

VID MINUTES July 10, 2014 Membership Meeting

Tony called the meeting to order with an announcement about the Citizens Preparedness Training Program, the session to be held on Tuesday, July 29 at 6:00 pm at the Frederick Rose Auditorium, 41 Cooper Square. Also, the VID has teamed with Kate Linker for phone banking at her loft, 227 West 17 Street, sixth floor, beginning Thursday, July 17 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, and then every Wednesday until election day. Tony said he would send out an email reminder to all members. There will also be a Lenox Hill Healthplex tour on Saturday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Keen opened her report with a report on how the paid sick leave law has been improved by the City Council. It originally only applied to companies with fifteen employees or more and now it applies in the case of five employees. Gale Brewer was instrumental in this improvement. Also, Keen spoke of the need for election workers for from 5:00 am to 10:00 pm for the September primary and the November election. These workers must undergo training and pass a test. They will be paid \$200 for each day worked.

She also spoke of the Demmy Awards ceremony to be held this Monday at the Apollo Theater. Club members will be charged a special entrance fee of \$50--general admission is \$125, VIP's \$250 with swag bag included. Monies go to running the party.

Next up was Brad Hoylman. He spoke of how his bill to ban conversion therapy failed--even though the votes were there, the Republicans did not allow it to come to the floor. Similar fates awaited the Womens Equality Act, the Dream Act, decriminalization of marijuana, campaign finance reform, and tax equity. Brad stated he was here to support Governor Cuomo and promised to push him leftward.

He also spoke of Cuomo's support of Truvada, a pill that people likely to become HIV positive can take every day to prevent that from happening. Cuomo's plan to end AIDS includes bulk purchasing of such HIV retrovirals. We would be the first state to do so. These medications are very expensive but this would bring the price down. Medicaid would also be used to distribute these meds. He said that this program, along with the marriage equality bill and equitable housing for HIV patients had swung his support to Governor Cuomo.

Jim Fouratt said he was astounded that Brad was supporting Cuomo and said that Truvada had very serious side effects that would be seriously detrimental to HIV positive individuals. He said this was an experiment being performed on young men of color, and to the tune of \$19,000 a year.

Ed Yutkowitz had a sore throat and so could not report, but Tony stated that we had raised 600 signatures for our judicial delegates, our councilwoman and Brad.

Frieda Bradlow next stated the date for the People's Climate March had been finalized as Sunday, September 21. She asked Anne Heaney to join her in organizing for this event. Over 400 groups had signed on as sponsors, VID included. The turnout was expected to be well over half a million people. Anne said she personally reached out to teachers and families with children to spread the word.

Jim Fouratt reminded everyone of the Pride March, and Queers for Climate Change.

Now Tony reminded everyone that the VID had previously voted no endorsement for the Governor position but that the Executive Committee had agreed to reconsider in the event of Zephyr Teachout and Randy Credico entering the race. We could stay with no endorsement or endorse one of the three candidates.

Randy Credico spoke first about his progressive credentials and his long association with William Kunstler, the NAACP in Texas, and the Madres de Plaza de Maya. He brought a dog with him which had been given to him by the last organization. He asked if VID was a radical club and stated that his black petitioners were much more radical--VID was much more conservative. He said that the Democratic Party was now like the Whigs and advocated taking to the streets to change things. He was asked what he would do differently and said he would tax Wall Street, reform the criminal justice system, and repeal 421A, which gives sports organizations tax relief--it was supposed to build affordable housing. He said he opposed fracking, but what are we going to do?

Zephyr Teachout next spoke, saying she was formally asking for our endorsement and how she felt a tie to the club. She said at 8:00 she would deliver Over 45,000 signatures from all over the state supporting her candidacy. She spoke of how people voted for Cuomo believing he would fight for a Democratic Senate and a new system of campaign reform, but he has governed more like a Republican. She said Cuomo was currently upstate at a fundraiser with two Republicans. He transferred funds for schools to cover tax breaks for the wealthy. He has no clear stance on fracking. True Democrats know we need to invest in infrastructure and public education. She said there have been more money problems since he's been in office and that she rejects the scarcity he's been pushing. She said he practices a false bipartisanship which is more like incumbent entrenchment.

She said her bipartisanship would involve small businesses and that she can compromise. She said we'd know where she stood and her first step would be campaigning for Democrats and that Cuomo had failed. She was asked about three elections she didn't vote in--she said she would check into it but she thought the record was wrong. She said she was in favor of the Triboro Amendment and direct government development of infrastructure; when the state spends money, it uses resources upstate.

Erik Bottcher, speaking for Cuomo, told a personal story about how, his first day in office, Cuomo called him into his office and asked him why the Marriage Equality Bill failed. The Governor said we're going to come at this as a campaign and get the bill passed this year. Erik said we'd been missing leadership before, with nearly one million unemployed. Now we have the highest credit rating since 1972. Hurricane Sandy saw leadership, with monies from Washington going for rebuilding infrastructure and shorelines. The Governor closed 13 prisons upstate, instituted solitary confinement reform, and quadrupled solar power in the state.

He was then asked questions about dissolving the Moreland Commission, privatizing Medicaid and legalizing marijuana. Erik said he didn't believe the Governor was in favor of legal marijuana.

Dr. Alec Pruchnicki asked why his patients Medicaid rates were going down and the difference between Cuomo's privatization plan and the Republican agenda.

Nat Johnson said Cuomo was going to let science speak on fracking and asked why we should support a Governor who can't be trusted and won't settle the question of fracking. Erik said Cuomo would not move forward on fracking until the issues were resolved, that there was no rush.

There was next a ten minute discussion with people voicing their opinions about the candidates, then an election. Teachout won with 14 votes, Cuomo got 6, Credico got two, and there were 4 no endorsements.

Finally, there was a panel discussion about the new Lenox Hill HealthPlex, led by Alex Hellinger, Dr. Eric Cruzen, and Wayne Kawadler, involving what to expect from this new neighborhood service.

At the last, Tony mentioned Arthur Schwartz's article about Deborah Glick in the West View News. The meeting was adjourned.