Present: Lisa Karim, Director of Simsbury Public Library; Kathleen Miller, Chair of Library Board of Trustees; Polly Rice, Vice Chair of the Library Board of Trustees; Greg Golinski, President of the Friends of the Library; Heather Goetz, Board of Selectmen Liaison; Tolly Gibbs, Mary Glassman, Holly McGrath, Mark Orenstein, Susan Rubenstein attended via Zoom and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council representatives: Sara Batchelder, Rick Brush, Cheryl Cook, and Mario Giapetti

Absent: Dave Blume and Linda Johnson

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COUNCIL

Ms. Cook presented that Simsbury has launched a year-long community engagement process to develop a shared vision and a plan for inclusive housing. This project is led by the Simsbury DEI Council, which is a town committee of volunteers that get support from the First Church of Christ in Simsbury and funding from the Hartford Foundation of Public Giving. They will be hosting several events over the next few months to provide information and gain an understanding of what the Simsbury community envisions for the future of inclusive housing. They are surveying and discussing with as many current and potential residents and stakeholders as possible. Part of what their programs will consist of is an education series, the first which will be held at the Library on May 12th, called “Housing Basics,” and will be definitional in nature. After the education series they are going to have community forums, where different groups of people from around town can come together to discuss what is important to them on this topic.

Mr. Giapetti explained that they have several project goals with specific measures, tasks, and owners. The first goal is to have an assessment of pre- and post-perceptions concerning what the community’s thoughts are on housing. The second goal is to arrange key stakeholder group meetings. They want to educate the Simsbury public on the issue because there are so many different impressions on housing and awareness on what Simsbury currently offers.

Mr. Brush inquired what are the themes, what are the challenges, and what are the conversations that the Library Board of Trustees has observed concerning the affordable housing propositions.

Mr. Golinksi commented that affordable housing would be great for the people who work in this town who cannot afford to live here.
Ms. Blaze observed that there is often an assumption of what poverty looks like and how someone can fall into financial adversity. She also mentioned that there are already families from surrounding areas who come to our town’s library and parks just to feel the safety that our town provides, but then have to return back to their home.

Ms. Karim commented that the Library has eradicated overdue fines because that has opened access to people who normally would not use the Library.

Ms. Glassman commented that transportation has also been a barrier to housing.

Ms. Miller commented that there is not much diversity in types of housing.

Ms. Cook responded that for the “Housing Basics” program the new Town Planner will be able to provide a zoning map that shows where certain types of housing are allowed. She mentioned that there will be information on low-income qualifications for housing. There will also be a developer that will discuss what developing looks like now and what the potential is.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 21st, 2022**

**MOTION:** Ms. Glassman made a motion to accept the minutes for the March 21st, 2022 meeting as recorded. Ms. Rice seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC AUDIENCE**

No public audience was present.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Ms. Miller noted there was a letter to the Editor from Ms. Karim and other area Library Directors urging support for the eBook Bill.

Ms. Miller informed the Board that she had written to both State Representatives for support for this bill.

Ms. Miller stated that she attended the Garden Club meeting and they read the letter of thanks that Ms. Karim sent them for supplying the flowers for National Library Week.

Ms. Miller said that she received a survey from the Association of Connecticut Libraries, and she will provide copies of that for the Board for next month’s meeting.

Ms. McGrath mentioned that a resident was wondering if the Library could offer a Service Club and was wondering when the next volunteer fair would be. Ms. Karim responded that there was one before the pandemic and one scheduled during the pandemic which was cancelled and that now that there is no Business and Career Center Coordinator it has been put on hold.

**FRIENDS REPORT**

Mr. Golinski reported that the Friends bought a new dishwasher for the Library kitchen which will be installed by Public Works.
The April 5th Virtual-Author Talk with Maggie Shipstead was successful with a lot of participation. The next author, Paula McLain, will be live at the Hop Meadow Country Club on May 19th for the Spring Author Luncheon.

The Special Selections Book Sale will be on Saturday and Sunday, May 21st and 22nd.

The Friends are reactivating the bus trips and on May 19th they are going to Lexington and Concord.

CHAIR REPORT

Ms. Miller welcomed Mr. Orenstein back to the Board, and thanked Ms. Rice for chairing the meetings during her absence.

Ms. Miller inquired of how the Board felt about resuming meetings fully in person. Ms. Rubenstein responded that having the virtual option has allowed her to be both, an entrepreneur and an active community member who can be of service. Ms. Gibbs added that with her lifestyle and family caretaking responsibilities this has been a flexible option to be a part of the Board. Ms. Rice commented that she enjoys the organic conversations that in person meetings foster. Ms. Miller added that she feels that members are less participatory over Zoom and that managing the Zoom meetings is challenging for Ms. Karim and hinders her ability to participate in the meetings as needed. Mr. Orenstein commented that hybrid meetings are the way of the future and that better technology needs to be utilized. Ms. Goetz added that each commission is in charge of making their own decision regarding meeting format. Mr. Golinski, Mr. Orenstein, and Ms. McGrath agreed to be trained in using the technology to continue to offer hybrid meetings.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Ms. Karim reported that Library Services Assistant, Suzanne Bailey has retired.

Ms. Karim expressed gratitude to the Friends for sponsoring the “Borrow A Bag” program.

The Book Lockers are available, are being utilized, and increasing access for residents. Ms. Karim thanked Mr. Orenstein for filming the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.

Rachel Gravel, the Head of Borrowing and Technical Services attended the Public Library Association Conference and has begun to put her learned ideas into play.

The Self-Check machines have been upgraded. These machines are being rented with up-to-date software and in a couple of years they can give the machine back and get a new rental option, which has saved the Library $5,000 a year.

The Library is hiring for Library pages in the Children’s Department.

Stephanie Prato, the Head of Children’s Services creates a “Raising Readers” email newsletter every month, and her and Children’s Librarian, Hilary Kennard, have put together a recommended reading list and this summer the elementary and middle schools are getting their recommended reading list for students from the Library’s Children’s Department lists.
Ms. Miller complimented the Banned Books Display and how she was stunned by some of the books on it. Ms. Karim credited Ms. Glassman’s suggestion of including the Library’s Purchase Selection Process for drawing people to the display.

Mr. Orenstein inquired about the availability of Chrome books. Ms. Karim said that she believes they are available but will check with the Borrowing & Technical Services Department.

VOLUNTEER CELEBRATION

Ms. Karim provided invitations to the Volunteer Celebration that will be held May 11th 6:30 P.M – 8 P.M.

LIBRARY CARD REPLACEMENT FEES

Ms. Karim stated that one of the things that Rachel Gravel came back from the conference offering was the concept of eliminating library card replacement fee because it became a deterrence for people getting a library card and therefore hindering their library accessibility.

BUDGET FY 2022-2023

Ms. Karim reported that the budget is moving forward to referendum on May 3rd.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Ms. Miller reported that the Strategic Plan was going to be presented to the Board of Selectmen April 25th at 6 P.M.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Not needed.

Ms. Gibbs made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Glassman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:45 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Blaze
Commission Clerk