



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

Minutes  
April 13, 2017

New President Erik Coler opened the meeting by introducing himself. He spoke about the success of the last Candidates' Forum, where seventeen candidates showed up and over 125 people from the community attended.

District Leader Keen Berger opened her comments by talking about her background as a psychologist, which underlines the needs of people to talk with others who may hold differing opinions. She enjoys these meeting where she can hear from other people, and the forum, where she met candidates for City Council she didn't know existed.

Nat Johnson asked her if she thought the Democratic candidate Jim Thompson could have won in the Kansas special election. She said yes, that there was a deep dissatisfaction with the Trump agenda. This was echoed by an attendee from Kansas, who said 2 of the 4 Congressional districts in Wichita could be Democratic, but the DCCC declined to put any money in the race.

Nat Johnson, of the Environmental Committee, reported on their three major projects:

One is the VID Resolution passed by the Executive Committee promoting curbside compost pickup. He read this to the membership and it was passed unanimously.

Second is a thank-you letter to the Governor for forming the plastic bag recycle task force. He said Cuomo had proposed an energy initiative to build renewable energy sources for New York State, and he wants to invite Richard Kaufman, NY's "energy czar" to explain.

Thirdly is preparation for the Earth Day celebration, April 22 at Foley Square. The next meeting of the Environmental Committee will be on the 19th. Erik Bottcher mentioned that buses would be leaving New York on the 29th for the Climate March in DC.

Nadine Hoffmann now brought us up to snuff on the Gala, to be held April 27 at Tio Pepe. Honorees are to be Shino Tanakawa, an education advocate, pro public education, who was also very active for years in the creation of the 75 Morton Street school, staff from the National Parks Conservancy for their role in establishing the Stonewall National Monument, and three pro-immigrant organizations, the NY Immigrant Coalition, the International Refugee Assistance Project, and Make the Road, all active against the travel ban. Also to be honored will be member Tony Hoffmann for his valuable contributions to the club.



Tony, who is on the Campaign Committee, reported on the success of the candidate's forum, where candidates for the City Council Districts 1, 2, and 3 spoke, along with the two District Leaders, running unopposed. This was co-sponsored by the Jim Owles Club and VRDC, with a standing room only crowd of 125 people. The next forum, for Mayor, Controller, Public Advocate, and District Attorney, will be held May 2 at the LGBT Center. This will be co-sponsored by VID, VRDC, CRD, DID, CoDA, and the Jim Owles Club. He also announced the upcoming Jane Street Block Association Street Fair, to be held June 3.

Tony brought up the County Committee, the grassroots level of the Democratic Party, and urged people to run for this committee. There followed a lengthy discussion about how to qualify and run.

Erik Coler now discussed the Day of Action and how successful it was, giving credit to Laurie Hardjowirogo. He wants to build it into something bigger, and proposed a Trivia Night. He will follow up on this idea.

On the Affordable Housing front, Erik commended Marlene Nadle on her letter opposing the renewal of the 421-a tax abatement. (Unfortunately, it was passed.) He stated the J-51 tax credit should be for 100% affordable housing, but this is not enforced. The Committee has located four buildings where tenants have been illegally destabilized, and said so far thirteen tenants have signed on for a retainer to fight the situation. Erik stated the law has been reactive rather than proactive and must change.

Jim Fouratt brought up the situation of rent-controlled tenants, and how they are largely ignored. There was a discussion about rent control vs. rent stabilization.

Now--the elections for endorsement! Members were free to make statements for or against candidates, with voting to follow. These were the results:

For City Council District 3, Corey Johnson won endorsement almost unanimously, with one abstention.

For City Council District 1, Chris Marte at 21, beat Margaret Chin, with twelve votes.

While the votes were being counted, Erik read the resolution from the Voter Reform Committee endorsing Eric Schneiderman's New York Votes Act, proposing early voting, same day registration, same day primaries, and other reforms. This passed unanimously.

Livvy Mann made a presentation about the campaign to defeat John Faso, in CD 19. The club wants to flip this district to Democratic, and is active in registering voters and publicizing the race.

In City Council District 2, Carlina Rivera won endorsement with 33 votes. Ronnie Cho got 2, with Erin Hussein and Mary Silver coming in with 1 vote each.

For Female District Leader, Keen Berger won unanimously.

For Male District Leader, the vote was "no endorsement" at 17, with 13 for Arthur Schwartz, and two write-ins received one vote each.



Under New Business, Sharon Woolums discussed her film, "The Lost Village", which she helped produce, and which won an award for best documentary. Kathy Slawinski lauded the film, which she had previously viewed.

Jim Fouratt proposed the VID call on President Trump to release his tax records, and for the club to support the upcoming tax protests. This passed unanimously.

He also proposed a letter to Hillary Clinton welcoming her back to the public sphere. After much discussion, this passed with 12 yeas, 3 nays, and 4 abstentions.

Tony brought up Judy Clark, saying her parole hearing went over seven hours spread over two days. The interview went well, with the Parole Board to get back within two weeks.

Jen Hoppe brought up the special election in Georgia, with Democratic candidate Jon Ossoff within one point of the Republican. She urged people to contribute or phone bank.

Lastly, Jim Fouratt brought up the fact that three Democrats voted for Gorsuch for Supreme Court. He wanted to send a letter of protest to Chuck Schumer for failing to get them in line. Tony opposed it as unreasonable. After much discussion, Jim withdrew his motion.

The meeting was adjourned.