



# Saugerties Democratic Committee

## December 19, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes

7:00 pm

### **Roll Call**

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

*Voting Members:* Bill Barr, Deena Turner, Skip Arthur, Nejla Liias, Kathy Gordon, Louise Bloomfield, Nicole Roskos, Brigid Walsh, Bob Gelbach, Kevin Freeman, Margo McGilvrey, Rick Cousin, Andy Cowan, Lanny Walter, Aaron Levine

*Guests:* Brittany Barnard, Steven Charney, John Dashman, Ken Germano, Arah Roberts, Ashley Torres, Dan Torres, Michael Zorn

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### **Committee Business**

Chair Nejla Liias welcomed all and asked the guests to introduce themselves. She briefly spoke about the importance of the local elections held last month, and explained that the Committee will re-form after the primary election in 2024. She noted that the committee represents and reflects the broad spectrum of opinion within the Democratic party, and stressed the importance of forming a strong Committee slate going into the 2024 election cycle. The Committee's primary role is to recruit and help to elect Democrats at all levels. Nejla passed out the Committee's Statement of Values to guests and noted that the Committee is recruiting potential candidates who align with them for the 2024 election. She emphasized the importance of working to reach out to voters directly throughout the coming year.

Kathy Gordon then moved to spend up to \$350 to purchase 1000 sheets of SDC letterhead (in color), seconded by Louise Bloomfield. Nejla explained that personal outreach by mail from the Committee is important, both to inform voters and to generate interest in volunteer work such as canvassing door to door and by phone. The motion passed.

### **Shared Values and Actions**

Nejla circulated a list of possible ways for nonmembers to contribute to town Democrats' efforts. She then introduced six questions on display around the room and invited all attending to respond to give answers in writing (using post-its). Questions 5 and 6 applied only to members, reflecting on the past two years. Nejla highlighted the central importance of growing Democratic engagement and participation in the community at the local level.

1. **What talents or actions do you commit to taking in 2024?**

2. **What would you want to gain by contributing to the SDC in 2024?**
3. **What are the top three values that we should exhibit as a Dem committee?**
4. **What is the biggest challenge we face as Dems in 2024, besides Trump?**
5. **What are you most proud of during the past two years related to the SDC and your work as a member?**
6. **What is the biggest challenge we face as the SDC to be a solid committee?**

### **Special Guests**

Nejla introduced Dan Torres, deputy chief of staff for Congressional District (CD) 18 Rep. Pat Ryan. (Though Ryan does not currently represent Saugerties in Congress, the outcome of the ongoing redistricting litigation and work now being done may change that starting with the 2024 elections.) Dan, who resides in CD19, offered petitions for signature for President Biden to be on the ballot and for himself to be a CD19 delegate to the national convention.

Nejla then introduced Ulster County Democratic Commissioner of Elections Ashley Torres. Ashley explained that because of the timing of the NY presidential primary, it will be held according to the existing Congressional districts. (The presidential primary will be held April 2, 2024; the redistricting commission map is due Feb. 28 and will then go to the state Legislature. The other primary elections will be held June 25; the general election will be Nov. 5.) She then invited anyone who can do so to sign up to be an election inspector and/or to recruit election inspectors for 2024. Inspectors are paid \$18/hour by the County for their work and are allowed to work half-shifts. Any registered—or if under voting age, preregistered—voter in Ulster County is eligible to sign up. People can sign up in pairs to cover an entire shift.

Ashley also answered questions on a range of subjects and encouraged the committee to consider donating refreshments for inspectors on election days, when their work prevents them from leaving the polls to get meals.

There being no other business, the chair moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by several members. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Bloomfield, Secretary

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