

34th District Democrats
Minutes of the First Meeting of the Leadership Development Committee

34th District Democrats - 30 Jan. 2008

The committee met on January 30, at the Uptown Espresso Coffee House in West Seattle. The following people were in attendance: Steve Karbowski (chair), Robin Hess, Beth Grieser, Leslie Harris, Richard Bartlett, Ann Martin, Walter Sive, and Peggy Abby (recording secretary),

The proposed agenda was briefly reviewed, but the main focus of discussion was the creation of strategies to fulfill that charge. The 34th District's Eboard, which established the committee, wanted us "**to create an action items list to optimize procedures and make the district more effective and as strong as it can be in 2008 and beyond.**" The committee was also asked to report back at the March eboard meeting on our progress.

A mission statement proposed by Beth G. was discussed but was not agreed upon by the committee members. The proposed language was as follows:

"We need to achieve a positive change in our district by fostering leadership growth and encouraging membership involvement. We need to create an atmosphere where people feel welcomed, valued and respected by changing the energy. By being inclusive we will retain board members, expand of our general membership and build a strong democratic community ."

The committee generally agreed that there are goals within the statement worth further discussion, but too long for a mission statement. Steve K. suggested that the committee identify values such as building trust, inclusiveness, and respect, which should be made part of every aspect of the organization. Walter Sive agreed to work on wording for a possible mission statement.

It was generally agreed upon that the committee should prepare action items both for the short and long term for consideration and approval by the E-Board, as well as time lines for our goals. There was also some discussion about ways of holding the board accountable for its work and behavior. Leslie H. noted that the E-Board is largely composed of elected members and the way to achieve accountability is through a recall vote or not re-elect someone. The board is bound to serve its membership and to build a stronger democratic community and the committee agreed that it work towards both those goals.

There was a lengthy discussion of whether the committee has the authority to propose some of the changes discussed, including whether by-laws should be amended or changed or to establish some separate executive rules of policies to affect change. It was generally agreed the details should not be incorporated in the by-laws, which are inflexible, and require a 2/3 majority of PCOs or members to change or amend. The committee would look more towards developing and proposing appropriate rules or policies for the E-Board and membership to consider.

The committee focused on creating more clarity for expectations, roles and job descriptions not only for officers but also for standing committees, PCOs and members. The idea of creating a

corresponding secretary position was raised as a possibility. It was suggested that the first and second vice-chairs, which have no defined roles at this time, be assigned "in-reach" and "out-reach" responsibilities, such as sitting on the outreach, rules, and membership committees. The committee agreed that a volunteer coordinator position or volunteer committee be created, perhaps as a permanent part of the E-Board. Also, mentorship should be a strong part all that we do to continuously develop new leadership for the future of our organization, both with new and existing members.

The committee agreed that a priority should be focusing on **new members immediately, creating a new member orientation, and member retention strategies**, by using soft ware such as the already proposed "Back Office," and surveying member interests. The opportunity to attract and retain new members because of the caucus next week was emphasized.

The committee brainstormed in a spirit of collaboration as discussed the following possible tasks:

- 1. Define officer and committee duties more clearly and responsibilities expected and possible means for more effective conflict resolution.**
- 2. Develop strategies for leadership development integrated into everything the organization does. Maintain and grow member skills and encourage participation.**
- 3. Develop new membership orientation and strategies for retaining existing members.**

Steve K. agreed to deliver a short report to the membership at the next meeting on February 13th, hopefully with positive input and comments from Chair Ivan Weiss, about the committee's first meeting. Steve would issue a welcome for anyone in our membership to participate in the committee's work toward achieving positive results and strengthening the district organization.

More discussion will be shared at the E-Board meetings in February and March, with a goal of reporting back to the general membership after that.

Our meetings will be advertised as open meetings for anyone who might want to participate, as with all meetings held by our district organization. We will strive to be completely inclusive with everything our committee and district undertakes.

The next meeting of the committee will be on February 28th, 2008, at 7 p.m., at the Uptown Espresso Coffee House, 4301 SW Edmunds St. (California & Edmunds).