10 a.m. at OFC -- at her own initiative and on her own time. They love the music and physical activity. Mr. Sachs will send her a thank you letter for her extraordinary efforts.

**Financial Stewardship:** *Comptroller Karra prepared a 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter FY19 report of summary statistics: Events-Participants; Booking Requests; Instruction Q3; Special Events Q3; Performing Arts (Q1, Q2, Q3); Youth Q3; OFC Q3.* Staff are directed to prepare for end of FY19. Purchase orders need to be closed-out by mid-June.

## ELECTIONS & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

The Elections Committee met on April 15. A student candidate from Langley was disqualified because she didn't have proper signatures on her petition (22066 is Great Falls; only some of it is in Langley district). She

was notified and was very nice about the situation. Ms. Herrick offered that she could still be a write-in candidate. We have not heard from her about this. Her grandfather had served on the board years ago. The Committee will make it very clear next year to the Langley High School candidates about the particular district boundaries.

The **“Meet-the-Candidates” reception** will be held at MCC on Sunday, April 28 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., jointly-hosted by the Friends of the McLean Community Center and McLean Citizens Association. All adult and youth candidates have been invited; they will have an opportunity to introduce themselves and speak for up to 3 minutes. This is a special gathering of two significant groups of longstanding McLean residents.

**Absentee Voting continues** at MCC and OFC until the cutoff: 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 15. A board member voiced concern that the process wasn’t secret if Absentee Ballot envelopes were being opened prior to McLean Day voting; her opinion was that only LWV should open all envelopes on May 18, 2019. It was decided that verifying the Absentee Ballots would take too much time, bog down the process, and the election results would not be completed by the end of McLean Day evening. Mr. Sachs and Ms. Novak will do the ongoing weekly work of separating the Absentee Ballot Affidavits and verifying that each voter lives in the tax district. The League of Women Voters will handle the voting process on McLean Day. After the polls close, they will come over to MCC and count ALL the votes –Absentee ballots and McLean Day in-person ballots. A member of the Elections Committee will be there to observe.

#### **Executive Committee positions on next year’s Governing Board:**

Ms. Herrick has begun to inquire among current board members about interest in serving on the Executive Committee for the 2019-2020 board year. All current board members should be present on June 5, 2019 for the final board meeting. This will be followed by the swearing-in of new members by Supervisor John Foust. Once the new board is seated, Ms. Herrick will open the meeting to select a Chair of the 2019-2020 Board. She will then turn it over to the new Chair to continue the election to fill the remaining officer positions.

**Absentee Ballots will not be mailed out after May 8** because there is not enough time to go through the County mail process and have them returned it by the May 15 deadline. Absentee voting ends on May 15 at 5:00 p.m.; postmarks do not count. Election signage has been moved over to the Library side of MCC to increase public awareness of Absentee Voting for the Governing Board. There was a random drawing to show where the candidate tents will be placed respectively on ‘CANDIDATE ROW’ at McLean Day and Ms. Novak will notify each candidate about their spot.

#### **CAPITAL FACILITIES COMMITTEE**

The Capital Facilities Committee did not meet in April. NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 14 at 6:30 p.m.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

The Communications Committee met on April 8 for a final meeting, discussing successful progress of communication to the public about the Governing Board elections. The committee also reviewed goals and summarized what has been accomplished during the 2018-2019 board year.

#### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

The Finance Committee did not meet in April. NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 14 at 7:30 p.m. May 14 meeting will be a 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter budget review. It is helpful to get a head-start on the next budget cycle.

#### **PROGRAM COMMITTEE**

Program Committee met on April 8, discussing several topics, including feedback that had been expressed by members of the public at the Public Hearing on FY2021 Programs on March 27, 2019.

1. Tyson’s McLean Orchestra and Youth Orchestra 2020 and 2021 performance seasons: the Program staff is handling their requests appropriately. There have been extensive conversations about TMO’s goals and their

expressed desire to be associated with MCC as their “home.” There is a need to clarify and communicate how performing arts organizations are defined by MCC guidelines to qualify for “Category 5” status. A meeting with current Category 5 groups was held on April 23, 2019, for dialogue with MCC staff and better understanding of the qualification guidelines: Alden Theatre staff + McLean Community Players + Tysons McLean Orchestra + Program Chair Waters attended; McLean Symphony was invited but they did not send a representative. It was clarified what the rules are about Category 5 and what the organizations needed to do. The groups had many questions and this meeting was a good ‘refresher’.

2. Adult chess class: This has been addressed previously by MCC staff. An adult chess class has been offered in the past, but not enough people showed interest or participated. Perhaps an “open play” chess club rather than a ‘class’ would be of greater interest to the public. Ms. Herrick knows of many people who would like to get together and play chess on a weekday.

*Clarification by staff:* MCC offers such “open-play club” with Bridge, Mah-jongg and Scrabble; chess could be added. Ms. Herrick confirmed that her colleagues don’t need a class to learn chess – they just want to play. Mr. Sachs will inform Program staff that, rather than an adult chess *class* being taught, there is interest in “open play” chess. That is a new and different idea being expressed.

3. Capability of sending automatic reminders to people who register for classes and other events; currently, there is no way to do so. With current technology (people using their phones) it seems like this would be so simple; but it’s not. This new idea has been submitted as a formal request for software upgrade development to MCC’s current IT vendor (ActiveNet). It will not be done in the foreseeable future, however. MCC could consider other vendors but that would be a big step and would have to be decided carefully to avoid loss of historical data and staff time involved in making a big change. The Board can address this as a future topic, but will not make any rash decisions.

*Question: Is the thought that, if you were to sign-up in late November for a Winter class, then you would get a reminder in mid-January? Or one week prior to the start date?*

Automatic notification is not possible now, but that is the goal. Given the long time between registering and the start of classes, a reminder would be welcome. Some instructors give such reminders on their own. This is not a dire issue; it is a ‘convenience’.

*Question: In lieu of ‘automatic’ reminders, could MCC staff download a list and produce such reminders for each class?*  
We can think about that for the future.

4. The next big issue that came up was room rental pricing, booking policies, and “category” definitions. Regarding category definitions of local groups: the Program Committee did not come to any conclusions and this will be discussed during the next board year as to what is allowed as defining an organization to be “Category 5” and what is MCC’s definition of “local, open” – is it open to everybody?

5. Program Committee did come to a conclusion about minimum hours for the booking policy. It was brought up that the 3-hour minimum makes sense for a party room or a big event; however, a 3-hour minimum might be too long for a basic meeting being held in McLean Room or Swinson. Program Committee decided to recommend for the whole board to consider that if someone is renting the rooms in *standard* configuration (i.e. not moving anything around), that the minimum requirement just be 2 hours.

*Opinions expressed:* When the board raised the rates in December 2018, the mindset was focusing on charging more (appropriately) for usage by people outside the tax district. In doing so, all hourly rates were elevated without also taking into consideration the 3-hour minimum being imposed - which turned out to be punishing for non-profit groups to suddenly be required to pay \$75.00 to come in and have a meeting. Reconsidering MCC’s room rates would be a task for the next board year. So... the first step to do right now is:

**MOTION:** That all meeting rooms, if used in their standard configuration, be changed from a 3-hour minimum to a 2-hour minimum for rentals. **Seconded.**

*Question: How is “standard configuration” defined? If a group wants a flag and podium, is that considered “standard configuration”? That would be up to MCC staff– generally, anything short of moving tables out of the room (not*

small items). As long as furniture doesn't get removed from the room, it would be considered 'standard configuration.' For example, Swinson Room only has one configuration (tables and cushioned chairs in-place).  
*Question: As a Category 5 organization, for 70 hours you would also get a room but provided you don't exceed 70 hours, then you get a room for \$1.00? Clarification by staff:* That is a provision for rehearsals; it is specific to MCP. Rooms other than McLean Room and Swinson require set-ups. The 2-hour minimum is for the two rooms that require very little or no set-up.

**MOTION:** That all meeting rooms, if used in their standard configuration, be changed from a 3-hour minimum to a 2-hour minimum for rentals.

**Amended:** This applies to McLean Room and Swinson Room ONLY.

**AMENDED MOTION STATED:** That McLean and Swinson meeting rooms, if used in their standard configuration, be changed from a 3-hour minimum to a 2-hour minimum for rentals.

**Unanimously passed.**

*Background:* Some groups had been choosing to occupy rooms in the middle of the evening; the 3-hour minimum became a limitation on usage of that room in the same evening by other groups. Also, some groups have been suddenly surprised by mounting \$75 charges – expressing disappointment and complaining about strikingly higher rental costs after the updated policies (and \$prices\$) went into effect in December 2018. The policy changes and new pricing structure were voted on unanimously by the board. However, now the public is experiencing the real impact and reacting to these changes.

5. The Summer Program Guide was just released. The location for MCC summer camps has been selected by Fairfax County: Chesterbrook Elementary School (same site as last year).

6. The topic of how the public receives a courtesy notice in the event of cancellation was discussed in detail after a board member experienced poor customer service upon sudden cancellation of a program. Program Staff explained that there is a courtesy protocol to be adhered to in the event of a cancellation. Ms. Shea will follow-up to address the recent instance of poor customer service from a particular volunteer instructor.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, May 6 at 6:30 p.m. – the focus of discussion will be: 1. room rental rates; 2. recapping Program Committee goals over the 2018-2019 board year.

## LIAISON TO FRIENDS OF THE MCLEAN COMMUNITY CENTER

Ms. Herrick attended a meeting on April 8; They have \$34K in the bank; the Wine & Cheese Reception in February netted \$270.00. There are 39 members of Friends; they are hoping that current MCC board members will join Friends of MCC if haven't already done so. Friends will identify a substantial project to focus on to encourage fund-raising - after all the renovation tasks at MCC are completed. The upcoming "Meet-the-Candidates" Reception on April 28 was discussed. E-mails went out to all membership of both groups. Friends of MCC will have a booth at McLean Day – they will assist with games and hand out pins. Questions arose about where the portrait of Robert Alden will be hung... and will it have protective glass installed on the frame? Also, when will historic photos of "old McLean" be displayed throughout MCC facility?  
*Clarification by staff:* No pictures or artwork will be hung for display until all construction projects are finished. Pictures and artwork will be professionally re-hung, without wires.

*Opinions expressed:* Some board members have not received e-mails from Friends; it seems complicated to join Friends online. Ms. Herrick will address these concerns with the Friends of MCC Corresponding Secretary.

## OLD / NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Kohlenberger opened the floor to any old or new topics for discussion.

## ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Kohlenberger adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Holly Novak - Executive Assistant to the Governing Board