



## General Meeting Minutes October 10, 2019

President David Siffert opened the meeting with an account of the recent County Committee meeting, saying the acting chair had refused to count votes, upsetting Arthur Schwartz, the law co-chair of the County Committee and our District Leader, who tried to make the process fair. There will be no elections for two years, so David warned us we must get our ducks in a row.

The New York Health Act Forum was a fabulous success, organized by Alec Pruchnick and featuring Assemblyman Dick Gottfried and Senator Gustavo Rivera, with others. There will be a Gun Reform Forum in November, and the November general meeting will be about court reform. The December meeting will cover endorsing a Presidential candidate and electing a VID President and three Vice Presidents.

Jen Hoppe gave the District Leader report, repeating that the County Committee meeting was a mess and commending those who attended. A group led by VID and DID attempted to get a rule change on the agenda to prohibit County Leaders from lobbying going forward. (Keith Wright, the current County Leader, is a registered lobbyist.) DID President Richard Corman and Vittoria Fariello, District Leader, will be meeting with Kyle Ishmael, First Vice Chair of the County Committee, to discuss this goal. A discussion followed.

Tiffany Townsend, the Democratic Commissioner of the Board of Elections in Manhattan and a District Leader with the Eleanor Roosevelt Club, now led a talk on the new early voting schedule. Early voting starts October 26 through November 3, with November 5 as the regular voting day. She said early voting is meant to give people more access to voting. There is also the option of using an absentee ballot. There are currently nine early voting sites, with possibly more in future elections. The Board is building a new website with more information. There had been a big push for this and VID played a big part in this campaign.

Now Alec Pruchnycki led a discussion on the New York Health Act, with members expressing the pros and cons of the legislation. At one point Dr. Gil Horowitz made a motion to revisit endorsing the resolution within 60 days. After discussion, this was defeated with 9 in favor and 25 against.

State Senator Brad Hoylman spoke up for the resolution in favor of the NY Healthcare Act, saying health care is a human right, and we have let down our fellow humans for



decades. He said there will be cost savings, and implored Democratic clubs to be very outspoken in their support. Now that the Dems are in control of the State Legislature, we have to stand up for the poor. Brad made the point that he was a co-sponsor of the bill, and urged a vote to support. The vote was taken, and was successful, with 26 in favor, 6 opposed, and 5 abstentions.

After the vote, Brad resumed his remarks, saying today we celebrate the passage of a plan to improve safety on the West Side Highway with a new lower speed limit, from 35 to 30 mph. He emphasized that the Hudson River Park is the most visited park in the Northeastern U. S., and visitors must be protected. He's also pushing a ban on floating billboards, with support from the courts. The Governor recently signed legislation that he pushed with Assemblymember Deborah Glick directing that State Liquor Authority licenses be published online. And legislation mandating vaccination has already been introduced and hopefully will pass in 2020. He urged us to ask every legislator to pass this.

Indiana Porta, Director of Outreach, spoke on the five Charter Revisions which will appear on the ballot this election. On the First she gave a detailed explanation of Ranked Choice Voting and the other provisions covered. After her talk, a vote was taken on all five proposed revisions, and all passed.

The vote:

The first revision, regarding elections, was passed with 27 in favor and one opposed.

The second revision, on the Civilian Complaint Review Board, passed 28 to 0.

The third revision, on ethics and governance, passed 29 to 0.

The fourth revision, on the city budget, passed 27 for with one abstention.

The fifth revision, on land use, passed unanimously with 29 in favor.

Tony Hoffmann, of the Campaign Committee, gave a report; there will be a report at the VID clubhouse on October 15. On October 19, there will be visibility events at Abingdon Square and St. Marks Church.

Jon Verbalis gave an introduction to his new Enforcement Committee, saying it will address the lax to non-existent enforcement of city laws and codes.



For the Environmental Committee, Nat Johnson reported that October 7 there will be a forum on recycling sponsored by Liz Krueger and Brad Hoylman. Organics collection will be available in all of Manhattan, with pickups three times a week. On October 20 there will be a tour of the Staten Island compost facility and a meeting with Robert Politzer of the Citizens Compost Lobby. The committee is working on a resolution against Federal bill HR 763, a carbon tax which will be detrimental to the environment.

Cameron Krause spoke for the Gun Reform Committee, saying there will be a forum on November 21 featuring New Yorkers Against Gun Violence.

Under New Business, Marlene Nadle said Corey's office will be giving \$1M in budgeting to the city. She advocated pushing for benches at every bus stop, and urged people to attend forums on October 16 at the Morton Street School, and October 21 at Manhattan Plaza.

The meeting was adjourned.