Library Management Division
Meeting Minutes April 24, 2014
Station North Tool Library, Baltimore, MD

Present:
James Kelly, Janet Vogel, Stephanie Long, Michael Shochet, Erika Cooper
Facilitators: Chris Lavoie, Piper Watson, John O’Shea, Station North Tool Library

The program began with an overview of how the library began. The founders wanted to provide access to tools as well as how to use the tools. They visited tool libraries across the country and then asked questions of their community to see what they wanted and needed. They are currently grant funded and also receive donations of tools, but they are hoping to add classes to allow them to be self-sustaining. There is also a webinar from the Center for a New American Dream about How to Start a Tool Library.

The nitty gritty:

- They use My Turn software to lend the tools (like almost every tool library in the country) and do not allow holds.
- Users may check out 8 tools per week with one renewal.
- They charge for membership on a sliding scale. For all of the membership details, visit their membership page: http://stationnorthtoollibrary.org/membership/
- They work with many volunteers (and note the importance of creating an organized plan for working with volunteers, which can be difficult for a small organization just starting out).
- Before checking out a tool, members must sign a waiver that signifies that they know how to use the tool safely. If they do not, the library provides safety classes.

We completed the program with a tour of the library and the space as well as an overall discussion of community engagement. The Station North Tool Library has also tried to position itself as an important part of the community. For example, they are a pickup location for a local CSA, they allow groups to use their tools to build a particular community project (i.e. planter boxes), and they also participate in neighborhood events. They stressed the importance of creating a specific “vibe.” In their case, they wanted to be friendly, open, creative, and a space that is open to learning rather than being intimidating. They do not serve as the “experts,” but rather encourage member to learn alongside them when trying to make a project, etc. Piper used the example of pulling up YouTube videos to learn with a member when she didn’t know how to build something.

The Station North Tool Library welcomes librarian visitors. Stop by when you are in the area!