

BIRMINGHAM BLOOMFIELD AREA DEMS

May 21, 2024

MINUTES

Chair, Debbie Rosenman called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm

Roll Call: Present: Chair: Debbie Rosenman, Treasurer Libby Dzurka, Recording Secretary: Corinne Shoop, Corresponding Secretary Dave Goodman, and Trustee: Nessa Fuller. Absent: Vice Chair: Emery Pence and Trustee Juergen Wiesenberger.

The agenda was accepted as posted without objection.

The minutes from the May meeting were approved and accepted as posted.

Chair Report: Chair Debbie Rosenman

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. This is the time to get activated and coming out to hear from our Oakland County leaders is so very important. My remarks will be brief, but I have three words starting with "P" that I want to focus on.

The first is our PAC. Although we are happy folks are giving us donations toward membership, which pays to run and build our club, we need to raise even more PAC money to help with the coming elections. By donating even a small amount to PAC, you are helping to cover the cost of printing our voter guides, which will be delivered to the doors of Strong and Leaning Democrats by our mighty crew of precinct delegates. We also need to print and mail thousands of voter guides to the voters in all the apartment buildings in our club area, which we are coming to realize are many, many more than we had sent to in the past. Please consider making a PAC donation to help us with these costs. You can do so on our website.

The next "P" stands for postcards. We have packs of 50 postcards you can take or sign up for that will go to the signers of the Reproductive Rights petitions across the state. The message is to thank them for their support and hope that they click on the printed QR code to request a free sticker. Then Distill Social and Fems for Democracy will have their phone number and email address to be able to follow up with them closer to the election to encourage them to vote. It is a wonderful campaign to encourage less engaged voters to vote.

The final "P" stands for parade! Join us next Monday in the Beverly Hills Memorial Day Parade. We are meeting at Groves High School at 10:30 am. We are delighted to have State Senators Mallory McMorrow, Jeremy Moss, along with State Reps Samantha Steckloff and Natalie Price and some local Judicial candidates walking with us too. Sign up before you leave, and I will send you a reminder. It is a great way to get into the community and we are passing out candy to the children along the way too!

Thanks for all you are doing and all you will continue to do. Saving democracy is hard work but we are up to the challenge!

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Libby Dzurka reported the current balances of the Club's accounts. There are two accounts: the general account and the PAC account. The general account is used to pay for expenses to operate the club. We encourage donations to both accounts, especially in an election year.

Committee Reports:

Precinct Delegate Committee:

Richard Grinstein gave the following report in the Committee Chair's absence:

I'm Richard Grinstein, liaison between BBAD and the precinct delegates in Southfield Township. Allen has asked me to report on the status of our precinct delegates.

4 years ago, one of my neighbors, Joyce Peralta, invited me to become a precinct delegate in Beverly Hills. She told me that it would be a way that I could help Joe Biden win the 2020 election, help inform our neighbors about down ballot issues, and simply put, "make a difference". I had no idea just how rewarding an experience being a precinct delegate would be. My wife and I had lived in our neighborhood for almost 40 years, but until I started doing the work of a precinct delegate, I had no real sense of belonging to a community.

Allen and Debbie's concept for using Precinct Delegates, which is essentially based on the principle of community organizing, is an amazingly powerful tool. By finding people in every community in our area who are willing to go out and meet neighbors likely to share their values and their hope for a just and equitable society, we are acting on that old idea of "it takes a village".

All of us here tonight are deeply concerned, even terrified, not just at the danger of losing the election this fall, but at the apparent willingness of a large percentage of the American people to embrace a leader who would turn our country into an authoritarian state. Debbie has suggested that it is not hyperbole to frame the choice this year as one of "Freedom or Fascism".

But we do have a path of action rather than one of depression or despair. We have an opportunity to step up and do something concrete- to embrace the idea of helping create a community of like-minded people, to meet and talk with strangers, to discover that we are not alone- in short, to discover the power of working together, the power of active hope.

This year, I'm happy to say, we have even more precinct delegates than we did in the last election- last time we had 141; currently, including write-in candidates, we have 157. We still have a few open positions, so I'd like to ask all of us here to talk to our friends and neighbors to help us fill those last few Precinct Delegate spots.

For all precinct delegates, new or returning, there will be opportunities to attend one of three in-person training sessions. This will include detailed information about how to use WAVE. You should have received an email from Allen yesterday regarding signing up for training. Let me know if you haven't seen it and I'll make sure it gets to you.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge all our precinct delegates, especially new delegates who are about to find out just how rewarding an experience this will be. We have quite a few new delegates this year, in fact 61 of our delegates are new. Let's have everyone here who has volunteered for the first time to be a precinct delegate stand up so we can honor them.

And returning precinct delegates, please also stand and join them.

All of you delegates should be very proud. It is your work that will win the election, not just for the Democratic Party, but for the future of our democracy itself.

I also want to recognize Jürgen Wiesenberger and Maureen Christiansen, along with Emery Pence, who helped recruit many of the new delegates. And, of course, Allen Wolf and Debbie Rosenman, whose incredible amount of hard work continues to amaze me.

This is going to be one of the closest presidential elections that we have experienced in a long time. We believe that if we all work together, we can win, but it will take all our energy to make that happen.

It is vital that every delegate pursues every possible vote. We definitely have our work cut out for us, but I am confident that by working together we will succeed.

The work that each one of you does this year will be something you can be proud of for your whole lives. And we are already so proud to have each and every one of you helping win the fight for our democracy.

Postcard Writing Committee/Student Intern Committee:

The Chair, Debbie Rosenman gave the committee report in Emery Pence's absence. The post card writing campaign for Shadia Martini continues. There are postcards from Distill Social to the signers of the Repro Rights petitions.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

Guest speakers: Oakland County Leaders

Robert Wittenberg, County Treasurer

Mr. Wittenberg initially educated the attendees on his role as County Treasurer, he basically acts as the county's banker. There are 63 local communities in the county. His office works as the collection agency for the collection of back property taxes. He reported that 96% of property taxes are paid on time and that there are programs available for property owners that are experiencing difficulty in keeping up with their property taxes.

Lisa Brown, County Clerk

As County Clerk it is Ms. Brown's responsibility to act as the record keeper or register of deeds for the County and also oversees the election process throughout the county. As the register of deeds, she has employed a property title protection program to prohibit fraudulent transfers or liens placed on property. This program was one of the first of its kind and has been adopted by other county clerks across the state. The service is free; go to ocmideeds.com to register your property and receive notifications of any filings regarding your property.

The second part of her job has become very challenging in the last couple of election cycles due to a great deal of misinformation. She reviewed briefly the measures her office incorporates to ensure secure elections. She reviewed the availability of early voting and advised that all the members of BBAD may vote early at the Bloomfield Hills Public Library. She reminded everyone that in the primary in August, stay within your party or your ballot will be spoiled.

Karen MacDonald County Prosecutor

During her first tenure in office her focus was on criminal justice reform. She reported that her office policies and procedures were antiquated and did not reflect the advancements made in policy reform to address the role of mental illness and addiction in the criminal justice system. She has incorporated a diversion program to identify the needs of those convicted and where appropriate place in programs to assist in addressing the underlying issues in an effort to avoid the criminal justice system. These office changes also included capital investments in equipment upgrades and assists her office to operate more efficiently.

Another priority is public safety. Oakland County has the 8th highest rate of human trafficking in the country; this phenomenon goes hand-in-hand with drug trafficking. She has put in place a unit to focus on this and related issues.

She has also incorporated canine support for victims of crime.

She is also very proud of the conviction integrity unit that she has put in place to make sure that only those that were properly convicted are incarcerated.

Lastly, in an effort to address the mass shootings and gun violence that have become an epidemic in our country she has started a non-profit, "All of Us". It will conduct research and promote public health campaigns to stop and/or prevent gun violence. It will provide a means to educate the public on threat assessment, in hopes of identifying someone in crisis before that person reaches for a gun to harm themselves or others.

Jim Nash, Water Resource Commissioner

As Water Resource Commissioner, it is his responsibility to maintain the underground infrastructure to protect water availability and provide clean and safe water. Currently, his office is working throughout the county to test and replace lead pipes.

Global warming and climate change has presented his office with new challenges. He is incorporating new technology to replace the reliance upon fossil fuel.

Announcements and Good and Welfare:

Various candidates introduced themselves.

The June meeting is on a different day; Monday June 16, 2024, at the Bloomfield Township Library. The guest speakers will be State Senator Jeremy Moss and representatives for the League of Conservation Voters, speaking on "Energy Savings Now".

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Attendees May 21st

Doris Applebaum
Howard Baron
Lisa Brown
Spencer Calhoun
Chris Chanko
Maureen Christensen
Suzanne Christopherson
Mike Clift
Mike Corbin
Kelly Dillaha
Brady Dillaha
Robin Dillard
Libby Dzurka
Michael Fayz
Nessa Feller
Oscar Garner
Sara Gajos
Dave Goodman
Rhonda Rhodes Grant
Richard Grinstein
Sandy Hansell
Eileen Harryvan
Anne Honhart
Nicole Huddleston
Paul Jacobs
Jaxson Kaplan-Rudolph

Catherine Martin
Shadia Martini
Karen McDonald
Chris McKenna
Max Mondshine
Adrienne Murdah
Jim Nash
Fred Newton
Bob Nicholson
Linda Pence
Tammy Pereira
Sydney Pereira
Angela Powell
Rakesh Ramakrishnan
Nancy Reed
Traci Richards
Debbie Rosenman
Liv Serio
Lynn Shecter
Corinne Shoop
Isaac Shore
Marti Szilagyi
Tarik Taskin
Kimberly Thomas
Laura Wade
Deborah Wahl
Robert Wittenberg
Mary Ann (?) on Zoom

55 attendees