



Saugerties Democratic Committee August 29, 2023 Monthly Meeting Minutes Senior Center, 7:00pm

Roll Call

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

Voting Members: Liz Buono, Bill Barr, Sakinah Irizarry, Skip Arthur, Christine Dinsmore, Nejla Lias, Mike Harkavy, Kathy Gordon, Louise Bloomfield (Zoom), Nancy Schaefer, Bob Gelbach, Kevin Freeman, Margo McGilvrey, Rick Cousin, Lanny Walter, Aaron Levine

Guests: Manny Nneji, Chris Allen, Andy Cowan

Approval of Minutes

Rick Cousin moved to approve the draft Minutes of the July 25, 2023 SDC meeting, seconded by Margo McGilvrey; the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Bill Barr presented the Treasurer's Report. Skip Arthur moved to approve the report, seconded by Liz Buono; the motion passed.

SDC TREASURER REPORT AUGUST 2023

| | Actual | |
|-----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Beginning Balance | | |
| 24-Jul-23 | | \$2,085.71 |
| Income | | |
| ActBlue Donations SDC | 101.32 | |
| ActBlue D&DfD | 438.09 | 355.34 |
| SDC Tkt Sales | 845.00 | |
| Meeting Collection | 88.00 | |
| Total Income | | \$1,472.41 |
| Expenses | | |
| Saugerties Lumber (Benches) | (71.25) | |
| Check 301 Manny Campaign | (150.00) | |
| Check 304 Fundraiser Tkts | (109.29) | |
| Check 305 Pavilion Rental | (500.00) | |
| Zoom CC Payment | (15.99) | |
| Total Expenses | | (\$846.53) |
| New Balance | | |
| 29-Aug-23 | | \$2,711.59 |

PENDING

\$3,066.93

Chair Nejla Liias welcomed guests.

SDC Fundraiser

This will take place Sept. 14 at the Cantine Pavilion. The final meal order is due to Stone Pony a week in advance, Sept. 7. Skip reported that they have enough volunteers for decorating, serving, ticket desk and cleanup after the event but need additional volunteers for setup. The biggest issue is ticket sales, which are running behind last year's at the same point.

District Attorney Candidate Manny Nneji

Manny outlined his biography and professional background. He gave numerous examples of his dedication, strong record and years of experience handling the office's most difficult cases, all of which make him by far the most qualified candidate. He stressed that while very actively campaigning, he is first and foremost doing his job as chief assistant DA. Impact, fairness, justice for victims and safeguarding the community are key priorities—including prosecuting law enforcement officers where necessary. As DA he would continue trying cases and would lead by example.

Christine urged all present to display Manny's campaign signs on private property as soon as possible. She pointed to Manny's campaign website for further background and accurate information (which is not always readily obtainable in media coverage). All are encouraged to invite friends to a meet-and-greet for Manny at Cantine's Island Sept. 5, hosted by Kathy Gordon.

Donations to Campaigns

Nejla reported that candidates Manny Nneji, Keith Gurgui, Leeanne Thornton and Aimee Richter have each formally requested \$500 from the Committee. Fred Costello and Mike Ivino have not yet submitted formal requests. The Executive Committee is recommending donations of \$250 in August, with the balance to come as follow-up donations in September depending on the success of the fundraiser. Manny has already received a \$250 donation. Nejla moved to make donations of \$250 apiece to Aimee Richter and Leeanne Thornton, and \$150—later amended to \$250—to Keith Gurgui. The motion was seconded by Nancy Schaefer and passed unanimously.

Lanny Walter commended Manny as a candidate and pointed out that it's especially vital for Committee members and volunteers to spread the word, since not all voters will have the opportunity to hear Manny for themselves.

Aimee Richter has two opponents in her race for Town Justice: Stanley O'Dell on the Republican and Working Families lines; and Gaetana Ciarlante on the Conservative line. The Committee's Town Board candidates have three opponents: Ryan Arold and Al Bruno on the Republican line, and George Heidcamp on the Conservative line.

Saugerties Coordinated Campaign

The Executive Committee has reached out to members to manage various aspects of the local coordinated campaign: Gilda Riccardi, Bob Gelbach, Skip Arthur, Nicole Roskos, and Lanny have volunteered, together with Mike Harkavy and Liz Buono (canvassing) and Kathy Gordon and Louise

Bloomfield (voter turfs and lists). Campaign literature will be needed for all candidates: final quantities to be decided and requested from candidate campaigns.

Mike Harkavy announced a Town Supervisor/Town Board fundraiser scheduled for Oct. 14 at the Centerville Firehouse at 5pm. There will be no set ticket price; contributions of any amount are welcomed.

Committee Business

Dual Residents Outreach Program: Louise asked for likely retail establishments we could approach about displaying the flyer, possibly with registration forms.

Bench for Pam Ross: The benches donated by SDC and Esopus Creek Conservancy are being constructed.

Caribbean Carnival: The County Democracy Tent's display—staffed mostly by SDC members--was a success with those attending, and some elected officials and candidates stopped by.

Village Updates:

- Nejla noted the importance of the Orpheum.
- Village Planning Board meeting—residents expressed strong disapproval of changing the zoning for the old town hall building to become a residential hotel, and of the same owner's converting a house on Washington Avenue to an AirBnB. The town has signed onto authorizing ADUs; the Village Board rejected them. Bill, a Planning Board member, explained that the it has very little power to curb short term rentals, but with a recommendation from the County Planning Board, a Village Planning Board could overrule a Village Board permit for them. Skip suggested a holding a public meeting on housing development issues after the election.

Town Updates:

- Lanny noted the Dominican Sisters' application to build senior housing on Spaulding Lane; the Town Board has to decide on a zoning variance to allow it. Public hearings are scheduled for Sept. 6 and Sept. 20.
- Winston Farm: Nejla noted the recent article in *Chronogram* saying that the owners are in talks with Open Space Institute about purchasing a large portion of the property for conservation as a state park. Her proposal for the Committee to send an open Letter to the Editor supporting this was tabled until a letter can be circulated and reviewed; one vote against tabling was recorded. Mike Harkavy noted that an open letter seeking to influence ongoing negotiations could have a disruptive effect on them. Liz agreed that there is a large potential for backlash to such a letter.
- School Board: Sakinah Irizarry reported that Atlas Security has been hired district wide. Free school lunches provided by the state will be provided at Cahill and Morse schools; Riccardi did not meet the financial criteria. The capital improvement plan has no funding for air quality improvements. The dress code and discipline policy have seen some improvements.

County Updates:

- Nejla announced the Ulster County Democrats Fundraiser dinner set for Sept. 28, with special guest Zellnor Myrie.
- County legislator Aaron Levine reported that the Legislature, by one vote, defeated a memorializing resolution urging Governor Hochul to veto the bill that would move most local elections to even years (aligning them with the state and federal election calendar).
- It was noted that county legislator Joe Maloney voted against the County Executive's \$15 million housing fund.
- Aaron reported that the UCRRA's executive director has been terminated by the board.

There being no other business, Christine Dinsmore moved to close the meeting, seconded by Margo McGilvrey. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Bloomfield, Secretary
