



## General Meeting Minutes September 10, 2020

President David Siffert opened the meeting with the adoption of the agenda. His report was "not that in-depth"--he mainly spoke about the election November 3 and how the local Board of Elections needed more polling places, poll workers, and absentee ballots protocols. He outlined that every Thursday VID has a texting, phonebanking, and postcarding event--at the next one, Anthony Brandisi will be appearing remotely. Vote Blue will be doing virtual busing, and he advocated joining with Erik Bottcher and his many electioneering events. The Hell's Kitchen Dems have one every Saturday, and DID does Tuesday nights.

The Campaign Committee will be having a meeting this weekend, and if you want to join, there will be a discussion of the club's endorsement schedule. And he advocated to please buy tickets to the Gala! If any member can't afford it, accommodations will be made. Electeds will appear, and there will be some surprises.

Jen Hoppe made her District Leader report, talking of voting and the BOE. She will be meeting with Suzanne Lawson, her primary contact there, next week to discuss the preliminary coverage report at poll sites. She discussed confusion about voting rules because each state is different, but she will email members regarding deadlines. She warned that anyone who has moved must re-register for an absentee ballot.

She was on a Joe Biden campaign statewide call yesterday--she has volunteered to be a phone bank captain and will give anyone who is interested information about how to join. Next week there will be a postcarding event for Biden. The site for NYS voting info is [www.voteearlyny.org](http://www.voteearlyny.org).

Next to speak was Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul. She appreciated the chance to say hello but hoped to meet again in person. She spoke of living in extraordinary times during a global pandemic which has forced the economy and the city to shut down, but she urged not to lose sight of the election. She mentioned Bob Woodward's book being revealing, but said she and the Governor know people can handle the truth. She told of how he has done an exceptional job of driving down the infection rate from the highest to the lowest. Schools are reopening, unemployment is off the charts, and people are struggling. There is the need to fight hard for progressive issues, and getting the diabolical resident of the White House out.

She mentioned Biden's VP candidate, Kamala Harris, and said it will be an important date for women when she is elected, and the importance of affordable child care and remote learning. She spoke of consolidating women upstate, and Andrea Stewart-Cousins needing a strong majority to wipe out the NRA and support the LGBT community, and warned that if Trump wins it will be devastating for the Supreme Court, reproductive health, and affordable healthcare. She thanked the club for its support, and urged us to support all of our candidates.



Next up, Ben Wetzler spoke of his letter urging Borough President Brewer and Councilmember Chin to push for affordable housing in higher-income neighborhoods, starting with Soho/Noho. He asked for the club's support, saying it was only the first step in a permanent re-orientation, and said he didn't mean to spring this on people. He cited a Fair Housing Act from the 60's and mentioned the Obama administration's efforts to investigate zoning rules, and if they contribute to segregating, framing the problem as one of wealthy people against affordable housing.

He was rebutted by Pete Davies of DID, also of the Broadway Residential Coalition, and Manhattan Loft Tenants. He said the Soho/Noho area was the only BID to have equal representation. He is also a member of three unions. He wanted to clarify the misinformation. He said because of the Loft Law, hundreds of rent-stabilized units were created.

He said he was quite surprised to see this letter mentioning Trump, Soho, and redlining. There is no redlining in Soho. Among the letters' signatories are real estate groups. He found it unseemly that Ben had bypassed the DLs in lower Manhattan, and urged people to sign the DID letter, saying more study needs to be done.

Other speakers on this side included Ben Yee, Jeannine Kiely, Chris Marte, Emily Hellstrom, Tom LaGatta and Rachel Lavine. There was a robust Q & A session and a vote was taken. For Ben's letter, the vote was one in favor, 23 against, and no abstentions. For the DID letter, there were 7 in favor, 15 against, and one abstention.

Next were two resolutions supporting legislation outlawing ghost guns. Both passed with identical votes of 23 in favor and one abstention.

Linda Jacobson of the Animal Welfare Committee spoke next, saying she had no report but wanted to thank David, Jen, and Keen Berger for assisting in moving her polling place nearer to her residence.

Tony Hoffmann of the Campaign Committee reported that David had covered most of the information, and he urged people to attend the virtual meeting on Saturday to discuss the forums and endorsement calendar for the NYC races.

Sara Kimbell reported on the Gala, to be held on Wednesday the 16th. The Honorees will be Hawk Newsome of Black Lives Matter, Vocal NY, Lincoln Anderson, and Keen Berger. She urged support, saying David Saperstein will be on piano, and thanked everyone.

The meeting was adjourned.