

Village Independent Democrats

Minutes- December 12, 2013 Membership Meeting

Keen Berger opened the meeting with her District Leader Report. She said she thought the role of a District Leader was to figure out which issues are of particular importance to her constituents and then to act on those issues. She cited 75 Morton Street. The tenants (New York State) are still not out and the deed has not been closed, but she hopes construction will begin in January, and the school will open in 2015.

Peter Crosta opened the Campaign Committee Report by saying not much was happening, but that the City Council has been swept by Democrats--only three Republicans remain. The Progressive Caucus has more than doubled--Corey Johnson and Rosie Mendez are members. As of yet, there is no word on who will be the next Speaker. Finally, the NYS Legislature has not set a date for the Primary.

Nat Johnson, Chair of the Technology Committee, said there is a RFP for Webmaster on the VID website and Craig's List. A discussion and evaluation will be held next Tuesday at the Technology Committee meeting.

Marti Speranza was in Washington, so could not report on Community Affairs.

Nadine Hoffman, Chair of the Fundraising Committee, discussed fundraising and also reminded everyone of the Holiday Party to be held at Frieda Bradlow's house on December 15. The Gala Committee members are Nancy Shamban, Jen Hoppe, Tom Connor, Kathy Slawinski, Marti Speranza, Tony Hoffman, Josh duBoff, and Linda Jacobson.

Marlene Nadle, Chair of the Housing Committee, discussed showing "Vanishing City" as a VID community event. As of yet, we do not have a venue. There was a discussion about a Certificate of Need from the Health Department, which Deborah Glick said was required in order to reopen a hospital facility to replace St. Vincent's. Marlene will look further into what is needed to get a Certificate of Need.

Jim Fouratt offered that we should not be afraid to raise issues, and it is our responsibility to raise questions in open discussion.

David Kruger introduced Kristina Andreotta, from Citizens Action, who was the speaker on the topic of Campaign Finance Reform Forum.

She said there were four aspects to fair elections.

1. Public financing of elections for all state-level races, Assembly and Senate.
2. Effective enforcement and administration of these elections..
3. Reasonable contribution limits.
4. Robust disclosure of money in politics and tougher limits on lobbyists.

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Governor Cuomo has a program encompassing all four aspects and the Moreland Commission agrees with the Fair Elections principles quoted above.

Connecticut has a voluntary system using these same ideas which has withstood all court challenges. 77% of Republican and over 80% of Democratic candidates participate. Kristina advised putting pressure on Governor Cuomo through letters, emails and phone calls in the interest of fair elections. She also said buses would be sent to Albany on January 11 to push these issues.

Next were elections--one nomination was made for President--Tony Hoffmann. Tony made a short speech about his successes in the past year and plans for 2014 which included working for affordable housing, a hospital for Greenwich Village, and to make sure that the transfer of air rights from the Hudson River Park doesn't lead to inappropriate construction in the West Village.

Three people were nominated for Vice President: Nat Johnson, Katharine Wolpe, and Irene Kaufman. Nominations were closed, and all nominees were unanimously elected through voice vote.

District Leader Arthur Schwartz delivered his report. He said air rights were important and he wanted to create a mechanism to control them through the Community Boards that would have a greater voice on who gets the air rights and how many can be transferred. He would like to use either the ULURP procedure or General Project Plan as a mechanism for controlling air rights.

Arthur mentioned a newsstand on Astor Place where he is defending the operator in court--the Bloomberg Administration feels the operator is not entitled to run this newsstand. Rosie Mendez has gotten involved with the Department of Community Affairs.

In October, the Department of Education approved 42 co-locations in public schools. Margaret Chin is involved in one where the DOE wants to co-locate 500 students in a learning-disabled school. Tish James is leading petitions to undo these. Charter schools don't pay rent, which Arthur and Bill DeBlasio oppose.

Arthur said he hopes Community Boards will have more power under DeBlasio--now they are only advisory. He said Corey Johnson will have to lead the way--his district includes many of the air rights transfer site.

There was a clarification of the "Certificate of Need". Arthur said it is a certificate required to proceed with construction and is needed when everything else has been worked out and construction is imminent. Marlene Nadle feels that it indicates that there is a need for a hospital in a community. Marlene will investigate it further.

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All resolutions were unanimously passed: Resolution in favor of Small Business Jobs Survival Act; Resolution in opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership; Resolution in support of Senator Gillebrand's position on military sexual assaults; and the Letter to Senator Reid to thank him for ending the filibuster for Presidential appointments and judicial appointments, except for the Supreme Court.

There was a discussion of candidates for City Council Speaker. Tom Connor spoke in favor of Melissa Mark-Vivarito. She is a graduate of NYU, from Puerto Rico, and very progressive.

Corey has said he and Margaret Chin will vote for whomever the Progressive Caucus endorses.

Jonathan Geballe announced that the GVHPS will be holding a party to celebrate the designation of the area south of Washington Square as a historical district. It will be held on Tuesday, December 15th at le Poisson Rouge at 6:00.PM.

The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes Submitted by
Kathy Slawinski
VID Recording Secretary