



General Meeting Minutes  
October 8, 2020

President David Siffert opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. A motion was made to approve the agenda, and it was unanimously approved.

In his President's Report, David said he was focused on November, and mentioned that Saturday, October 10, there would be a phonebank for Antonio Delgado, and he spoke of forthcoming campaign events. He emphasized that the State Senate must have a super majority to put pressure on Cuomo.

Assemblyman Harvey Epstein emphasized the need to win the Federal election, and said he felt there was a real shot to flip the Senate. In the State government, he also spoke of the need for a super majority in the Senate, in order to pass a more progressive agenda and gain leverage on the Governor. He urged everyone to get out and vote, and vote on the Working Families Party line. He also spoke of voting against the state budget, which unfortunately passed.

Next followed a full-throated discussion of certain amendments to the VID constitution. Certain amendments to the amendments were proposed, and passed:

**Amendment to Amendment 11** re allowing the Executive Committee to remove members: vote 17 for, 9 against, and 3 abstain.

**Amendment to Amendment 10** re Campaign Committee recusals: 29 for, 0 against, and 0 abstain.

**Amendment to Amendment 12** re excluding the Executive Committee vote from ranked choice voting: 28 for, 1 against, and 0 abstain.

After this, the Amendments themselves were voted on.

**Amendment to Article IV** clarifying "Secretary" to "Recording Secretary" passed with 28 in favor, no one against or abstaining.

**Amendment to Article III** regarding eliminating automatic discounts for students and seniors: 16 for, 10 against, and 0 abstaining.

**Amendment to Article IV** articulating duties of officers: 27 in favor, none against, and one abstention.



**Amendment to Article V** clarifying when District Leaders are on the Executive Committee: 24 in favor, one against, and 3 abstentions.

**Amendment to entire Constitution** replacing him/her with gender inclusive "they": 26 in favor, one against, and one abstention.

**Amendment to Article VI** clarifying the Audit Committee: 26 in favor, one against, and one abstention.

**Amendment to Article IV** allowing Co-Presidents: 25 for, one against, and 2 abstentions.

**Amendment to Article VII** regarding excused absences for Executive Committee members: 27 in favor, none against, and one abstention.

**Amendment to Article VII** regarding cancellation of Executive Committee meetings: 27 in favor, none against, and one abstention.

**Amended to Article VI** (as previously amended) regarding membership of the Campaign Committee: 25 for, 3 against, and no abstentions.

**Amendment to Article IX** re how expelled/removed members may return: 21 for, 5 against, and 4 abstentions.

**Amendment allowing ranked-choice voting** (as previously amended): 27 for, 3 against, and no abstentions.

**Amendment to Article VIII** re adding a "conflict of interest" provision: 29 for, none against, and one abstention.

Next, State Senator Brad Hoylman noted a really good turnout and reminded us that Tuesday was the last day to register to vote. He said there were lots of issues on the horizon and mentioned the call for rezoning Soho/Noho, calling it a trickle-down housing policy which was the biggest giveaway to developers. He pledged no rezonings under this mayor, who's bungled every chance he's had--he vowed to hold the line at 421-c and to push for 100% affordable housing --if rezoning is forced by the mayor. We don't need more luxury housing!

Now District Leader Arthur Schwartz spoke, hoping everyone is well and noting we've had some terrible losses. He has registered to become a candidate for City Council, and saying he realized



the difference between registering and making a formal announcement. He spoke of his pending lawsuit against the elimination of six stops from the M14 buses, saying it violated the NYC human rights law. He has called to make the buses free, emphasizing that the buses are at 65% capacity and trains are at 20%. He said there were lots of municipalities going for free buses to get people out of cars. He is also pushing the MTA on four elevators needed for the L and F trains at 14th Street and Sixth Avenue.

Another lawsuit, against the East River Park seawall, which would destroy the park for four to seven years, and accused the city of "unlawful alienation" of the park, was joined by Brad and Harvey--but was lost, although they are appealing. Arthur is also working with a NYS lawyers panel to allow lawyers to work in another state without leaving home.

Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, now a candidate for NYC Mayor, spoke. He acknowledged it was his first time at VID, and thanked the club for the opportunity. He gave a campaign speech, saying he got it that we're watching the city falling apart, and not doing the job in education. He spoke of his start in the NYPD in 1984, when there was much more crime, and he was a computer programmer. He installed a program designed to change how to govern in a dysfunctional department--one agency creates crises, and another tries to fight the problems. He spoke of how the Department of Education is not educating black and brown children, not giving parents adequate help for the crucial first thousand days of their children's lives, and creating a criminal justice problem. The majority of prisoners at Rikers don't have a high school education. There is also a lack of quality health care and housing.

He spoke of the industry of poverty being profitable, and how putting the homeless in shelters is more expensive than providing permanent housing--we must go in a new direction. This was followed by Q & A.

Livvie Mann gave an update on the current upstate races, including Christine Pellegrino, Antonio Delgado, Patrick Nelson, and others. She said politicians like Andrew Gounardis, Jen Metzger, and Rachel May are under attack for supporting bail reform.

David thanked Livvie for her work in keeping an eye on these races and protecting NYS, and reminded us that two seats are needed in the State Senate to attain a two-thirds majority. It's not too late to get involved in these races.

Jen Hoppe gave her District Leader Report, catching us up on voting and the many requests for poll workers. She has signed up at least 20 people, and she will be around on Election Day, at 16 to 18 sites. She met up with Ny Whitaker of the NY for Biden operation. "Virtual Staging Locations", recreating a union hall or campaign location, will start two weekends and four days



before Election Day. Five million votes have already been cast.

For the Animal Welfare Committee, Nancy Shamban said the Hi-Line is experiencing many bird deaths--the head of the Hi-Line and NYC Audubon are making a plan for bird-friendly glass.

Tony Hoffmann, of the Campaign Committee, said they are getting out extensive voter information to people in the district--Ed Yutkowitz is the main person behind it. He outlined the three ways to vote--regular voting, early voting, and vote-by-mail. He spoke of ads taken in Westview News, the Villager, Village Express, and the Village Sun. He spoke of Zella Jones doing a great job on the website, and Laurie Hardjowirogo helping with phone banks. He's also working with Vote Blue and Hell's Kitchen Democrats on phone banks. He mentioned a memorial for Sue Harwig, one of the original VID members.

David updated us on the calendar.

- On **November 3** petitioning starts for mayor.
- At the **December 10** meeting, we'll be endorsing for City Council Districts 1, 2, and 3, and will elect a new VID President and 3 Vice Presidents.
- On **December 13** we will participate, along with DID and Grand Street Dems, in a forum for the DA candidates.
- On **January 10** there will be a forum for Comptroller and Borough President.
- At the **January 14** meeting, there will be endorsements for Comptroller and Borough President, and elections for VID Executive Committee, Secretaries, and Treasurer.
- On **February 7**, there will be a forum for Mayor and Public Advocate.
- At the **February 11** meeting, there will be endorsements for Mayor and PA, District Leaders, Civil Court Judges, and Judicial Delegates.

In his Environmental Committee Report, Nat Johnson outlined three items: the DEC will begin enforcement of the ban on single-use plastic bags; the Hudson River Park Trust restarted its compost program with three new sites; and many environmental groups are asking people to call Council Speaker Corey Johnson's office (212-788-7210) to urge his support of the "Skip the Straw Bill" 936 and urge him to bring it up for a vote as soon as possible. Also, please call Governor Andrew Cuomo (877-235-6537) and ask him to stop the Danskammer Gas Power Plant. A Wall Street hedge fund is seeking to massively expand a rarely used gas-fired power plant on the shores of the Hudson, threatening the nearby town of Newburgh, already experiencing a major water pollution crisis and increasing air pollution.

Under New Business:

Jen wanted info on the post-carding events--David will put her in touch.

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Gil Horowitz did not receive his absentee ballot. He was advised to go to [vote.nyc](http://vote.nyc) to track it and/or call the Manhattan Board of Elections office.

Nancy said she has a friend who rented cars to drive to Pennsylvania to put literature on people's doorknobs. David said Red to Blue is doing "lit drops".

The meeting was adjourned.