



General Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2020

President David Siffert opened the meeting with the adoption of the agenda. Then he gave his President's Report. He urged a shift of focus to the Georgia runoffs for the Out-of-District Campaign Committee work, and noted that we are about to launch into the election and endorsement season. He laid out the schedule for these events. He thanked and congratulated everyone on their hard work for the election.

District Leader Jen Hoppe gave her report next. She spoke of visiting the polls on Election Day and how everything went smoothly. New Yorkers for Biden are now shifting their focus to New Yorkers for Georgia, and she asked for volunteers. A discussion on the situation in Georgia followed.

Assemblymember Deborah Glick now gave a report on the situation in Albany, touching on her priorities of animal welfare and education.

District Leader Arthur Schwartz gave his report, including his legal work and his campaign for City Council District 3.

Now it was time to vote on the newly proposed VID Constitutional amendments. David read them and displayed them for members to vote whether to adopt or not. After discussion, the amendment to get rid of automatic discounts for the elderly and students passed, senior discount was 17 in favor, 12 opposed with 5 abstentions. The rest of the amendments passed with 29 in favor, 2 opposed, and 2 abstentions.

Now Deb Sherman spoke on her Gun Reform Resolution, which David also displayed for the membership. After discussion, this also passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

For the Animal Welfare Committee, Kathy Nizzari noted that Denmark was culling minks because of coronavirus contamination, and suggested bringing this to Speaker Corey Johnson's attention, because he has a bill pending to ban fur.

Tony Hoffmann spoke for the Campaign Committee, saying most of his report had already been given by David and Jen. He congratulated them, along with Kate Linker and Erik Bottcher, for their hard work phonebanking. A forum for City Council candidates for Districts 1, 2, and 3 will be held at the December meeting. It will be a long meeting, probably starting at 6:00 and not ending until 10:30 at the earliest. The vote on the endorsements will be by email, and will use ranked-choice voting. Because RCV is new to the club, a test ballot will be sent so members can familiarize themselves with the process.



For the Education Committee, Patricia Laraia said that Mar Fitzgerald had written a letter urging the mayor not to relocate the homeless families housed at the MAeve shelter--this is to be voted on by the Executive Committee.

Nat Johnson, of the Environmental Committee, had no report but congratulated Deb Sherman for her work on wind turbines.

Next, State Senator Brad Hoylman gave a presentation. He noted that Biden did not have coattails in the election, and many other State Senators were in danger of losing their seats. He did note that this was the first time in a hundred years that Dems controlled the Senate for two consecutive terms. Ron Lauder had spent \$15M attacking Democratic senators on bail reform, and Brad underlined that we had to strengthen redistricting. This was followed by a discussion on the Senate progressives. He said volunteers were needed to observe recounts, and urged members to contact him if interested. He discussed the SLAPP Act--Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation--which are used by corporations and wealthy individuals to suppress First Amendment rights. Under this act, if the lawsuit fails, all expenses must be paid by the loser. He noted that Trump and the Kushners are suing the Lincoln Project for their billboards in Times Square, and could be liable under this act.

When asked what his important issues were, he stated LGBTQ rights were important to him--the ability to adopt, workplace protections, protections for trans people, etc. He also would like to see a carbon tax enacted, and an increase in the gasoline tax. Also important are revenue, protecting the social safety net, mass transit, and the homeless. In the next session, he hopes to see marijuana legalized, along with safe injection sites and legalization of other drugs.

David extended his thanks and congratulations to Brad for winning reelection, and thanked Deb Sherman for her resolution.

Under New Business:

Rachel Lavine, State Committeewoman, mentioned that legalizing marijuana would help save farms upstate, paving the way to repeal the Jim Crow laws which prevent farmworkers being paid for overtime, among other inequities.

The meeting was adjourned.