



General Meeting January 14, 2021

Co-President Cam Krause opened the meeting with a vote on the agenda, which passed unanimously. Co-President Mar Fitzgerald gave the President's Report. She announced it was the first meeting of 2021, also the first meeting under her and Cam's leadership. She said they were very honored to be serving as Co-Presidents, and that the Executive Committee had signed on to a couple of letters. The first was from the Invest in New York Coalition, calling on ending tax breaks on the wealthy and hoping to raise \$50-\$70 billion in new revenue. The second was from the Protect the Results Coalition, where we joined over 100 other organizations. They are sponsoring an event on Monday, MLK Day. She also touched on the forum held by downtown clubs last weekend, for Manhattan Borough President and Comptroller. Recordings are available for those who may have missed it. Cam now introduced Chris Marte, who gave a presentation on Ranked Choice Voting.

Chris opened by saying this was his first time teaching people about RCV--he thanked the club and said he was excited to be there. He emphasized that RCV only applied in local elections, not state or federal races, and it ends the need for runoff elections. It will prevent candidates from winning with less than 50% of the vote. He continued to explain how to vote using the RCV format. Afterwards, there was a robust question and answer period.

State Senator Brad Hoylman was present and announced that he had sponsored legislation to allow the use of drop boxes for those voters using mail-in ballots in our next election.

Assemblymember Deborah Glick, also present, wished everyone a happy and healthy new year. She touched on the traumatic time in the Capitol, and said she expected the unrest to continue. She asked people to limit being in both capitols--Washington and Albany--because of concerns. She said the price of democracy is eternal vigilance, and that a full reconciliation was needed. She also hoped the new administration would supply more vaccines. Brad added he had introduced legislation to disbar Giuliani. This was followed by a discussion about vaccines and availability.

It was now time for endorsements. After discussion and recommendations by the members, a vote was held for NYC Comptroller, using RCV. Brad Lander won with 41 votes, Brian Benjamin had 9, David Weprin 3, and Kevin Parker 0. There was one vote for "no endorsement".

For Manhattan Borough President, Brad Hoylman was the clear winner with 44 votes. Lindsey Boylan had 2, and Mark Levine received one vote. Elizabeth Caputo, Ben Kallos, Kimberly Watkins, and "no endorsement" all received 0 votes.

Now it was time for the election of VID officers.



David Saperstein was nominated for Treasurer. After giving a short presentation, and because he was the only nominee, he was elected.

For the two Corresponding Secretaries, Melissa Carty and Ed Yutkowitz were nominated and gave short presentations. They were also elected.

Kathy Slawinski was nominated for Recording Secretary, and she was also elected after making her presentation.

For the Executive Committee--fifteen seats--the winners were:

Keen Berger, Frieda Bradlow, Chloe Chik, Caroline Donahue, Susan Gottesman, Nadine Hoffmann, Judith Jacobson, Nat Johnson, Irene Kaufman, Sara Kimbell, Alec Pruchnicki, Lois Rakoff, Nancy Shamban, Katharine Wolpe, Livvie Mann, Annelie Roding, Linda Jacobson, Eliza Orlins, and Erik Bottcher. Because Susan Gottesman and Judith Jacobson were tied, Susan withdrew voluntarily.

Beginning the Committee Reports, Melissa Carty of the Animal Welfare Committee had contacted Erik Bottcher regarding a city-funded trap, neuter, and release program for cats, and was waiting for a reply from the city. Nancy Shamban had floated bird-friendly glass legislation with the City Council, and was also awaiting some news. (This actually passed.)

Cam, for the Campaign Finance Committee, said the group's job involved weighing candidates' total costs and total expenses, supplied by Grace Price, and pushing to change campaign finance laws. He urged members to join.

Sara Kimbell, for the Gala Committee, explained they would be starting up again and they were planning to meet in a Wednesday zoom. She also urged people to join and solicited suggestions for Honorees.

Nat Johnson spoke for the Environmental Committee, saying they had planned a January 6 meeting but had been co-opted by the events at the Capitol. He, too, was looking for new members. He said the Governor had embraced a more ambitious green energy program with renewable energy sources, but he suspected covid would delay this. They plan to screen a film on the Danskammer Power Plant, which uses fracked gas, so stay tuned for a date. He invited anyone to send him questions.

Jonathan Geballe spoke for the Housing Committee, announcing a new zoom Tenants Clinic every Wednesday. He said some new tenant relief had passed, and they were pushing affordable housing goals. He also invited members to contact him with questions.

For the Campaign Committee, Tony Hoffmann stated the next urgent business, after the elections, was getting people to sign up for the County Committee. Petitioning will be difficult because of covid, but he urged every member to sign up. He also said the club preferred the petitioning process rather than just appointing County Committee members.



Under New Business:

Irene Kaufman warned everyone to be careful on Inauguration Day. Rick Braun echoed that the police had told him they expected people to be shot.

District Leader Jen Hoppe gave kudos to Erik Bottcher for running an incredibly effective phone bank for Biden--which John Leguizano had participated in--and in which many VIDers participated.

Chloe Chik said she was still plugged into the Biden campaign. She was working on a rapid covid test in Harlem, and needed people to distribute masks and get people tested. They needed volunteers for MLK day and distributing info re vaccinations.

Alec warned everyone that Penny Mintz had an article in the current WestView News complaining about VID and Carlina Rivera.

Rick Braun advised he had recovered from the Judicial Convention depression that he had experienced, and was soliciting advice from members about reforming the system for choosing Supreme Court judges.

Irene Kaufman advised everyone that she had successfully registered both her 90-year-old parents for the covid vaccine, but it took two days.

Keen Berger advised Jen not to fear opposition because Keen was well-supported by VID and as a result did not have opposition when she ran for District Leader.

Lauren Esposito advised us that Corey Johnson's office provides assistance for vaccinations.

Susan Gottesman expressed concern about the patients at her hospital not receiving vaccinations--it's a poor area and many people don't have computers and can't get information. They are now immunizing the staff but she's very concerned about the patients.

The meeting was adjourned.