



Saugerties Democratic Committee

April 23, 2024 Monthly Meeting Minutes

Senior Center, 7:00pm

Roll Call

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

Voting Members: Bill Barr, Christine Dinsmore, Skip Arthur, Nejla Liias, Kathy Gordon, Louise Bloomfield, Nancy Schaef, Nicole Roskos, Barbara Boyce, Kevin Freeman, Margo McGilvrey, Andy Cowan, Lanny Walter

Guests: Fred Costello, Mike Ivino, Brittany Barnard, Steve Charney, Ken Germano, Fred Hirsch, Sakinah Irizarry, Molly Mackaman, Mike McIsaac, Marcy Pollitt, John Schoonmaker

Approval of Minutes

Margo McGilvrey moved to approve the draft Minutes of the March 19, 2024 meeting, seconded by Rick Cousin. Lanny Walter offered a friendly amendment to the draft Minutes wording about the Housing Smart Committee’s push for the town to apply for Ulster County Housing Action Fund support to increase affordable housing. The amendment was accepted, and the motion to approve the Minutes as amended passed.

Treasurer’s Report

Christine Dinsmore moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report, seconded by Andy Cowan. The motion passed.

	Actual		Pending
Beginning Balance			
19-Mar-24		\$3,142.94	
Income			
ActBlue Donations SDC	124.83		ActBlue Donation 302.55
Meeting Donation	78.00		Incl. Xfr from Zaloga
Total Income		\$202.83	
Expenses			
Zoom CC Payment	(15.99)		
Check 449 (K. Gordon Printing	(26.27)		Check 450 (PO Box) (\$122.00)
Total Expenses		(\$42.26)	
New Balance			
23-Apr-24		\$3,303.51	\$3,484.06

Chair Nejla Liias welcomed guests and introduced Town Supervisor Fred Costello.

Town Board Update

Fred described the status of the development proposals Winston Farm and the two developments proposed for Barclay Heights. The Climate Smart Task Force has secured a \$100,000 grant; potential uses include EV charging stations, solar, and other options. An electric Zamboni machine is now in use at the ice rink. Proposed new zoning regulations are being developed by a consultant working with the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

In response to a question, Fred noted that town board members are willing to pass a resolution emphasizing humanitarian concerns in Gaza, but there is no consensus about a judgment call on Israel's actions. He noted that this divergence reflects the public's concerns expressed at recent Town Board meetings, and that some residents view a ceasefire resolution as outside the scope of town officials' responsibility. Others hold that any lack of support for Israel is anti-Semitic. Mike Ivino added that he values conversation about this. He noted that there is much pressing town business as this resolution is being considered, and that oppositional behavior and emailed from members of the public on both sides of the issue has undermined the discussion. Nejla invited comment from those with strong feelings about the Town Board passing a ceasefire resolution, drawing responses both for and against. Marcy Pollitt suggested passing a resolution that all people should be free to practice their faith in the town of Saugerties. Kathy Gordon thanked Fred and the Town Board, noting Fred's wide-ranging knowledge and skill in keeping the Town Board meetings civil and productive.

June Primary

Assembly Campaign: John Schoonmaker reported on the campaign for Sarahana Shrestha in Saugerties, which includes campaigning for SDC candidates in the three districts where they are being challenged (EDs 7, 12 and 13). He noted the high number of volunteers at the kickoff and that Saugerties rural voters are extremely receptive to being visited door to door. He noted Sarahana's successful campaign to cover communities with smaller populations, such as Saugerties Village, under the good cause eviction legislation, and appealed more SDC volunteers to canvass. Canvassers are getting high contact and support rates. They will do a persuasion phone bank in May, and are eager train our canvass volunteers as needed.

SDC Member Campaign: Nejla listed the challenged candidates and the opponents. Christine Dinsmore noted that all three opponents who have previously run in general elections have done so *against* Democrats. Christine, Margo, Louise Bloomfield, Barbara Boyce, Lanny, and Kathy volunteered for the Campaign Committee. Nejla proposed three weekend days for canvassing in the challenged EDs. Kathy and Louise will coordinate access to the Shrestha campaign's VAN data.

Nejla proposed collecting a separate body of funds to finance our candidates' primary campaign, preserving funds already contributed for other campaigns. Bill Barr confirmed he can

keep separate records of targeted SDC primary contributions. Members contributed a total of \$120 to this targeted fund, which will also have an Act Blue link.

SDC Business

Member Resignation: Sakinah Irizarry has resigned from the SDC as she is a candidate for the Board of Education. The election is May 21, 2024. Sakinah noted that she is not seeking any political party's endorsement, as education concerns should be independent of politics.

Scribers Committee: It is run by Kathy Gordon and meets on a regular basis at Inquiring Mind. Local mail outreach is prioritized—e.g., to newly registered Dems in the town--but time permitting they can also write postcards for other significant races and issues.

Bylaws Committee: The Committee has met and is making progress on proposed revisions. For the new version, Nejla proposed striking the current requirement to advertise vacancies and searches in newspapers.

Future Meetings: Both the May and June meetings will be held in alternate locations. Pat Ryan will join the May meeting; Juan Figueroa will be invited for the June meeting, with Sarahana Shrestha and Michelle Hinchey to be invited for later in the year.

Bench Dedication for Pam Ross: Esopus Creek Conservancy suggests that the gathering take place held at the Pavilion, which is accessible to all. The site where the benches will be placed is not easily accessible and, in May, a crowd there could harm nesting birds. Final date still TBD.

Slate Members: Nejla confirmed we will hold an election for slate members to associate membership or full membership at our upcoming meeting.

Community Updates

County Health Commissioner: Nejla explained that a replacement for retired Health Commissioner is a difficult hire. The state requires that, if the commissioner does not have a MD, a MD is required to be available. The County requires a MD where the state does not. The proposed legislation's intent is to align with state policy.

County Bed Tax Exemption: Christine voiced concern about the proposed exemption of all-inclusive resorts from the tax and encouraged us to talk to our County legislators.

Moms Demand Action: Kevin Freeman announced an Albany Day of Action for Tuesday, May 7.

Pat Ryan Campaign: Kathy announced a house meeting for Pat Ryan on May 4 at Cantine's Island Community Center.

Village: Bill announced a Tree Commission-sponsored Tree Fair for May 27 at the Library.

Other: Margo thanked Marcy Pollitt for her suggestion to the Town Board. Molly Mackaman announced that on April 29, Jewish Voices for Peace will present a documentary on Gaza, *Where Should the Birds Fly?*, at the Library.

There being no other business, Nejla moved to adjourn seconded by Margo and the meeting adjourned at 9:09pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Bloomfield, Secretary
