



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

Minutes
General Membership Meeting
Thursday, March 9, 2017

President Erik Coler opened the meeting by remarking on the impressive turnout. He told us about his trip up Mt. Kilimanjaro, where he brought a VID flag up the mount. He caught us up on the very successful VID Day of Action last month, which was attended by Tish James and Brad Hoylman, among others. He urged everyone to get involved in future events.

District Leader Keen Berger next gave her report. She recounted an anecdote about her daughter, with whom she is staying because of a fire in her apartment, the point of which is "nobody is perfect". This was the lead-up to the letter of thanks she had written to AG Eric Schneiderman, whom some had criticized. She read the letter, and the members unanimously approved it for mailing.

Now Tony Hoffmann and Laurie Hardjowirogo of the Campaign Committee caught us up on upcoming races and events, the first of which will be a Candidates Night April 4 at Judson Church, followed by an endorsement meeting. A second Candidates Night and endorsement meeting will follow in May.

Tony gave a brief description of the County Committee, with some input from Charles Stimson and Gil Horowitz.

Frieda Bradlow talked about the Environmental Committee, and the five main things they are working on:

1. A letter to Governor Cuomo regarding three vacancies on the PSC.
2. The plastic bag issue.
3. Curbside recycling for compostables.
4. Actions to discourage Cuomo from supporting pipelines.
5. Renewable energy.

Other issues are eliminating polyurethane and noise pollution. The next meeting of the Environmental Committee will be March 21 and all are welcome.

Eric reported on the Affordable Housing Committee; Aaron Carr spoke at the last meeting. This committee is prioritizing 350 units of illegally destabilized apartments in the Village. He also mentioned the VID free Tenants Clinic, held on Wednesdays at the clubhouse.

Marlene Nadle wrote a letter regarding the 421a tax credit, to be sent to Cuomo, Mayor DeBlasio and other electeds. Jonathan Geballe explained rent laws.



Guest Speaker Tish James, Public Advocate, gave a speech where she told us about her Worst Landlords List. She is also training people in immigration law to counter the administration, which she said feels above the law. She spoke of International Womens Day, cuts to Planned Parenthood, and wage inequality. She has introduced a bill to prohibit employers from asking for a payment history--DeBlasio supports it, and she feels it will be passed

She claims to have reinvented the office of Public Advocate and resolved 10,000 complaints. She sued Cuomo and DeBlasio regarding disabled children on hot busses and won, and has another suit to address special needs children, but she lost the Eric Garner case. She outlined some other suits and stated her goal of trying to serve the interest of all the people of the city.

Laurie followed with the goals of the Voter Reform Committee--same day registration, early voting, and one Primary day. She outlined some races she feels optimistic about, and some upcoming campaign events.

Nadine Hoffmann was next with the Gala Committee--gala to be held April 27 at Tio Pepe's, honoring Shino Tanakawa, Make the Road, International Refugee Assistance Project, New York Immigration Coalition, the National Park Conservancy, and a special award to VID member Tony Hoffmann.

Next up was Jim Yates, with a very complete talk about the Constitutional Convention, covering its history, purpose, and possible dangers. He explained the ways to amend the constitution and that on November 8 voters will have a chance to convene another convention--or not.

District Leader Arthur Schwartz now spoke about his organization, NYPAN, which has become active in trying to prevent the closing of Beth Israel Hospital. There will be an upcoming Town Hall on this topic. NYPAN is also active in voter reform and agitating for single-payer healthcare in NY.

Election of Judicial Delegates was held, with Kathy Slawinski, Jen Hoppe, Nadine, Austin Brown, Tom Connor, and Lois Rakoff running. Finalists were Jen and Nadine as Delegates and Kathy and Austin as Alternates.

Alison Greenberg introduced Lynn Ellsworth from Alliance for a Human Scale City, who made some brief remarks about REBNY.

Lois Rakoff reminded everyone about her twice-yearly Poe event in the Poe Room at NYU on April 21.

Katharine Wolpe reminded everyone of Lynne Stewart's funeral at St. Marks Church on Saturday.

Lastly, John Bredin reminded us all to watch his Public Voice Salon on cable.

The meeting was adjourned.