



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

MINUTES OCTOBER 12, 2017 MEETING

President Erik Coler opened the meeting by saying he had no report, but there were to be two speakers.

Jen Hoppe began by talking about organizing buses to Virginia for local elections there at the end of October, first week of November. The bus ride is 4-5 hours, with training on the bus, and hotel for one night with roommate--the campaign will pay. She urged anyone interested to contact her.

Justin Reidy has been working with Laurie Hardjowirogo on the Faso campaign with over 1500 volunteers. They have door knocked 15-20,000 doors, they are phone banking and sending mailers. There are seven Democratic candidates in the race, and they are talking to Independents to try to combat low voter turnout. There will be second homeowner registration parties in the city if members want to be involved. Jen thanked everyone involved and stated they keep her going.

District Leader Keen Berger was presented with a handmade tote by Irene Kaufman, to much applause. She repeated her focus on three things: public education, immigration, and voting. She is involved with the Chris Marte campaign and feels Margaret Chin undercut the Bleecker Street school. Chris also did work with immigrants, and was working with the County Committee to streamline the process. She introduced Arthur Schwartz, and said she worked with him although he is in a different club.

Arthur began by saying he was co-District Leader with Keen since 2013. He does a radio show on Mondays on WBAI, and is also online. He has many guests, including Senator Gianaris, Terry Gipson (running for Governor), and Bella Abzug. He asked if anyone wanted an issue aired, to please contact him. He spoke of litigation he was involved in, including a lawsuit to save Beth Israel, along with Margaret Chin, doctors and nurses. He's also involved in litigating the SUNY Charter School Commission along with the UFT. He spoke of a NYPAN Conference this Sunday where many people will speak--he's working with Keen.

He's leaving his club, the VRDC, and would consider joining VID, even though he's often on the opposite side from VID. He said the proposed VID constitutional amendment could be illegal, and the concept is antithetical to reform politics. The NY Times will not support candidates who challenge petitions, one of his considerations in joining VID.



Erik read the proposed amendment. There followed a very heated discussion, with many members speaking. Eventually a friendly amendment was offered, and it passed with 18 yeas, 6 nays, and 2 abstentions. Then the revised amendment was voted on, and passed with 22 yeas, 11 nays and one abstention. It must be brought up again and voted on at the next membership meeting.

Now there was a vote on endorsing in City Council District 1, because the previously endorsed candidate (Marte) had lost in a close election. After much discussion, no endorsement carried the day, with 19 votes. Marte received 11 votes and Chin 5.

Ben Yee, State Committeeman and Secretary of the County Committee, told of a meeting by the State Committee a week ago--since they only meet twice a year, there won't be another for six months. He felt it was not done in a democratic manner--three rules changes which were supposed to be on the agenda had not been voted on by the sub-committee because no one had been informed. In addition, there were two conference calls held which no one knew about. The Executive Board, which had met before, decided to table the resolutions. He applauded Rachel Lavine's work with the Progressive Caucus as very important, and advised everyone to visit benjaminjee.com to keep up to date. Everyone had been re-elected.

The County Committee will reconvene in three months to review certain resolutions--in particular, one asking Keith Wright to step down from one of his positions, and also one asking the IDC to rejoin the Democrats or not get support from the party.

Laurie Hardjowirogo spoke briefly of her campaign in CD 19 against John Faso.

Nat Johnson of the Environmental Committee said the next meeting would be on the 26th to discuss when the showing of the Indian Point film and discussion with Richard Kaufman would take place. They are working on the details of the composting project and a bioswale project for the neighborhood.

Erik noted that the Affordable Housing Committee will hold a tenant information event on October 18--he will keep us updated.

Tony Hoffmann and Laurie spoke of VID palm cards to be distributed at every polling place in the district with the Con Con on the ballot--voters trust the VID. He will put out a mailing. The Supreme Court nominees must be endorsed, but because of time limits, he asked for permission for the Executive Committee to make the endorsement. This passed unanimously.

Now votes were held on Props 2 and 3. Prop 2, regarding allowing judges to reduce or revoke pensions of public officers convicted of felonies, unanimously passed. Prop 3, about land banking, was also unanimously passed, after some discussion.



Under New Business, Marc Fliedner, running against Cy Vance, spoke of his background and qualifications--30 years of criminal justice experience, mostly prosecuting hate crimes, and sex crimes. He's currently looking for a Manhattan residence, so he can qualify for the ballot. Erik Bottcher spoke up for his work in the LGBTQ community.

Kathy Slawinski proposed expanding talk time in discussions to two minutes. It was agreed flexibility was key and time would be allotted by vote.

John Bredin spoke of the 25th Amendment and the need to remove Trump immediately. On Saturday there will be a discussion on this topic at the NYU Law School with a march to City Hall afterward.

Annette Zaner brought up an article in the Westview News which Arthur Schwartz had written which she felt was abusive to Erik Coler.

The meeting was adjourned.