



**General Meeting Minutes  
November 14, 2019**

President David Siffert opened the meeting with a vote to adopt the minutes, which was done unanimously.

He further said he had met with Keith Wright, who was nice and friendly, but not much concrete got done. Keith said that Ben Yee wanted to activate the County Committee, but seemed hostile to Keith, so walls were built. Keith said he doesn't do anything without Barry Weinberg's say-so. David also said he was trying to set up a meeting with Greg Sumas, co-chair of the County Committee, and wondered if he should meet with Cynthia Dody of the Board of Elections. A discussion followed.

District Leader Jen Hoppe made her report, saying she had been wrangling DL's and club presidents along with David and Ben Yee to try to figure out what we want the County Committee to be. There definitely had to be a more progressive vision for the party. Amplify Her suggested elected leaders need to adhere to a pledge.

She said on Election Day she went to all 16 poll sites, and was impressed with how seriously people take their jobs as poll workers. She attended an early voting seminar and early voting went really well.

She also mentioned that Jumaane was working on a bill, Intro 800, mandating paid vacation time for all NY workers. She advised us to go the PaidTimeOff.NYC website to sign the petition.

Now Marc Solomon gave a report on surrogacy. He said New York has virtually no laws regarding legal parentage or surrogacy, and NY laws needed to be modernized across the board. He cited the bill S2071B/A1071C legalizing surrogacy agreements, and led a discussion on it.

President Siffert made an argument in for a resolution in support of the bill and it passed, with 30 in favor, 1 opposed, and 1 abstention.

Next Jim Yates, former judge and member of JCOPE, made a presentation on the repeal of Section 50-a of New York Civil Rights Law, providing confidentiality for personnel records of police officers maintained by the NYPD. He provided a history of the law and the fact that until 2016 these records were publicly available and argued they should be again, especially because



this new interpretation of the law was used to shield Officer Pantaleo after the death of Erroll Garner.

After this speech, a resolution in favor of repeal of Section 50-A was passed with 29 in favor and one abstention.

Now District Leader Arthur Schwartz gave his report. He touched on the County Committee anomalies, his lawsuit against the 14th Street busway, and the WBAI lawsuit. He spoke of the City Council approval of the plan to shut down the East River Park for 5-7 years and said it should have been argued in court as "park alienation". He cited other lawsuits regarding Harvey the fruit man and a bike rider run over by a cab, in which the police did nothing. His lawsuit regarding the removal of the 14th Street bus stops is still ongoing. And he said if anyone was interested in being a Bernie delegate, please speak to him. He explained the process of being a delegate for any candidate.

Nat Johnson, of the Environmental Committee, gave a report on a letter President Siffert had written to the Draft Remedial Investigation Work Plan of the Brownfield Cleanup Program at 240 Water Street. This letter, to Project Manager Rafi Alam, asked that the public comment period be extended to March 1st to allow the community more review time. (250 Water Street is the former site of three mercury thermometer factories, a mercury warehouse, and a gas station. The proposed luxury tower could expose the community to the toxic chemicals currently underground.)

After this report, it was decided that VID would send the letter, with 22 in favor and none opposed or abstained.

Nat then gave a report on the Environmental Committee, saying the committee will be discussing the NYS Green New Deal bill S2878B at their next meeting and will ask the club to support it. He also distributed a ten point holiday statement flier advocating a more eco-friendly recycling plan. Deb Sherman advocated for Tru-Earth, an eco-friendly laundry detergent, available on Amazon or the Tru-Earth website.

David gave an update on the Animal Adocacy Committee, noting that the bill banning foie gras in NYS passed.

Tony Hoffmann of the Campaign Committee stated that the VID visibility campaign went really well on both the east and west sides, and it will resume in the spring. He also gave a calendar of the elections and endorsements of the next three VID meetings.



Grace Price, of the Campaign Finance Committee, said she was focusing on Cy Vance and had sent out a draft of egregious campaign violations. She said Vance had run out of money but had created 12 new positions, and she asked if anyone was interested in writing a letter to the Comptroller. This spurred a discussion.

Mar Fitzgerald of the Education Committee spoke on bills for lead testing and diversity plans. A schools diversity advisory group was formed and Jumaane wanted to make it permanent. She noted that CB2 had passed a resolution for screening for dyslexia, and said she would introduce a school bus resolution to make mileage shorter for buses to qualify.

Allison Stowell and Deb Sherman started their Gun Reform Committee report by speaking on the shooting in Santa Clarita in which two students were killed. They reminded everyone of their upcoming forum in which Rebecca Fischer of New Yorkers Against Gun Violence would appear along with a panel of community activists devoted to mitigating gun violence. They also said their post card campaign was going well.

Under New Business:

David noted that State Committeewoman Rachel Lavine was hosting a fundraiser for Amanda Farias, running for City Council, on December 10.

Libby (last name?) spoke on the Commission on Campaign Finance Reform with a deadline of December 1. She said activists were coming to meetings to get action and get the Commission to change course. She said a phone relay would launch Monday to get it done in 2019.

Keen Berger cited her book launch--a book on grandmothering--at Judson on Sunday the 24th.

Kelly Grace Price is suing the NYC Board of Correction in State Court and asking for a restraining order against future official actions because the rotating appointment mandate described in the agency's charter hasn't been honored.

Four new members, Analise, Barbara Good, Liz Crotty, and Carol Yost, announced themselves and their reasons for joining.

And Jen Hoppe announced a candidate forum for all women running for office sponsored by Amplify Her.

The meeting was adjourned.