**Minutes of SDC July 28, 2020 Virtual Meeting**

**ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Lanny Walter, Bill Barr, Pam Ross, Margo McGilvrey, Christine Dinsmore, Nejla Liias, Kathy Gordon, John Schoonmaker, Kathleen Gray, Skip Arthur, Mike Harkavy, Tim Scott, Susan Breen, Nancy Schaef, Finley Schaef, Cara Stammler,

Hélène Listerlin, Nicole Roskos, Rick Cousin, Katherine Smith, Aaron Levine, Barbara Boyce, Louise Bloomfield

Guests: Antonio Delgado, Jerry Cohen, Justine Gauckler, Richard Azoff, Tyler Vanderhaag, Larry and Robin (last names unknown), Jeremy Russell, Kenneth Kleinberg, Gilda Ricardi, Josef Hinchey, Chris Allen, Claudia Andreassen, Deena Turner, Loel Barr, Diedre Miller

**Approve Minutes from June 24, 2020 zoom meeting**: The Secretary noted that spelling of attendees’ names had been corrected and moved that the minutes, as amended, be approved. The motion was seconded by Kathy Gordon, and approved unanimously.

**Treasurer’s Report:** The Treasurer presented her report, as detailed below and moved that it be approved. The motion was seconded by Rick Cousin and unanimously approved.

Balance June 24, 2020 $2,038.53

Collected from members 157.62

Check: Friends of Betsy Kraat 250.00

Check: Rise Up Kingston 250.00

Check: Hinchey for NY 250.00

Balance July 28, 2020 $1,446.15

**Visit with Congressman Antonio Delgado**: Nejla Liias explained the protocol to be used during the meeting.

**County Bylaws**: The Chair noted that the draft amended bylaws have been distributed by email and encouraged the committee to review them and comment, if desired. The meeting to vote on the amended bylaws will be in August (day TBA but probably the 27th. He noted that the County Subcommittee has been working very hard on it. The Chair said he would have the Secretary forward the email allowing Committee members to opt out of receiving the bylaws by postal delivery, getting them by email instead.

**Engagement in Campaigns (General):** The Chair noted that all candidates listed below are our candidates and we will support them. Ideally, there will be a lead person on the committee for each one.

**Engagement in Betsy Kraat campaign**: Christine Dinsmore said that the campaign is doing a book drive for local kids. Books are being collected in Saugerties at Hudson Valley Desserts. Betsy is now engaged in coordinating her campaign with Michelle Hinchey and Antonio Delgado and will make several appearances with them. Aiden O’Connor has agreed to endorse her and share his donor list, which is good because she needs cash, as well as a campaign manager. Kat Smith said Pat Strong is also willing to share her donor list. Donations can be made through Betsyforassembly.com. She has recently taken to the airwaves to promote her candidacy.

**Engagement in Michelle Hinchey campaign**: Michelle just hired a field director, Kaylee May who will help the campaign’s direct voter contact efforts. Her email is Kaylee@hincheyforny.com. Her campaign will be holding coordinated phone banks with the Delgado campaign on Tuesday and Wednesday. They have weekly volunteer training on Wednesday at 6pm with Kaylee and check with her for details. They are also looking for folks to host meet and greets with Michelle. The Committee is putting together a coordinated plan for September.

**Engagement in Antonio Delgado campaign**: Congressman Delgado spoke to the Committee and began by discussing the loss of John Lewis. He addressed the amount of fear, angst and hostility in the country. He said of Lewis that his last actions were making a clear message to the country of our ability to focus on reclaiming our national soul. He said now is a real moment of accountability that we should be galvanized by. As hard as the road ahead will be, its difficulty lets us know how important it is.

He noted that he has introduced 33 Bills in Congress, every facet of which he has been involved in, but there is something about this moment that is deeper than any of these issues. It goes to the heart of being moral and compassionate. Democrats have an opportunity to overcome the corrupt, incompetent leadership of this administration. He encourages all of us to seek this opportunity to make inroads and change the power dynamic of this country. Then we can make sustainable change. He applauds our work and said he will always be accountable to us.

Questions:

Nancy Schaef said she was honored to have him represent us. She asked about the Federal forces in Portland and expressed concern over the lack of opposition in Congress. Answer: Important issue. The President is looking for an opportunity to create wedges between potential allies. He’s cobbled together a secret police with no constitutional authority in order to incite violence that will feed into his narrative that those opposing him are anarchists. He said 117 Congressional colleagues are demanding answers from his administration, but what can be done is problematic. His authority under DHS is vast, going back 9/11. The present tactic is being justified by the President for failure of the amendment to the Insurrection Act to be passed. Antonio noted that the Insurrection Act has historically been used to support Civil Rights and for that reason, he was reluctant to vote for changing it.

John Schoonmaker asked about his vote against a 10% reduction in the military budget. The Congressman answered that, as a general principal, he does not support blind percentage cuts to budget items. He noted that there are real cuts that need to be made, but reductions should target which items are to be cut. He said that approach would apply to any budgetary item, not just the military.

Christine Dinsmore asked about Antonio’s small business advisory commission and wondered why there isn’t more diversity on it. The Congressman said the Committee is not just who joins up on the calls, but he acknowledged that the issue of minorities and persons with disabilities on the committee is a good question and should be looked at. She added that there are three businesses in Saugerties that are owned by persons of color.

Justine Gauckler said she is a Black, disabled business owner in Saugerties who can’t generate the resources she needs to pay back a loan. What can she do? How can she get other disabled folks to support him when he hasn’t reached out to them. The Congressman encouraged her to reach out to the PPP program and encouraged her to ask for his office’s help. He said there is a lot of good stuff in the program, to include benefits to minority borrowers. On the disability front, he said he thinks he has been supportive of legislation for disabled Americans. He said he is happy to talk to her some more about this.

In closing, the Congressman thanked the Committee, acknowledged its passion and hard work. He said he feels our energy and is truly grateful for the opportunity we have given him. He encouraged us to rally around the knowledge that we are on the right side of history.

Tyler Vanderhaag encouraged anyone to contact him for further questions.

**Engagement in Claudia Andreassen campaign**: Claudia Andreassen spoke on how the Committee can help. She said she will request an endorsement in August. The Chair said the Committee will move forward accordingly. Christine Dinsmore asked if there are specific things the Committee can do now to help. She said she would appreciate volunteers.

**Report from Ad Hoc Committee to review SDC By-law amendments**: The Chair noted that the committee has met and will meet again on the 30th, and is coordinating our effort with the County effort. Drafting under Article One has been done and will be reviewed in light of the proposed new County Committee Bylaws.

**Covid 19 Surge: Stay Safe, Stay Open**: Nejla Liias said the initiative came as a result of meeting with Supervisor Costello over HITS holding competitions in Saugerties. We decided on a poster that reminds all to stay safe. We will seek endorsements from merchants, Sawyer Foundation, Town Board, Parks and Recs, etc. The campaign will welcome folks but ask them to join us in staying safe and healthy. Christine pointed out that the SDC will not be on it, so it is not political.

The Chair asked if there is any new information on the impact HITS is having on the community. John said some merchants has contacted the Board to say it hasn’t been helpful to their business because of fears of infection from competitors.

**Police reform in Saugerties**: The Chair asked if any have applied. Justine Gaukler, Gilda Ricardi and Christine Dinsmore, in addition to the Chair, have applied. John said 20 have sent in applications, but the Town is waiting until Friday for other applications. The Committee will form in August or September. Every member will receive a thumb drive with all the policies the police department uses (400 laws). The Chair asked for a table of contents and John said he will make sure that happens. Gilda pointed out that this Commission will not be controlled by the Police Chief and the Commission will decided what they want to review which John affirmed.

**Neighbor to Neighbor**: Christine noted that a Zoom meeting August 4th at 7pm will take place for participants and possibly neighbors. She briefly described the Neighbor-to-Neighbor initiative and its focus on building relationships with constituents. Where it has been employed, voter turn-out has greatly increased. The Chair noted that anyone, including those not on the Committee, can engage in this effort. Kevin Freeman is taking the lead. If you are interested, please contact him for the link at kevin@mutoworld.com.

**Contribution to County Committee**: The Chair noted that at each Executive Committee meeting County Chair Frank Cardinale notes that loans individuals have made to the County Committee have never been repaid. The substitute coordinated campaign director has also never been paid. Nancy Schaef moved that the Committee give the County $200, seconded by Bill Barr. Discussion: Aaron asked about the follow up to the postponed County brunch. The Chair said Frank Cardinale has asked the County Executive Committee for ideas but none have been forthcoming. Aaron Levine suggested that County try to organize a take-out effort with a local restaurant and the Chair encouraged him to communicate it to the Chair of the County Committee.

Kat Smith said she doesn’t feel it is our obligation to help the County because the County Committee contracted for individuals without our input. The Chair acknowledged that there were problems, but felt we could pay something since the County does other work that we benefit from. Motion passed unanimously.

**Standing Committees:**

Local Campaign Coordinating Committee-Update on Town Judge race. The Chair said there is no Republican candidate for Town Judge. Mr. O’Dell will be on the Independence line, possibly.

Data Committee: Kathy Gordon reported on the turn-out. There are about 3,500 Democrats in Saugerties and 57% voted, and 43 % voted early. Biden got 64% of the vote and Sanders received 22%. Of the absentee ballots issued, 73% were returned. Kathleen Gray noted that many who got absentee ballots voted in person, making the count lower. The Chair added that the County has agreed to purchase a device that will count absentee ballots which will be in place by November.

Fundraising Committee. All were urged to send a check or money to the committee.

Program Committee. Christine had nothing significant to report. Given the inability to meet in person, she proposed that we delay programs until next Spring. She then advocated for establishing a Social Media Squad that can move up our social media game.

School District Update-opening schools. Barbara Boyce attended the virtual School Board meeting with a particular interest in reopening schools. She said the Board is in the stages of planning that is required by the NYS. She said they discussed phasing in early childhood, students with disabilities, and English language learners. The Plan will be published on the website and in the schools. The Governor will have the final word. Districts must be in Phase 4 with an infection rate of less than 5%. The state will make a decision in early August. Next School Board meeting is Tuesday, August 11. Barbara will let the Secretary know when the school’s plan is posted.

**Business issues:**

The Secretary made a motion that the Committee open its own Zoom account to conduct virtual meetings. He said it would cost $14 a month. The motion was seconded by the Treasurer and passed.

Kathleen Gray said she wants to see the Senate flip and wants to pull folks together to work on Senate seats that are susceptible to flipping. Kathy Gordon added that Jerry Cohen is doing postcards every day. Jerry said he’s been watching the Senatorial races and Kelly is doing so well he recommended giving money to others, such as the race in North Carolina. He said analysis is required and he will send some information to the Chair on what he is seeing. An organization called Go Forward will help with writing letters. There is also focus on Voter Registration. Jerry’s email is jerrywoodstock@yahoo.com. Kat added that Sara Gideon v. Susan Collins in Maine and MJ Hegar running against John Cornyn in Texas is important.

Kathy Gordon said the vigil on the corner of Market and Main are still meeting every day shouting BLM from 5:30 to 6:30.

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn made by John Schoonmaker, seconded by Mike Harkavy and unanimously passed.

Respectfully submitted: Bill Barr, Secretary