



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

General Meeting Minutes February 8, 2018

The meeting was held in the Auditorium of P.S. 41. President Erik Coler promised the club would be back at their usual venue next meeting.

The Agenda was unanimously adopted.

President Coler opened with two issues, the first a Special Meeting of the Executive Committee to be held on the weekend to discuss what goals the club will be addressing this year, along with necessary committees and time lines. He said this will help the club and the community and the findings will be brought to the members. Also, John Weatherall will be speaking on the L train shutdown at a February 14 MTA Open House. Erik will send out an email with more info.

Chris Marte made a report on 85 Bowery, a building where almost 75 residents, children and seniors among them, were evacuated because of structural issues which the new landlord had not addressed. He had disputed the status of the building as rent-stabilized and had not fixed the staircase for two years, so the court ordered the evacuation and gave the landlord two weeks to do the repairs. The tenants, many of whom don't speak English, were sent to a homeless shelter in East New York, where they were packed six to a room. Both VID and DID sent letters to the local electeds. Senator Kavanaugh, in particular, met with them, but as the landlord seems bent on getting the building condemned, the tenants were going on a hunger strike. There was a GOFUNDME site for donations, and certain items were asked for.

There was a discussion about the situation, with certain members expressing horror that it had been allowed to go on for two years, with HPD being ineffectual.

District Leader Keen Berger now gave her report, addressing the three issues that motivate her - public schools, voting, and immigration. As for public schools, VID has been heavily involved in 75 Morton Street, which will open next September. As for voting, she described having dinner with Jason Kander, working on the "Let America Vote" program to address voter suppression. And in immigration, Keen spoke of her work with the New Sanctuary Movement, the deportation of Jean Montrevil to Haiti, and the future deportation of Ravi Ragbir. Both of these people are activists in the NSM. Nydia Velazquez introduced a private bill to rectify the situation.



Eric called for a motion that VID support special bill HR 4937--this passed unanimously, and Jonathan Geballe will work on it and send it out.

Deborah Glick now introduced Julie Menin--she worked with Julie and CB1 after 9/11, then Julie ran for Borough President. She became the Consumer Affairs Commissioner, now is the Media and Entertainment Commissioner, where she is working on womens' issues such as pay disparity. Deborah applauded her for her long history of community organizing.

Julie expressed her happiness to be back and spoke of [NYC Kids Rise](#), her program to provide low-income children a \$1,000 college savings account. She is also involved in protecting the undocumented. In Media and Entertainment, her focus is on various programs to provide women opportunities in film and onstage, including a \$5M fund for women filmmakers and playwrights. She also promotes sustainability and when a production is in the neighborhood, everything must be bought locally. She saved the Power Station, one of the last remaining recording studios.

This was followed by a discussion, in which she was asked how she got the Grammys to be held in NYC. She hosted the chair commission and had an in with the unions--and she brought in \$2M.

Rob Gotheim now spoke for Jerrold Nadler for an endorsement. He read the speech Jerry gave when he won the Chair of the Judiciary Committee 118-72. He promised Jerry will use the Committee in his fight for justice.

Jonathan Geballe, Tony Hoffmann and Keen spoke for him. He was unanimously endorsed when the Secretary cast one unanimous vote.

Siraj Patel, running against Carolyn Maloney, made a stirring presentation. He worked on both Obama campaigns, is from an immigrant family, attended NYU Law School and currently teaches ethics at NYU. He founded [THE ARENA](#) to recruit new candidates and helped organize the ACLU JFK demonstration to protest the administrations immigrant ban. This was followed by an animated discussion.

Now Minna Elias, Carolyn Maloney's Chief of Staff, spoke for her. She acknowledged VID was an important element of her base, and took many tough questions.

The vote was 20 for Maloney, 17 for Patel, and 2 no endorsements.

There was a brief discussion on Kirsten Gillibrand's endorsement, where Kathy Slawinski reminded everyone of Gillibrand's early ultra conservative career, and called her out for sabotaging Al Franken's career and Senate seat.

She was endorsed, by a vote of 26 for, 5 no endorsements, and one write-in for Al Franken.



Now Nat Johnson reported for the Environmental Committee, speaking of the four pillars of the Committee: use less and reuse, use everything more efficiently, protect the neighborhood and world environments, and assure progressive policies rooted in social safety nets and environmental justice. There will be a presentation in the VID March 8 meeting featuring Tal Zakan, Senior Coordinator, Organics Outreach, DSNY, to discuss recycling. There will also be a Town Hall followup on these same themes.

Laurie Hardjowirogo recounted a great meeting two weeks ago where phonebanking at Livvey Mann's persuaded 50 voters to re-register upstate at their second homes. The Committee is working with organizations like [True Blue](#) and people like Julian Spector, and will host a forum with Ross Barkan and Andrew Gounardes at Greenwich House.

Tony and Laurie outlined the last Campaign Committee meeting, which was attended by 19 people and set the calendar for endorsements. There will be a forum for statewide candidates on May 7, and a breakfast March 3 which Nadler will probably attend, and petitioning begins March 6.