



Saugerties Democratic Committee April 26, 2022 Monthly Meeting Minutes Saugerties Senior Center/Zoom, 7:00pm

Roll Call

The Secretary called roll and determined that a quorum was present:

Voting Members: Gilda Riccardi, Liz Buono, Kathryn Gordon, Ken Kleinberg (Acting), Bill Barr, Pam Ross, Deena Turner, Justine Tomkiell, Christine Dinsmore, Skip Arthur, Michael Harkavy, Nejla Liias, Louise Bloomfield, Sue Breen, Tim Scott, Nicole Roskos, Nancy Schaef, Brigid Walsh, Cara Stammmer, Joe Maloney, Bob Gelbach, Kevin Freeman, Rick Cousin, Anna Markowitz, Barbara Boyce, Hélène Lesterlin, Aaron Levine, Lanny Walter

Associate Members: Finley Schaef

Guests: Amy Fradon; Kate Hagerman, Catskill Mountainkeeper; Town Supervisor Fred Costello; Sakinah Irizarry; Mary McNamara; Andrew Cowan

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the revised Minutes of the March 22, 2022 meeting, which had been previously circulated. The motion passed without objection.

Treasurer's Report

Bill Barr offered the Treasurer's Report below. A motion was made and seconded to approve the report; the motion passed without objection.

Beginning Balance	
22-Mar-22	\$3,199.51
Income	
ActBlue Donations	\$172.83
Check	\$20.00
Total Income	\$192.83
Expenses	
Mailbox Rental	(\$100.00)
Total Expenses	(\$100.00)
New Balance	
26-Apr-22	\$3,292.34

Guest Presentation: Voter Outreach

Amy Fradon, Vice Chair of the Ulster County Democratic Committee for Voter Outreach, discussed the background to the Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) program now developing in Saugerties. Voter Outreach also includes a Voter Registration campaign countywide.

The Democracy Tent, including a children's voting booth, will be at several festivals in the county and we are invited to volunteer to staff it. **Saturday, September 10, 2022**, will be a countywide Voter Registration Day, with each town committee developing its own program, but fostering collaboration among the towns. Cara Stammler is working with Amy on a day to bring the Democracy Tent to Saugerties, probably in July.

A Voter Outreach youth team is doing Instagram Live interviews with candidates, led by Eleanor Martello, and a podcast series "Why Vote?," both going to young people's social media platforms. The Second Homeowners (2HO) project has some 2000 potential prospects to switch registration to Ulster County; that will launch countywide in July with two mailing events at the County Committee headquarters. The County is providing materials including a trifold for insertion into mailing packets. Nine UC towns are doing N2N this year. N2N when it's well established is a grassroots "answer to campaign finance reform" for the candidates, because the outreach is direct among neighbors who have established connection and trust. This translates directly to increased voter turnout. It's also a starting point to build a town committee's volunteer base.

Get to Know Your Members

Justine Tomkiell, Kevin Freeman and Finley Schaef introduced themselves and spoke about their backgrounds as illustrated by photos, moderated by Cara. Future meetings will include introductions to other SDC members.

Guest Presentation: Winston Farm

Kate Hagerman, program manager at Catskill Mountainkeeper (CMK), discussed the proposed development plan for Winston Farm. The site is significant for biodiversity and is protected under several different programs. The town's 2009 Comprehensive Plan called for preserving at least 50% of the site's open space; the proposal does not commit to that amount and the proposed uses of the open space use (cabins, ziplines) could be damaging in themselves.

The core of CMK's concern is aquifer protection. The proposed deforestation could result in flooding, stream siltation, and groundwater pollution. Kate explained the existing need for a backup water supply for Saugerties: Blue Mountain reservoir, which is owned and administered by the Village of Saugerties, is the main supply source. Because of turbidity caused by increased flooding, it has had to be shut off several times. The Beaverkill Aquifer on Winston Farm has been identified as an alternative supply, which is needed currently. The proposed use of Winston Farm could contaminate current water supplies. The requested zoning change would in effect hand over this public water supply to private commercial use. The developers say they will undertake additional water infrastructure, but the net effect may be to diminish an already problematic supply. [Beautiful Saugerties](#) has information about these concerns and how to get involved.

Joe Maloney expressed concern about where alternative water supplies might come from, and potential tax implications if another source were needed. Supervisor Fred Costello noted that a request for a zoning change to Planned Development District has been made; as of now the Town has neither consented nor refused. The Town Board will issue a Positive Declaration that the action has a potentially significant environmental impact, which will trigger a long-form State Environmental Quality Review

(SEQR) process. Village and Town officials expect the water at that site to remain a public resource. (The Town of Saugerties, Malden, Glasco, and Barclay Heights are all water customers of the Village.) A yield study will be part of the SEQR process; potentially the developers would be given an allowance of some water once the yield is known. As of now the developers own the water rights.

Mike Harkavy noted that the Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC) is looking out for sustainable development and is analyzing the developers' open-space proposal, determining what constitutes open space (contiguous, not fragmented, preserving at least half the property from development). Kathy Gordon noted the developers' lack of any effort to get community input thus far, and urged that events be set up before the process goes farther. Kate suggested hiring an ecologist to walk the land, map wetlands, list species of concern, and specify the carbon sink, so the environmental perspective can be accurately balanced with the potential private and public returns from the proposal. Joe noted that if the developers obtain PILOTs there will be no tax revenue to the town for the duration of the abatement. Fred Costello said no PILOT had been discussed; he will return to talk further with us about Winston Farm at another meeting.

Grow--Saugerties Voter Outreach

N2N: Kevin reported that our first N2N wave will begin in May, with materials provided by the County. Bill noted the value of meeting neighbors.

2HO: Louise Bloomfield outlined the county mailing effort, and noted that 2HO work can also be done by canvassing. Brigid Walsh noted that many 2HOs are not able to register up here.

Engage--Program Committee

Christine Dinsmore called for questions for the candidates asked for volunteers to staff the Committee's Assembly District 103 Candidate Forum on May 12.

Monitor

Town Board: Gilda Riccardi left a sign-up sheet to plan attendance at all meetings spread around committee members.

County Legislature: Lanny outlined the debate and results concerning gas tax cuts and long-extended foreclosures, in which Joe has been closely involved.

School Board election: Christine and Sakinah Irizarry gave updates having researched the candidates' social media pages and had some conversations. The election will be May 17; a candidates forum will precede it, date TBA.

Subcommittee Restructure Proposal

This will be presented for discussion at a future meeting. The purpose is to have a structure that will better support and reflect the strategy we adopted in January 2022.

Announcements

The May and June monthly meetings will take place on Wednesdays: May 25, and June 29 (because of Town Grievance Day and the June 28 primary respectively). Michelle Hinchey will address the June meeting.

The County fundraiser brunch will take place Sunday, May 15.

Executive Committee office hours can now be scheduled on demand by any SDC member.

Nicole Roskos reported that a tree planting will be held on Arbor Day (April 30), sponsored by the Climate Smart committee—3 trees are to be planted thanks to a grant the town received and free tree seedlings will be available.

Kevin moved to adjourn, seconded by Mike Harkavy; the meeting was adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Bloomfield, Secretary
