

## **060113 Minutes of CPCA**

JANUARY 13, 2007 MEETING

To meet

GINNIE COOPER

CHIEF LIBRARIAN, DC PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

Co-sponsored by

FRIENDS OF THE CLEVELAND PARK LIBRARY (FCPL)

CLEVELAND PARK CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (CPCA)

CLEVELAND PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY (CPHS)

CPCA President George Idelson opened the meeting at 10:15am and introduced FCPL President Jill Bogart and CPHS President Joan Habib. Bogart introduced DC Chief Librarian Ginnie Cooper, who came on board six months ago, after serving as Chief of the library system in Brooklyn, NY.

Cooper noted that she is fortunate to have a Board that both cares deeply about DC libraries and appreciates the need for transformation of the system. Since assuming the job, she has been able to secure funding from the DC Council to make key improvements. These include extending library hours to Sunday afternoons during the school year; additional funding for both paper and online reference works; providing Tutor.com, an online program in both English and Spanish to help school children with their homework; establishing online access to the historic Washington Post and YFI access in all libraries; and sprucing up physical library facilities.

The most visible problems in the DC Library system have been the closed facilities for the Anacostia, Benning, Watha T. Daniel/Shaw and the Tenley-Friendship neighborhoods. Since mid-September, branch services have been provided by 4 high-tech mobile vans. In late December, a modular interim facility opened to serve the Tenley-Friendship area and three more modular facilities are due to open in the other areas over the next several months.

Cooper outlined her four initiatives for improving the library system. First, she wants to make all libraries “the place” to bring kids, from pre-school age to school children, to young adults. Second, she wants to enhance technology, doubling the number of computers, providing computer training in each branch, and devoting one of the mobile vans to a computer lab. Third, Cooper wants to enhance community engagement by providing more transparency and information through the library website. And fourth, she is working to accomplish building renovations and compliance with ADA accessibility requirements.

Idelson opened the audience discussion with questions regarding the future of the Main Library and its relationship to the branch libraries. Cooper advised that the DC Council has not yet acted on legislation authorizing a new Main Library facility. She noted that it would be difficult to transform the existing building into a modern library, though she is working to improve the facility. Even if a new building is erected, the old facility has

applied for landmark status and will never be demolished. Cooper advised that she views the Main Library and its branches as a whole. The Main Library has broader collections, but it shares its resources with the branches on request.

Other audience comments included questions about: online reminders about overdue books (DC has a system which will enable this and other features, such as online catalogues); what to do about the homeless people at the Main Library (“there are regulations about sleeping and bathing, but it is important to remember that this is their library too”); whether branch real estate could be leveraged to help with construction and renovation costs (not likely); realigning branch staff to provide technical support (there are plans to have 1-2 technicians at each branch); feasibility of purchasing used books (this is not cost effective); including the DC archives and records in the library holdings (this can be done online).

There were also audience questions and comments on the need for more non-English language resources, ways to increase community involvement; staff recruitment; further extension of Sunday hours, the relationship between public libraries and school libraries, how and when to glean collections, and how to meet the needs of varied users

Bogart asked that Cooper return in a year to update the organizations on accomplishments.

At 11:50am, Idelson adjourned the CPCA segment of the session and turned the gavel over to Bogart who then presided over the Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Library. The session was attended by over 100 members of the CPCA, the FCPL, and the CPHS.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Joan Buchanan, CPCA Recording Secretary