Minutes: Feb 28, 2017 Saugerties Democratic Committee Meeting

**Attendees:** Committee Members—Rick Cousin, Lanny Walter, Margot McGilvrey, Tim Scott, Bill Barr, Chris Allen, Pamela Ross, Mike Harkavy, Claudia Lawrance, Luz Mooney, Mary Ann Wrolsen, Skip Arthur, John Remington, Nancy Schaef, Lisa Ellerby; Others—Allan Vickers, Kevin Morgan, Judith Lechner, John Bassler, Virginia Luppino, Arzi McKeon, Michael Phillips, Sarah Phillips, Lorrie Fredette, Shellie David, Ernie Mortuzans, Dennis Lazaroff, Elisabeth Lennon, Lewis Rosenbluth, Kathleen Gray, Marsha Franklin, Paul Feingold, John Terrell, Connie Bailey, Beth Murphy, Elliott Auerbach.

**Presentation by Ulster County Comptroller:** Elliott Auerbach expressed his pleasure to speak to the Committee. He said he is up for his fourth term explaining that terms for Comptroller and County Executive had been staggered so that they do not run during the same election cycle. His first term was a two-year term and now he is completing his first four-year term. He said that in his youth, he ran a family hardware store so he campaigned for the opportunity of “minding the store” for Ulster County. He now manages a $352M budget, 26,000 invoices, and $126M in vendor charges. The Comptroller’s office is only 6 people so they are very dedicated and work very hard. Their claim is to be the people’s watchdog. He sometimes has to say ‘no’ to County Government and at times, that does not make him very popular.

He said the election this year is more of a local election. At top of ticket will be County Clerk and Comptroller. He likes it because it gives him an opportunity to meet local people. He then responded to questions and left saying his door is always open.

The Chair thanked all for their attendance, noting that it is larger than usual. He introduced functions of Saugerties Democratic Committee pointing out that for each of the town’s 16 election districts we assign two committee members, and noting that these assignments are only half populated. He then moved to the General Meeting and briefly discussed agenda.

**General Meeting**

**Approval of minutes:** The Secretary moved that the minutes to the January 24, 2017 Committee meeting be approved. Seconded by Chris Allen. Discussion: Rick Cousins asked that minor corrections be made to the description of his background. It was unanimously approved that the minutes be approved as amended.

**Treasurers Report:** The Treasurer reported that with the $58 contributed at the January meeting, the Committee had a balance of $1,243.75. She moved that the report be approved. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**New Members:** The Chair explained the terms of membership adding that it includes being a member of the Ulster County Democratic Committee (upon approval). He also explained County representation as well as rules for petitioning. The Chair made case for more Democrats being elected and noted that we would like SDC to consider making Saugerties a Sanctuary Town. He also referenced the Committee’s our Statement of Values and offered to send it to those providing their email address.

The Chair then asked if any present were interested in becoming members.

Elisabeth Lennon then introduced herself. She has lived on Church Road since 1984. She has lived in both Woodstock and Saugerties and presently works for NYS Dept of Transportation, involved in Climate Change. She grew up in Germany, but is now a naturalized citizen and said, like many, she is passionate about being active in government.

Kathleen Gray introduced herself, saying she thinks it is now crucial to become involved. She was born in Poughkeepsie and worked in the non-profit organization field until 2011. Has undergraduate degree in Sociology and worked as a social worker in Green County for 10 years and found it very rewarding. She retired last year but got called back for 3 days/week. She has four children and is devoted to education. She graduated from Vassar where she had a scholarship. Feels children today should not pay so much for education. She has a lot of experience with Medicare and Medicaid patients and very sympathetic with them. Said she is very busy but will make time for Committee work.

Kathy Gordon: She has been very active politically. She lives in Cantine Island. She worked full time on the Sean Eldridge and Zephyr Teachout campaigns. Said she wonders if it’s not time to go back to ward politics where one knows every voting member in one’s election district. Said her interest would be somewhat dependent upon which district she gets assigned.

Allan Vicker: He lives near Blue Mountain campground. Lived in Woodstock for 29 years where he was on the Woodstock Democratic Committee. He was the finance chairman for the Omega Institute. He and his wife moved to Florida, then moved back. He said he was greatly disappointed in Zephyr Teachout loss.

Connie Bailey: Very modest. She liives in District 2, on Fiero Road. She has lived in the in area and had a business in town for 20 years

Judith Lechner: She is a freelance writer, growing up in NYC. She said she is a progressive Democrat and former SDC member where she worked against the casino proposed for Saugerties. She said she feels it is important to be politically active.

The Chair moved to accept them and assign them to districts as close to their home as possible. Seconded by John Remington and unanimously approved.

**Discussion of DNC Chair Election:** Alessandra Farkas said Perez’s election caused her to question whether she wanted to stay in party. Jessica Weiss spoke out against Ellison and expressed her support for Hillary Clinton and decided she did not want to associate with this committee. Both Mike Harkavy and Rick Cousins expressed the need for Democrats to unify, and that compromise will be necessary.

**Standing Committees--**

**Search Committee**: Chair suggested that we develop a county legislative group to work with Indivisible Groups to seek candidates for the county legislature, specifically in the Blue Mountain area. He asked for attendees to consider being volunteers to do that. He pointed out that two of our representatives voted against the resolution opposing hate speech and defeating the Affordable Care Act. Chris Allen said he has reintroduced a bill opposing rescission of the ACA without a suitable replacement. He said he thinks he will get 7 to 9 Republican votes this time. The Chair said there will also be a vote on not allowing memorializing resolutions and recommended those present to attend the next meeting of the County Legislature to express their views. Chris Allen then explained why memorializing resolutions are proposed.

The Chair announced a training session on how to be a candidate will be available March 8 in Rosendale.

**Data Committee:** Bill Barr did an District by District run down of the election between Faso and Teachout. He pointed out that although Teachout won in the election districts in the center of Saugerties, Faso won a larger number of outlying districts and where he won, it was by a wider margin.

**Sanctuary City Resolution for Saugerties:** The Chair expressed the hope that Saugerties could become a sanctuary city for immigrants and asked for volunteers to research what that would involve and report back. He appointed Nancy Schaef to take the lead with the assistance of Lisa Ellerby, Margot McGilvrey , and Claudia Lawrance. He urged them to talk to Chief Sinagra and ask how he thinks the President’s Executive Order on Immigration will impact Saugerties police procedures.

**Village Election:** It was pointed out that there were no opponents to standing board members.

**Town Issues**

**Alternative Energy:** The Chair brought up a plan afoot for a Solar Farm along Kings Highway, or possibly on a nearby landfill. He suggested Democrats could sink their teeth into exploring alternative energy issues in our community. Rick Cousins said he has been working with town on installation of EV charging stations in three or four locations. He said the town is also interested in getting either an EV or a Hybrid and that Vernon Benjamin is working on a grant application. He reported that Fred Costello and Fred Chorvas are also involved. Rick said he was working as an advocate and technical advisor and, as such, not aware of the current status of the actions. The Chair suggested that it could become a Town Committee by reconstituting a former town Alternative Energy Committee. Rick Cousins said he would take the lead on it. Nancy Schaef pondered whether a resolution of support for town’s actions would be appropriate but it was decided that more information was needed. Skip Arthur explained the solar panels on the roof of the Senior Center and provided additional information on the Solar Farm plan. He said he would work with Rick on that.

**Bristol Beach:** Mike Harkavy suggested some people may wish to get involved in the Bristol Beach Project and announced an upcoming meeting on March 16 at 7 PM. The project is trying to carry on despite not getting two grants it had hoped for.

**Indivisible Group:** Virginia Luppino spoke on a planned meeting on immigration issues and suggested our committee could work with them. The Chair mentioned hostility to that issue within Kingston but said it had passed the City Council. Virginia was suggesting focusing on reaching out to the people affected. One way could be to develop a bi-lingual website. She said she would like to help with the website.

Beth Murphy said there will be an indivisible meeting, called an Umbrella Meeting, here on April 13, 7 PM regarding asking Faso to support the ACA. If Faso does not attend, there will be those present to explain ACA issues and hopefully quell panic.

**Resistance Voter Registration:** The Chair cited the March 12, at 10 AM voter registration drive in Saugerties. The Senior Center will be the Headquarters. He welcomed others to attend.

**People’s March for Education Justice Platform:** Luz Mooney announced that on March 4, there will be several marches throughout the state, including one in Kingston, to highlight Cuomo’s lack of support for education in the state. It will be at one o’clock at the Academy Green. She then handed out pamphlets providing details for the event.

**Committee Facebook and Webpage:** Rick Cousins addressed the facebook page for the Committee. He said there is a webhosting agency called Go Daddy that has an introductory price of $50 for each of the first three years. We would then have a 100GB website that would include 100 MB for email. He said he would recommend it and said he will investigate it further. His offer was made into a motion that was seconded by Luz. Discussion: Virginia Luppino said you could get a Word Press cite for $18 per year. John Bassler said Indivisible Saugerties Word Press site is very powerful and should be looked into. There was a friendly amendment to authorize funding up to $200. Lorrie Fredette offered to underwrite the $200. The Chair emphasized the need for a fundraiser rather than an individual contribution.

Motion to adjourn: Nancy Schaer seconded by Luz. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted:

William Barr, Secretary

Saugerties Democratic Committee