**Minutes 24 Jan 2017 SDC Meeting**

**Attendees:** Nancy Schaef, Finley Schaef, Lanny Walter, Tim Scott, Skip Arthur, Bill Barr, Chris Allen, Pam Ross, Mike Harkavy, Margo McGilvrey, and prospective members Claudia Lawrance and Rick Cousin.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of 22 November 2016 approved as amended to correct the spelling of one of the attendee’s names.

**Approval of new members:** The Chair said there were three new candidates. One, Judy Lechner, who is not present for this meeting, would be considered later.

The Chair explained what it means to be a committee member. He said the key responsibilities are to attend county committee meetings, circulate petitions to get people on the ballot, and attend caucuses. Of course, there’re more; e.g., participating in sub-committees, rallies, and serving as an officer.

Claudia introduced herself. She said she lives in E.D. 8 and has lived in Saugerties for 40 years. The Chair moved accept her. It was seconded by Nancy Schaef and approved.

Rick Cousin discussed his background. He said he grew up in Westchester (Goldens Bridge) and that was very politically active. He has done website design and created the NOW-NYC Website. He has lived in Saugerties since 2009 (bought house in 2005). He now specializes in software quality assurance. Lanny Walter moved to accept him which was seconded by Mike Harkavy and approved. It was planned to assign him to E.D. 13.

**Treasurer’s Report**: See report. Margo McGilvrey moved to accept report. Seconded by Skip Arthur and approved.

**Fundraising:** The Chair asked that we think of ways to raise money and hoped that ideas would be forthcoming at the next meeting.

**Last weekend’s activities:** Nancy Schaef recounted her experience in NYC at the Women’s March. She said the energy was incredible and that the police were cooperative. Margo McGilvrey agreed. She said it was well organized. Pam Ross related her experiences of the march in Washington DC. Skip Arthur talked about Woodstock demonstration saying perhaps 1,000-1,200 people were present.

**Caucus vs. Primary:** The Chair pointed out that the Democrats have always used a Caucus to establish nominees. He suggested we think about changing it to be a Primary. He pointed out that nominees need not be Democrats in a Caucus system, and that has resulted in endorsed candidates who never became Democrats and thus did not help party to grow. In a primary system, candidates must circulate a petition. On the downside, this is more work. Skip Arthur asked what the advantage to switching would be, then. The Chair responded that, as previously stated, it would help the party grow and that other advantages are that it permits wider participation. Claudia Lawrance asked why we would nominate someone who was not a Democrat. The Chair responded that it sometimes happens due to a shortage of qualified candidates. There followed some discussion as to whether a Primary would require funds. It probably would not if it coincided with state or national primaries.

Chris Allen thought Republicans shifted away from caucus to maintain more control of their candidates, of who is running. Also, there is a convenience factor to voters. A caucus only last a couple of hours which limits participation. He also feels that the act of petitioning creates an amount of emotional investment. Rick Cousin said that the discussion was very useful to him, but said he has historically been completely unaware who the candidates are until voting day, but if he knew about a caucus, he would know who the candidates are.

**Standing Committees:** The Chair asked for people to think of candidates for town board.

**Voting Data:** Michael Harkavy talked about the distribution of votes in Saugerties for various candidates. He said it looks to him like Teachout did pretty well here, compared to other areas. Hillary beat Trump in Saugerties by 130 votes.

**Program Committee**: The Chair acknowledged that the chair of the Program Committee is overwhelmed by other obligations and the committee needs revitalization.

**Resolutions:**

 To support Keith Ellison for chair of Democratic National Committee: The Chair moved that it be adopted. It was seconded by Skip Arthur. Discussion: If approved, the resolution would be sent to DNC and NYS Democratic Committees. Michael Harkavy moved to strike reference to Clinton’s loss. This motion was seconded by Rick Cousin. Resolution passed as amended.

 Sanctuary City: To be tabled and discussed at the next meeting. Also to consider whether it should be added to the SDC Statement of Values.

 To support a two-state solution in Israel: It was agreed to table this for later discussion.

**Local Political Action:**

The Chair discussed Ulster Progressive Action and how it is structured. It has been meeting mid-county and pointed out that it is a chapter of the NY Progressive Alliance (Action) Network. The federal team focuses on resisting Trump agenda. A state team tries to bring progressive candidates into the state government to try to get control of NY State Government. The county/local team exists to flip representation to get more progressive candidates and to see how they might advocate for issues that are more positive.

He also discussed Move Forward NY, from Gardiner/New Paltz and the pointed out that the Hudson Valley Progressive Network was created in the wake of the Obama campaign. They are trying to coordinate activities of all groups. Our Revolution is a Bernie Sander’s group which has a board and is hoping to network with all local groups. Saugerties Indivisible is meeting 6:30 at Inquiring Minds this Thursday.

Nancy Schaef recommended the committee put together a summary of who these groups are and make it available to our mailing list, at a minimum. It could also go to the press. She said after Saturday, people are itching to be involved. The Chair said working that up would fall on him.

Nancy Schaef suggested announcing our next meeting in the Times and the Freeman as a way to channel our concern and anxieties about the new administration into action.

Michael Harkavy suggested we need to begin moving on identifying candidates for local offices.

Finley Schaef read Robert Reich’s “Seven Truths”.

Nancy Schaef moved to adjourn; it was seconded Pam Ross. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted:

W.D. Barr, Secretary