



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

## General Meeting Minutes June 8, 2017

President Erik Coler opened the meeting with a discussion of the 311 issues from the last meeting. He proposed putting together "complaining blocs" --adding other complainants who live nearby and getting them to call 311 also. Last month's Trivia Night was a big success, but there will be none this month. Trivia Night will resume next month. There will be a sponsored street festival June 17, with the opportunity to hand out literature and secure signatures on petitions. There will be a Community Service Day in early July--Lois Rakoff will contact Washington Square Park to work out details.

There will be a Petitioning Kickoff Breakfast at the clubhouse Saturday, with appearances by Corey Johnson, Carlina Rivera, Scott Stringer, and Chris Marte. And Keith Wright will be sent a letter regarding his new lobbying job.

Keen Berger opened her report with an anecdote about a homeless panhandler she encountered on the F train while she was with her grandson. She makes it a policy not to give, but it made her think about Comey and a need to change the system. She called for retaking Congress and working for impeachment.

Next, Rachel Lavine, State Committee Member in the 66th AD, gave a report. She outlined the two functions of the Democratic State Committee--electing candidates for statewide office in case of a vacancy, and putting forward resolutions to shape the party platform. She asked for the VID to support their resolution to remove Jeff Klein from leadership of the IDC. He will be asked to find another party and another line to run on. All members of the IDC will have their clubs approached to request that they either run as Dems or on another party line.

There ensued a discussion of the IDC and its members. There is also a plan to request that Governor Cuomo share money with state Dem candidates--at least \$1M should be redistributed to local races. In addition, the Committee wants to amend rules so they have 25 days instead of 10 for petitioning--and to encourage more progressive members. The Governor selects 37% of the State Committee. The Progressive Caucus wants to make the State Committee more democratic and more progressive. They will urge a vote to support these resolutions at the next meeting at the end of July. Jim Yates proposed no party funds should go to the IDC, and Ben Yee is also very supportive.

Now, Erik introduced Dave Daley, author of "Ratf\*\*ked; the True Story Behind the Secret Plan to Steal America's Democracy". He delivered a riveting talk on how the Republicans took over in 2010 by using computer modeling to gerrymander and steal elections. Gerrymandering, which can be traced back to at least 1788, has resulted in 69 of 99 state legislatures and both houses in 35 states to be controlled by Republicans in a country in which both parties are pretty evenly represented, with Democrats slightly ahead. Dave called the new computer techniques, dreamt up by Karl Rove, "gerrymandering on



steroids". He warned that the hard work is yet to be done to undo this catastrophe, the structural problems are deep and difficult to undo, and the usual electoral solutions may not be enough.

Dave recommended Dems should push voting rights, labor rights, and women's rights. He warned that the Supreme Court has ruled against racial gerrymandering but has never ruled on partisan gerrymandering. Changes to the electoral college lose whenever they are brought before SCOTUS, because there is no precedent. He also cautioned that there is no happy ending--winning elections will not redraw the lines. He advocated concentrating on governorships to start the hard work. This instigated a robust discussion.

Since Laurie Hardjowirogo was ill, Erik gave her report on NY's 19th CD. She's been door knocking and getting out the vote. On Saturday, Brad Hoylman will be at the clubhouse to deliver a talk on the IDC.

Nat Johnson couldn't make it either, so Erik gave a progress report on shutting down Indian Point and work on composting. Frieda had a screening of a film on Indian Point at her house, which was very successful.

Tony Hoffmann gave a report on petitioning--there will be a petitioning breakfast Saturday at the clubhouse, and there will be a street fair on June 17 with more opportunities to troll for signatures. He said he has never seen such enthusiasm, and he asked for volunteers.

Now Erik gave a report on Affordable Housing. He's going after bad landlords--those getting J-51 tax breaks and illegally destabilizing tenants. He said there has never been a club which has created affordable housing, and promised a class action lawsuit by the end of the month.

Now there was an election for an open position on the Executive Committee. The two candidates were Jim Yates and Amanda Rocha. After Jim gave his impressive resume--he worked as a judge for 19 years and worked as counsel for five speakers--Amanda withdrew. Jim was unanimously elected by the Secretary casting one vote.

Under New Business, Sharon Woolums told us the film, "The Lost Village", which she co-produced, had a screening at the Jefferson Market Library, which was packed, and another screening will be held. She will inform us of the date. Frieda Bradlow suggested having a swap meet. Zella Jones noted that if you bring reusable items to the DOS, they will sort them and recycle, and maybe VID should sponsor such an event. Barbara Ruether asked about shredding, and Erik Bottcher advised Deborah Glick's office will do it.

The meeting was adjourned.