



Village Independent Democrats  
26 Perry Street  
New York, New York 10014

MINUTES, JANUARY 14, 2016

President Nadine Hoffmann opened with several announcements concerning the labeling of GMO foods: Campbell's will be labeling GMO ingredients in their foods, Vermont will start labeling their GMO foods this summer, and Congress killed the "Dark Act", which would preempt states from labeling GMOs. There were provisions in the budget for labeling GMO salmon, increased funding for meat and poultry inspections, and a ban on Chinese chicken products in school lunches. She invited members to attend the Ansonia Independent Democrats Forum on Voting Rights on Tuesday the 26th. Nat Johnson contributed that the Governor committed to closing four coal-fired plants.

District Leader Keen Berger began her report by speaking of the upcoming election, one of the topics she's focused on along with schools and immigration. She's worried the April primary will bring out an unprecedented number of impassioned voters, so she wrote a report to the Board of Elections and elected officials recommending early voting and split shifts for poll workers. Then she spoke of her favorite project, the middle school at 75 Morton Street, due to open in September of 2017. She said political change takes time, but progress with 75 Morton Street gives her hope for progress.

There followed a discussion of the zone for the school, where the students will be coming from. This area could go as high as the 60's, but neighborhood children would be guaranteed attendance, according to Keen.

Nadine added that VID would be co-sponsoring a Gun Safety Forum on March 9 along with the CRDC and the CFD. Rachel Smith, Leah Gunn, and Jerry Nadler will speak, along with someone from the NRA.

Jonathan Geballe said he and Erik Coler are putting together a forum and a process to push the Voter Empowerment Act--getting voters registered. New York State has one of the worst voting records in the country. Nadine said she, Jonathan, and Erik will meet with Brian Kavanaugh, who authored the bill, and allowed that this was a great topic for a forum.



Tony Hoffmann announced that petitioning for Presidential candidates is ongoing, with most petitions due by the 24th. Saturday morning members can meet in Abingdon Square to petition for any (Democratic) candidate.

He also mentioned Candles for Clemency. A small contingent of six people will demonstrate briefly at Reverend Sharpton's NAN on Martin Luther King Day. The Governor's clemencies for juvenile offenders are not acceptable--C for C is going for elderly prisoners who are rehabilitated and shouldn't die in jail. Because of this, there will be another vigil in April.

Now Nadine read her letter to the Governor asking to raise the minimum wage for health care providers for the disabled. There was a discussion about who will be affected and possible cuts in jobs and services.

Frieda Bradlow brought up the burgeoning problem of homelessness and its causes. Nadine broke off discussion for future talks.

Next were elections--Nadine asked for nominees for Treasurer. As there was only one--Frieda Bradlow--it was unanimously agreed that the Recording Secretary would cast one vote and elect her through acclamation.

Kathy Slawinski was the one nominee for Recording Secretary--she was unanimously elected through acclamation.

For Corresponding Secretary, the two nominees were Ed Yutkowitz and Jonathan Geballe. As there were two positions, the two were unanimously elected through acclamation.

The Executive Committee nominees were Tony Hoffmann, Tom Connor, Alec Pruchnicki, Frank Savits, Eli Hausknecht, Mary Petretti, Lois Rakoff, Annette Zaner, Nat Johnson, Katherine Wolpe, Jen Hoppe, Allison Greenberg, Marlene Nadle, Nancy Shamban, and Joe Gallagher. As there were fifteen positions open, all the nominees were unanimously elected through acclamation.

Now Marti Speranza, Director of Women Entrepreneurs NYC, gave a presentation about this new organization, product of the DeBlasio administration. A study of 1,500 women business owners--out of 360,000 in the city--was conducted. These 360,000 contribute \$150B to the city and employ 190,000 people, but there is a disappointing gender gap in which one of four NY women live in poverty. This new organization will serve 5,000 women entrepreneurs over the next three years, providing help in four areas: capital, skills, information, and mentorship/networking.

She brought out some very daunting facts, like the fact that men are twice as likely to get funding from a traditional bank. She described workshops in which women's business needs can be



addressed, and that there is already a WE Boston. Eric Bottcher, an aide to Corey Johnson, asked how to help and volunteered the use of Corey's monthly newsletter.

Deborah Glick, member of the State Assembly, now addressed the club. She advised Marti to put together a blurb to give to local electeds and small newspapers. She spoke of how the Governor put mixed martial arts (or cage fighting) in the budget over the objections of various Assembly members, including herself. She spoke of how the Governor has now mandated that the city pay 30% of the CUNY budget also.

Her other main concern was non-consensual pornography, also called "revenge porn", involving the victimization of mostly women. It is not criminal now, but she's working with Brad Hoylman to try to change that. The Cyber Civil Rights Initiative, or CCRI is fighting this problem. She ended by saying she's running as a Hillary delegate and she has petitions, but they must be in by January 25.

Nadine now mentioned that Jim Fouratt was to provide a resolution to request the DNC to schedule additional debates, but he was absent. Kathy Slawinski volunteered to write one up and present it to the next Executive Committee meeting.

Katharine Wolpe made a couple of announcements about a Citizens Preparedness Training Program on January 19 and a petition in favor of H.R. 2114, the Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2015.

Jonathan brought everyone up to snuff about the Tenants Clinic. There are now three attorneys, one from MFY Legal Services, allowing the Clinic to expand to three Wednesdays a month. What is now needed is publicity to get the word out. There was a discussion about how to accomplish this.

After an announcement that the next Executive Committee meeting was to be January 25, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kathy Slawinski