

**2021-2022 MCC Governing Board
Meeting-of-the-Whole
Strategic Plan – Preliminary Workshop
April 20, 2022 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

MISSING AMS DISCUSSION & PRESENTATION 4/20/22

- Board Members present:** *in-person:* Barbara Zamora-Appel; Lisa Mariam; Rasheq Rahman; Suzanne Le Menestrel; Carla Post; Melanie Sletten; Max Blacksten; Maria Foderaro-Guertin
- Board Members absent:** Ivy Chen; Bill Glikbarg; Shivani Saboo
- MCC Staff present:** *in-person:* Daniel Singh, Executive Director; Mike Fisher; Catherine Nesbitt; Matthew Hockensmith; Katie Fedora; Erin Bieger; Carrie Conley; Sarah Schallern Treff; Danielle Van Hook; Jennifer Garrett; Justin King; Deion Roulhac; Ashok Karra; Lindsey Hogan; Nadia Jaff; Andrew Carter; Aaron Greene; Kyle Corwin; Anne McAfee; Holly Novak
virtual: David Craig
- Guests:** Michele Walter (AMS); Rebekah Boggs (AMS); Meg Friedman (AMS – *virtual*); Debra Butler; James Lawless; Merrily Pierce; Paul Kohlenberger

CONVENE MEETING

Chair Zamora-Appel convened a Meeting-of-the-Whole of the Governing Board of the McLean Community Center on April 20, 2022, at 5:15 p.m. Several MCC staff participated in this joint workshop to discuss progress on the strategic plan. This meeting was open to the public attending in-person.

ADOPT AGENDA No changes were requested to the proposed Agenda; it was adopted by acclamation.

STRATEGIC PLAN **Executive Director Singh introduced Michele Walter and Rebekah Boggs of AMS Planning & Research. AMS has done extensive work on understanding community needs toward development of new strategic directions for MCC.*

A PowerPoint presentation outlined progress TO-DATE focusing on MCC staff's recent efforts in inter-disciplinary working groups to address each respective goal. The staff working groups have met three times to recommend new program offerings and to codify existing programs that could be marketed and updated to meet strategic goals. The staff collaborated in 'thinking big' and imagining new possibilities. MCC staff creativity is considered outstanding by AMS which has consulted with hundreds of civic organizations.

A written exercise was given to board members and staff in this meeting to indicate their preferences in establishing relative priorities among the goals.

Board members expressed a particular priority on evaluating MCC's success in terms of metrics and impact reports.

According to AMS, the following future emphases are emerging from the analysis thus far: building community liaison relationships; fine-tuning of financial oversight; improving governance structure. The strategic plan will be comprehensive while allowing for new ideas to enter the framework in the future.



PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Paul Kohlenberger

Good evening, my name is Paul Kohlenberger. I haven't reviewed this particular document deeply; but I have a few specific quick reactions in light of this: I question the wisdom and the justice of suggesting that the Center 'expand its solicitation of local sponsorships' - especially this is the case as, on the other hand, it is proposing entirely elective new programming, new staff, new facilities – that come with their own funding requirements. The Center has (the Comptroller would have knowledge of this better than I) \$5.2M of real estate tax money annually. The means that the local business community is already supporting the Center to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Whatever remaining funds businesses have for community engagement and support should remain focused on the various and worthy local community organizations which completely rely on voluntary contributions. The Center should not be comprehensively and consistently competing with (and therefore harming) local community organizations when its own mission charges it with, instead: “assisting” community organizations.

My other comment is that I urge you NOT to amend the current mission statement. To my knowledge, no member of the public has asked for this, or is even aware that dealing with the fundamental purpose and mission of the Center was an issue here. Rather, there should be a strategic plan to better implement that mission. The rest of the plan aligns with the current mission statement; but the current mission statement has the advantage over the proposed one in including not only 'recreation' but the word 'civic' – which is essentially important to what we are here for and why the Center exists. And it also specifically charges the Center with “assisting community organizations and furnishing facilities” for the community which built and sustains MCC. So, I'm asking you to consider strongly retaining the current mission statement. Thank you.

2. Merrily Pierce

I am a long-time resident of McLean and former Board member. One of my major concerns is your public input process that has not been given the mixed content of the strategic plan: it has not been widely distributed or is not well known by members of Small District 1A-Dranesville. Certainly, you've had a robust first public input in Community Hall. I think everybody found that was very valuable. The second community input had two people participating (online); and I only knew about it as a former board member. And I'm really concerned with the third input which is going to be a risk in terms of your final public opportunity: McLean Day. Because I've been to many McLean Day events – people wander in-and-out. Even people who are coming to vote may not have any context of what you have been doing... and they'll be coming in and putting dots on sentences that may sound very nice but for they will have no concept of, or context, for what you are going to do. This is something that is very significant changes to the Community Center – and again, the people who support the Community Center do not know about it; and it's important for the community to know about. And that's my concern – back out in the community, people have no idea that this is going on or what you're doing.

There's no such thing as a perfect organization or a perfect individual. I think we all have to have the attitude to improve ourselves and the organization to participate in that can take all this and build a strategy. The very definition of life has changed; and each generation puts their imprint on what is important to them. And that's the process that's going on now. And I don't ever mean to malign any individual or any person who is participating in the strategic plan. I've participated in many and it's heck of a lot of work. But ideas come out and directions need to be discussed.

But I am concerned about the words – I feel the words that you all have written in your memo basically are an insult to the civic, the faith, and the community and business organizations that initiated, starting in 1918, the whole concept of a community center. Because there is no recognition of the incredible amount of work that went into the not only the idea – but the committee; Bob Alden actually started the committee in the late 1950's. The amount of work that it took, not only



to build the whole concept of a community working together, but how complicated it was to consolidate the land on which we stand right now. It was an unbelievable process – and there’s no recognition of that past effort.

Also, I think the words are insulting too: in the last 50 years that the Center has been in operation, we’ve had not only incredible participation from the community, but you have a professional staff, and excellent, excellent Directors who have basically embodied the very ideas you have written in this memo. In fact, when I was reading the memo, I went through it and noted ‘check,’ ‘check,’ ‘check’ because we’ve done many of the things and the ideas that you have been working on. Obviously, there are new things and new ideas: One Fairfax, CECAP and other ideas. But please do not forget the tremendous effort that has gone into, over basically the last 75 years, in bringing us to where we are today.

I have participated in this process from the very beginning and I plan to be with it until the end. But please do recognize the professional expertise of your staff and all the individuals over the years who have come to create what we are all part of now.

3. Debra Butler

My name is Debra Butler and I am a 1A-Dranesville resident. I’d like to say “thank you very much” to the staff because I think McLean Community Center is phenomenal! I’ve had kids at Chocolate Fest, sat out with MPA to put the art in the middle of the night for ArtFest – you’ve done a great job for a very long time! And I know you will continue to do it. I’m emotionally involved in this. I am also a CMO of a company; I have spent 20 years at a fragrance company in France and Switzerland. My son is an alternative learner; he is autistic. He has an Indy rock band – he has every diversity covered with his five band mates.

And I would like to say that I do not find the purpose, vision and mission aligned. I think the purpose is to create community for the district (it’s paid for by the district). I think the “vision” is not aligned with the purpose: “Generate inspiration, creativity and unity in McLean and its communities.” It takes out the broad swath that we have right now. It takes out ‘recreation,’ it takes out ‘civic’ – see all these little girls running around; they need yoga. It’s too narrow – it has become too regional, too arts-directed... and I think we need a very broad vision – much broader. And we have one. Maybe we don’t like the words (they are 50 years old); maybe you want to nuance the words; but we don’t need to go narrow. Our vision needs to be bigger.. it needs to be bigger than art and reading. And that is “Yes” to the volunteerism; “Yes” to the community aspect – all of that needs to stay in there. I’ve looked at many, many strategic plans for a \$6B company. When I look at the back... Be visible. Invite discovery. Showcase excellence. Model sustainability. Love em! All the ideas are fantastic – we can nuance all of this stuff. But to take the purpose – it must be aligned with the vision. To take the vision – it must be aligned with the mission; and it’s very divergent here. It needs to be broader, more inclusive (that’s the point of what we’re doing). Maybe there is recreational floor time here [at MCC] for kids who are on the spectrum. Maybe there is more education in how do we grow in civics to be a more inclusive, better democracy? Because right now, people are driving a line down the middle of McLean Community Center. And I don’t think we should tolerate it and I don’t think we should start it by narrowing our vision. I’m sorry I’m emotional about it. So those are my comments. Thank you very much.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Zamora-Appel asked for a MOTION to adjourn (it was seconded) and was unanimously affirmed. She adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted – Holly Novak, Executive Assistant