



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

General Meeting Minutes September 14, 2017

President Erik Coler opened the meeting by welcoming everyone back after a one month hiatus. He applauded Carlina Rivera's great win on Tuesday, and Chris Marte's close loss which had to be authorized after counting absentee ballots and affidavits. The entire slate of VID Judicial Candidates and Alternates won.

District Leader Keen Berger spoke of the "fatal flaw" on her petition binders, which caused her to lose an automatic ballot appearance despite getting four times the signatures needed, endorsements from many clubs, and no opposition. She urged everyone to come support her on Sunday at Judson, when the County Committee would make a determination of female District Leader for the 65th ED Part A.

She went on to speak of her three causes: immigration, public education and elections. In the case of the Dreamers, people were rising up and may be able to pull something off to help them. In education, 75 Morton Street opened. In the case of elections, she spoke of going to the polling sites with cookies and witnessing a bigger-than-usual turnout.

She also spoke of the snafu which caused her not to automatically be on the ballot, Frieda Bradlow was irate about hearing about it from Arthur Schwartz and not from the club. Tony Hoffmann and Ray Cline are debating over who should take the blame.

A debate over the vote for the Constitutional Convention ensued, with Al Benninghoff of The People's Convention urging a yes vote and Susan Welber of Legal Aid urging a no. Al asserted many improvements could be made in the State Constitution, while Susan asserted the political climate was not conducive for this outcome. After a robust debate and many questions from the members, the Con Con lost, 38 to 1.

Laurie Hardjowirogo of the Vote Reform Committee now addressed the group, stating she was going upstate for the fourth time to oppose John Faso in CD 19. on September 29, Basil Smikle will appear at the Jefferson Market Library after a video narrated by Edie Falco.

It was now Nat Johnson's turn, on the Environmental Committee. He's working on designating a time and place to show a film and panel discussion on Indian Point. The Committee is also working on curbside composting this month. The next meeting is September 18, working on saving the EPA and lobbying Chuck Schumer to stand fast against efforts to slash their budget. There will be a march on the Brooklyn Bridge September 28 to commemorate Sandy and urge preparations to prevent another such event.



Tony and Laurie spoke for the Campaign Committee, congratulating the club for getting 62% of the vote for the Judicial Delegate slate. Tony also announced the club is welcoming two new members a month, and congratulated all the members who worked hard in the campaign, mentioning six in particular: Erik Bottcher, Alyssa Stein, Laurie, Sara Kimbell, Katharine Wolpe, and Ed Yutkowitz.. There was a discussion about voting difficulties.

Erik Coler spoke about Affordable Housing, and the two lawsuits which he has spurred to re-regulate illegally destabilized units. Tenants of 21 units will receive monies from this. He is working on two new buildings, involving 45 units to be destabilized. Brad Hoylman will be drafting new legislation requiring DHCR to notify tenants rather than landlords when apartments are destabilized.

A Special Election was now held for a vacant slot on the Executive Committee. Two candidates competed, with Sara Kimbell winning with 20 votes, and David Saperstein coming in second with 11 votes; there was one abstention.

Ben Yee of the State Committee now spoke about how he introduced a resolution to that body to make budgeting more transparent--unfortunately it was tabled, but he's working on an improved version to introduce at the next meeting, October 2. Other resolutions he's introduced include a "sanctuary state" which was endorsed by the DSC, one asking the IDC to return to the Democratic fold, and one advocating 25 days notice for votes on rule changes rather than the existing 15 days, to make it easier for members to attend. He advocated attendance at the Judicial Forum on September 19.

He also advocated attending upcoming County Committee meetings to determine who will fill Daniel Squadron's vacant seat and one to resolve Keen Berger's candidacy. When Erik asked him, he agreed that Keith Wright should choose between his County Leader position or lobbyist.. Ben also advocated decentralizing power from the County Leader to the members, so this would be less of a problem in the future.

Deborah Glick commended the Campaign Committee for its great work, then urged efforts to get Betsy Devos to rethink her position on sexual assault on campus--she writes a letter every week in this effort. She also sent a "clean water" letter to Scott Pruitt regarding which bodies of water would be protected. SUNY has introduced a "charter school institute" which would allow Eva Moscovitz to allow charter schools to certify teachers to their own standards. She has sent a letter to the Chair of Education--she doesn't believe they have the authority to do this.

On the SUNY board, there are three attorneys and one guy who owns a company who does consumer product testing--and no educators. This was a favor done by Cuomo for Eva Moscovitz. Deborah asked members to reach out and send letters to the Board of Trustees--it may be lawful, but that doesn't make it right! She said she would send the information to Erik.

The meeting was adjourned.