



Village Independent Democrats

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www.villagedemocrats.org

MINUTES July 9, 2015

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Linda Jacobson, in the absence of President Nadine Hoffmann. She read a report from Nadine which stated that Ines Barron became the 20th co-sponsor of the SBJSA. Now we're only 6 Councilmembers away from bringing the bill to a vote. Another Councilmember, Steven Levin, had criticized Gale Brewer's bill for not having "teeth". There will be another forum on this topic July 22 in Washington Heights. The VID Tenant's Clinic will meet on Wednesday, July 22 at 6 pm in the clubhouse.

Surprise guest Brad Hoylman spoke on many topics including the ban on fracking, the failure of the rent freeze, and weed-killer "Roundup" presenting serious damage to the Monarch Butterfly and other species. He emphasized the importance of the upcoming Presidential election and the need to get out the Democratic vote. The next six months are crucial to getting input from the public. Tom Connor had a question on rent-controlled housing--Brad told him he was organizing with Corey and local pols here and in Albany, and advised if Tom had questions, he should call rather than email his office.

Anne Heaney commended a recent demonstration against oil trains and urged further action to ensure that GE continue cleanup efforts in the Hudson and its tributaries. Barbara Ruether complimented Brad's website.

Brad spoke further on the lack of progress in ethics and government reform and the LLC loophole, which must be closed. He proposed legislation to make the Senate a full-time job and exclude outside jobs, which led to the problem of Sheldon Silver. He said he will support an opponent to run against Silver. Mary Peretti brought out the party's reluctance to talk about money-saving programs while being accused of spending money. This led to a discussion about lobbying and the lack of regulation or information about money in NY government. The NY Senate lobby is the root of that term.

Nat Johnson brought up Indian Point and FERC signing off on the pipeline project. The only hope is if the DEC stops the permit. He asked Brad if he could help and Brad agreed to talk more about it. John Bredin brought up "Bernie fever" and Brad conceded that it was important to excite the base.

Keen Berger, District Leader, now spoke, recounting her experience at Senior Action Day at Community Board 2, where all the local politicians showed up. She received an email from the

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Downtown Progressive Democrats stating they had withdrawn their delegates and therefore our delegates were unopposed and there would be no election in the 66th Assembly District. Any poll workers would be transferred to other districts, if they wish.

Now there was further discussion about Bernie Sanders and whether we should talk about endorsing. Alec Pruchnicki inquired about what could be done and Tom Connor stated Arthur Schwartz was forming a committee in support of Sanders, and perhaps that was the best option for action.

Neither Ed Yutkowitz nor Tony Hoffmann of the Campaign Committee was present, so Linda read a statement from them stating that 43 VID-ers had carried petitions and gotten approximately 900 signatures. As the DPD had withdrawn their candidates, our coalition with the VRDC, DID and Jim Owles Clubs will hold and our candidates will be elected. Linda also recommended attendance at the Demmy's, where we are running for Club of the Year.

Nat now made his presentation on Port Ambrose, which is on hold due to protests--100,000 responses will have to be addressed. On Saturday July 18 a forum will be held on Indian Point and how to get a resolution passed against it. On July 15 an informational discussion will be held in Montrose, NY, and a Stop the Pipeline action will be held at Chuck Schumer's office on July 13. [Also see website posting of July 11:

<http://www.villageindependentdemocrats.org/more-nukes-and-pipelines/>]

Linda now made a presentation about this evening's meeting being Member's Night, to address the members' concerns and ideas. She read an excerpt from the General Rules for Synergy, adapted from the Josephine County, Oregon, Department of Health and Community Action. She emphasized the need for respectful discussion without personal attacks. She encouraged members to speak, with a 3 minute limit on presentations with a 2 minute limit on questions and comments.

Alec began with what it would take to get Bernie Sanders to come to New York. Since Arthur Schwartz was supporting him, it was proposed that Linda would talk to Arthur regarding bringing this about with the club's help. This was passed unanimously.

Tom Connor talked of widening the sidewalk at Fifth Avenue and 8 Street in order to constrict traffic to make the area safer. He brought up the Safe Streets Program and the Mayor's goal of zero traffic fatalities for pedestrians. There will be a Vigil for Vision Zero on July 14 at Union Square.

John Bredin talked of how great he felt to be a member of the club and how he wanted to contribute more. Betty Herman talked about possible outreach to high school students, which triggered an animated discussion about how this might be achieved, with significant contribution from Erik Coler, new member. Erik volunteered to form a committee devoted to student outreach and lay the groundwork during the summer, to revisit the topic in September.

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Katharine Wolpe spoke of campaign finance reform and possible strategies to bring it about. This triggered more contributions, with Linda agreeing having Common Cause come and make a presentation would be worthwhile, with Betty bringing info and support.

There was some discussion about Staten Island and what can be done there to help Democrats, with Jonathan Geballe providing input and warning that it would require commitment and work.

Lastly, Anne Heaney gave a heartfelt talk about what a great month it had been, with progressive comments from the Pope and the final removal of the Confederate flag in South Carolina. Everyone concurred it had been a historical moment.

The meeting was adjourned on an optimistic note!

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