

Minutes – March 11, 2009
34th Legislative District Democrats
Business Meeting

7:05 PM Chair calls the meeting to order. Peggy Abby leads the flag salute. Minutes from the previous meeting are adopted with a unanimous vote.

Chair's Report

Chair starts off with a report about Legislative Action Day (LAD). Turn out from the 34th was good, with 20 showing up in all, and that was more than most districts. Overall, it was a great success and he thanks everyone that helped make that happen. He remarks that the session is still going on and strong.

Chair announces the passage of the Equal Rights Bill in the State Senate. He notes that California's Proposition 8 fiasco teaches us something, just because one bill gets passed, it does not mean that our rights are secure.

Chair moves on to discuss the Strategic Summit. What was the summit? How we organize and how we will get a lot of work done. The Executive Board met for four hours discussing responsibilities in the district. No one left the room until each district responsibility was owned by a corresponding committee chair. Committee chairs are now looking to the membership for help meeting these goals. Go to www.34dems.org to see what the various committees are doing and what roles need to be filled. The 34th has set some big goals. Some of this will be addressed during the budget review. One big goal has been set by the Membership Committee. Their goal is to have 750 members by the end of this year. The 34th will rely on its current membership base, neighbor by neighbor to get the word out. Just tell them to go the website www.34dems.org and plug in with their political leaders and support the 34th District.

Upcoming Committee Meetings

Communications Committee on 3/16 @ 6:30pm, Salvadorean Bakery. They will do everything from messaging and branding to coordinating large scale mailings.

Membership Meeting on Sunday @ 4:00pm.

Outreach met yesterday. Outreach is networking with community organizations through out the LD. Contact Les Treall for more information and to be a part of this.

7:10 Chair invites Greg Doss to the microphone to discuss what the Legislative Action Committee (LAC) is doing. Chair concedes time to Greg.

Doss discusses the LAC meeting, which consists of four members and him. He asks the membership to go to the website, www.34dems.org and review a list of all the bills the 34th is tracking. Doss and his committee will be reaching out to the membership as needed using the membership list to garner support for these bills as they come up for votes. He asks that if any members are interested in joining his committee to contact him.

Doss gives the microphone back to the Chair. Chair reviews the agenda: Dow Constantine, David Ginsberg and Dorsal Plants will all discuss their respective election campaigns, and the Treasurer, Stu Yarfitz and Doss will present the current budget.

Chair introduces the First Vice Chair.

First Vice Chair Report

First Vice Chair takes the microphone and invites Les Treal to discuss the Gathering of Neighbors.

Les talks about the Gathering of Neighbors at the Chief Sealth High School at the old school on Delridge. The 34th is going to have a table there, and volunteers are needed. There is a sign up in the back of the room.

Les gives the microphone back to the Chair.

7:15 Chair introduces David Ginsberg. “He is an avid supporter of Barak Obama and a proficient leader. We wanted to be sure to give him a chance to speak to our members tonight.”

David Ginsberg speaks to the membership. He thanks the Chair and the Executive Board, and then explains why he chose to announce his candidacy at this meeting. He holds a “deep admiration for this district.” He is running because he is concerned about the direction the city is going. He speaks about the tragedy of his children’s early life and their ability to surpass their struggles. He talks about affordability issues living in Seattle, and transportation issues. He lists issues that are pertinent today and compares that list to a list of issues from 10 years ago. This list has not changed much. He wants to bring fresh ideas: living wages, revise zoning laws revision, build on partnership with Seattle School District to prevent gang violence. “Politics is what he create by what we do what we hope for and what we dare to imagine” – Paul Wellstone. He wants to give better opportunities for youth, transportation, residential growth, and sustainable quality of life. There is a platform on his website, www.davidginsberg.org. “If you believe in a candidate that runs on a platform and will be held to higher standards, then vote for me.”

Questions

Where can people contribute?

[Kimber McCreery holds up an envelope and yells, "Right here!"] David uses this time to explain why funding his campaign is so important.

How do you feel about Unincorporated King County?

Ginsberg states that he thinks the people in Unincorporated King County should choose what happens to their communities and not the City of Seattle.

What position are you running for?

Ginsberg states that he has not declared, but he is looking at running for Richard Conlin's seat.

Do you support the City of Seattle spending money to annex North Highline?

Ginsberg states that he does not unless the people vote for this annexation.

What will he do to help support the Seattle Public Schools' superintendent?

The city can partner with the school district to a certain degree, but the school district is a separate legal entity. Ginsberg state that the Council can support and recommend, but cannot dictate.

7:26 Ginsberg ends with that question and turns the microphone over to the Chair. The Chair introduces Dorsal Plants. "[He] worked hard to prevent a jail in the area and worked with members in his neighborhood on annexation."

Plants starts off by thanking the membership and states that he has not declared what position he will be running for yet. He gives an introduction to himself by way of a short history. He comes from a very Democrat household. He served five years in the US Army and was in Iraq for the initial invasion and in 2003 and then in 2005 for standard rotation. After leaving the army, he wanted a place that was open and liberal. His first week he was debating politics with a Socialist on a Street corner, and knew he would love it here. He has been a West Seattle resident for as long as he has lived here. He is a PCO, and had been the Hospitality Committee Chair for the 34th. He has been volunteering for the Seattle Police. He is a case manager for a homeless shelter in DT Seattle. He believes that this downturn has been going on longer than Bush was willing to admit.

Plants begins to speak on the struggles of the homeless population in downtown and raises various points. He believes that the city can do more with less money. He would like to create efficiencies within the city to do this, while making fire, police and human services priorities. Adding to this, he discusses his ideas regarding the stabilization of neighborhoods so that the homeless issue can be solved, calling this plan the Urban Village. He would also like to open government up to more people by moving away from English only communications and working with various communities for cultural inclusion strategies. "We need to take the government back. It is important [that we understand that having] dynamic leadership in D.C. and the governor in Olympia will not matter if we do not have a strong local government in place.

Questions

How organize the communities within Seattle on issues that they are not directly in their interest, but are in the interest for the city as a whole? (The questioner uses Plants example of a helicopter pad for a hospital that is within a certain neighborhood.)

Plants states that the greatest challenge will be organizing a community around an issue. He wants to sit down with the neighborhood leaders and work with them to overcome apathy and frustration. Plants believes that there needs to be a dialog between the communities and government.

Health care crisis is getting worse; recently Nick Licata and Tom Rasmussen pledged to support single payer health bills, do you?

Plants states that he does but that he needs to review it more thoroughly.

How do you view redistricting in the City of Seattle?

Plants describes how many large cities are split up into sections so that each district has representation. Then he notes that much of the current Seattle City Council members are from West Seattle. He thinks that in the long run it is better for all neighborhoods for that representation, otherwise "smaller neighborhoods get lost in the hustle and bustle of a large city".

You don't like cookie-cutter homes, how are we going to address affordable housing without them?

Plants states that he "find[s] it hard to believe hat the local architects and engineers can only come up with the exact same house over and over again."

That is an esthetic issue; I am more interested in quantity? Do you have some other ideas of mechanisms for people of normal means to live in the city?

Plants states that he does. He elaborates that "it is possible to provide for urban density without using the same concept... but the how is difficult to answer at this moment. I have the heart for this and I have the drive. If I don't know something, I will find the answer."

What seat are you running for?

Plants restates that he is has not declared a seat, but he is looking at Drago's position as a possibility.

7:45 Plants ends with that question and gives the microphone back to the Chair. A lost sapphire ring is brought to the front of the room. Chair announces. The owner found quickly.

Chair then moves on and announces that City Councilor Tom Rasmussen is here this evening. The Chair then requests if any other representatives are in the body to make the presence know. No one does.

Chair introduces Dow Constantine. "...Hours and hours, days and days, to building this organization. He was our State Representative, our State Senator, and is the King County Council Chair. Fighting the jail, building ferry-wide transportation, the list goes on and on... and now he is running for King County Executive, Dow Constantine!" [Membership gives Constantine a standing ovation.]

Constantine takes the microphone and proudly exclaims, "I am a Democrat!" He discusses his 20-year history with the 34th District. He talks about past events that helped shape him as a politician, like watching the community of Port Susan's Bay fight the development of a port facility in favor of Kayak Point County Park. He discusses his roots to the working people, because of his parents being teachers. He learned from them that sometimes you have to stand up and fight for what is right, even when it is uncomfortable.

Constantine then turns to his role in the county. In King County, he has served in every level and this is his eighth year, he has been elected four times. This time he was elected the Chair of the King County Council. He discusses some initiatives that he has worked on during this recent time in office, and praises the job of King County Executive Ron Sims, who has been nominated by President Barak Obama to be

Deputy Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Department in Washington D.C.

Constantine discusses the county's need for change and innovation in the face of the current economic crisis and how he intends to make this happen. "It means how can we spend these dollars to get the most money to those that need it and protect quality of life? We have to be willing to innovate and change the way that we do business, rather than loping off, bit by bit the services that the county provides."

He further elaborates how collaboration and cooperation will be key to his way of working through the county's various issues. He discusses the Murray Island gravel pit issue as an example of this. He talks about how there have also been times where he has had to take on his friends to get the work of the county done, and showcases this with his work to fix the treatment of animals in our shelters.

Constantine then speaks about the campaign and gives a rundown of how it is currently going. He says the response has been overwhelming. Over 100 people volunteered to help and they received over \$60,000 in donations in the first 60 days. He then discusses the need for money and why campaigns cost so much with a simple example. There are almost two million people in this county, try sending a letter to two million people.

Constantine then turns to the support that he has received from 34th District members. He thanks everyone and asks everyone to continue the fight and to continue to spread the word throughout the county.

Questions

Do you anticipate cuts in King County public health?

Constantine states that the King County public health programs have already been cut substantially, and some people have been put on partial health coverage at this point. He speaks to the importance of childhood immunization, and that without it then we have epidemics. He then discusses the King County dental program which has been cut completely due to lack of money. He states that he does not believe these are optional programs.

Constantine then rails against the current state tax system. The tax system in this state puts more of the burden on those that are least able to pay for it. He and Lisa Brown had a meeting and she asked him what one thing could be done this session that could really help this state, he said "the tax system." This discussion led to the

[Gates Tax Study](#). He states that we cannot solve these problems in Sales Tax and Property Taxes. We are scrambling to bridge across the next 2 or 3 years.

Currently this study is endorsed by all the 34th representatives.

Is it possible to have a King County income state?

Constantine explains that all taxes derive from the state. (Parliamentarian, Allen Monroe ways in and confirms what Constantine said.)

When you are the Executive are you going to sub-area allocation and look at a growth approach to transportation?

Constantine discusses the current make up of transportation as viewed by King County. Then he discusses his view of how this should change to a region of urban centers beyond just Seattle.

Are you going to be able to maintain the ferry district? And please say you won't go back on year-round water taxes?

Constantine says that he will not go back on them. Then he describes ferry district funding and how we will eventually partner with other districts and how this will result in a wider transit system like successful bus lines.

Will you continue to purchase technologies that are different, even when it goes against expert advice? [Questioner uses an example of burned buses to make his point.]

Constantine states that yes, he will continue to buy new technology in order to save fuel and get more reliability. He combats the notion that the buses mentioned have proven to be less reliable than our traditional buses.

He then tells a story about going to Washington D.C. to visit Norm Dicks and talked about local government's role in climate change. Dicks put in his budget \$15 billion for local governments to rewrite building codes other mechanisms in order to address environmental changes.

How does the Stimulus Package affect us locally?

Constantine explains that he went through the package and realized that there is not that much money. He jests that one trillion should change the world, but in reality it is not enough.

Could you explain how you will expand economic development and international trade for King County?

Constantine explains that King County is working with the Port, because the county does not own much land on its own to build warehouses, etc. Working together the county and the Port can combine efforts to promote trade and create jobs. He then focuses on transportation issues that effect trade, such as the Freight Corridor. Traffic is tied up and trains are running too slowly. "We are losing business to other ports, because of this. King County should provide support for all the government institutions to move that forward."

What can we do to support our large corporations like Microsoft and Boeing?

There is a working group to see how we can keep Boeing here. Constantine says that he is eager to see their recommendations. He will be meeting with Microsoft because of their transportation concerns. They are concerned about the light rail line ending at the Microsoft campus do to parking concerns.

"Thank you for your kindness tonight and for letting me speak. This is going well and I am going to fight like hell!"

8:23 Chair takes the microphone and asks the body if there is any old business to discuss, seeing no one respond he moves on to new business.

New Business

Appointment of the Parliamentarian and Sergeant at Arms. Parliamentarian keeps the meeting on Parliamentarian Procedure and Roberts's Rules of Order. Chair honors Allan Monroe prior service before appointing Stephen Lamphear. This will be an active role, and he will sit up front and keep Chair in check.

The Sergeant at Arms is person that keeps the body in order. The Chair appoints Les Treall. Treall and Lamphear are invited to the front of the room. Chair requests a vote to appoint both positions at once. They are unanimously appointed by the body.

8:27 Adoption of the Budget. Chair invites Stu Yarfitz to the front to discuss. Chair reminds everyone that there are copies available for everyone in the back of the room.

Point of Order: Why are the budget in the newsletter and the budget being presented tonight different?

Chair responds by stating that there were changes due to the Strategic Summit and that the budget being considered tonight is the one on the print out.

Yarfitz begins explaining the details of the budget. He hits on some key points regarding the budget to explain how revenue projections are being calculated. Last year the district had over 1,000 members due to the caucus process. This year, though not expecting 1,000 members, the Membership committee has set a goal of 750 members. He quickly runs through the math to determine the average contribution per member arriving at \$35 per person. He then turns to other streams of revenue like the Garden Party, which he and the Finance Committee assume will remain about the same. Other fundraising items came out of the Strategic Summit due in large part to a very active communications and membership committee. Yarfitz continues to go through the various categories of expenses. One expense that shows a good sized change is the Newsletter budget. Yarfitz explains that the decrease will be due to moving the newsletter towards an electronic form. Yarfitz continues to go through the differences. Finally, he discusses the \$5,000 bereavement from Nels, and that the Executive Board is looking at something different for this that will be brought to the membership later in the year.

Questions

How did you come up with \$35 as the average for the membership due?

This has actually been the average amount from both last year and this year.

Ivan moves to except the budget. Seconded, unanimous vote.

Chair points out that the Executive Board will look at the budget and bring any changes to the members.

8:38 Chair moves on to the Resolution to Rename the West Seattle Bridge. Chair asks for speakers for the motion. Allan Monroe speaks for the motion. He tells the story from 1972 when Ralph Nozland lost control of his ship and slammed into the bridge connecting West Seattle with Seattle. The bridge was broken for years. Then Jeanette Williams, member of Seattle City Council, rounded up Magnuson and Henry Jackson and Mural Aslem to work towards getting the West Seattle Bridge built. "I don't think it would have happened if she didn't make it a project and kept pushing. She didn't even live in WS."

Monroe yields the remainder of his time to Rusty Williams. Williams started this resolution here in the 34th District. At this time the 46th and 42nd Districts are on board as of this month. It speaks to the amount of effort that she put into this city. People are concerned about how much this is going to cost. This is not prohibitively expensive to do.

Chair asks for speakers against. Seeing none, he moves to a vote. By a visual count, the resolution passes.

Chair brings Resolution Opposing Drug Advertising on Television to the body. He asks for speakers for the motion. Georgie Kunkel, writer of the resolution, speaks for the motion. She discusses her own issues with the pharmaceutical industry due to health concerns. For her this resolution is about raising awareness and getting people discussing and thinking about what corporations are doing to the cost of health care and drugs. She is working through the internet to get this passed.

Chair references extra copies are available in the back of the room. He invites a speaker against resolution.

Lisa Plymate speaks against the motion. She is not against content, but against how it is written. She proposes changes to the last "Whereas".

A member starts demanding that she formally propose an amendment and a back and forth begins regarding her position. Ultimately, it ends with Plymate offering an amendment to the resolution. Chair takes the microphone and asks Plymate to work with the Secretary to get her wording correctly in the minutes so that it can be read to the body for clarification.

Plymate formally proposes an amendment to strike the third "whereas" and replace it with "WHEREAS direct to patient advertisements on television maybe technically correct, it is often biased and inaccurate and implicitly endorses off-label use."

The amendment is moved, seconded and passes by a large visual majority.

Chair points out that with the amendment the motion starts anew, because it is now a different resolution. Chris Porter speaks for the new resolutions. He makes points that medical advertisement is bad through several cleverly poignant examples using participation from the body. He points out that there are alternatives that cost less but they get a backseat because of the effectiveness of the advertising campaigns.

Chair invites a speaker against. Dave Coffman speaks against the resolution. He states that he agrees with the idea behind this, but thinks as written it is a restriction of free speech. "We are still dependant upon our doctors to prescribe, and if there is a drug out there our doctor should be made away. I am worried about the erosion of free speech."

Chair invites a speaker for the motion. Peggy Abby speaks for the motion. She is also concerned about free speech, but she is more concerned about “treatment advertising”. She thinks advertising should be truthful and legitimate.

Chair invites a speaker against the resolution. Al Rouyer speaks against the resolution. He states he is also concerned about the free speech implications of this resolution. He thinks the resolution implies that the average person is not as smart as us and will be taken in. He gives an example of how seeing an advertisement for a drug on television actually helped him.

Because the vote is close, chair asks Richard and the First Vice Chair to count every vote in the house. The resolution fails by a vote of 33 for and 40 against.

Treall is recognized by the Chair. He moves to endorse Constantine. The Chair calls him out of order due to the endorsement rules. Ivan Weiss moves to suspend the rules. Motion to suspend the rules is seconded and passes with a visibly large majority. The Parliamentarian notes that the suspension of the rules was not specific to anything, so the rules are now in suspension for the remainder of the meeting.

Ivan moves to endorse Constantine. Chair asks for speakers for the motion. Ivan speaks for the motion. He reviews Constantine’s efforts over 20 years on behalf of the district. Chair request speakers against the motion, seeing none, the Chair moves to a vote. The motion passes with a visibly large majority. King Council Chair Constantine has the endorsement of the 34th District.

Constantine is invited by the chair to speak to the body. He thanks the 34th for all their support and his surprise at their endorsement this evening. He returns the microphone to the Chair.

Chair asks for other new business. Marcee Stone moves to make a contribution to Constantine’s campaign in the amount of \$3,434.34. Chair explains that the Executive Board did want to do this and that this motion has their support.

Point of Information: Bruce Stotler asks to the current amount of cash on hand. Yarfitz says roughly \$19,000. Chair reminds everyone that budget just passed includes enough money for this, with \$7,000 marked for campaign contributions.

Chair calls for a vote. The motion passes with a visibly large majority. The First Vice Chair arrives with a giant check for the donation and hands it to Constantine. Constantine tells the body that he is shocked and touched by the giant check. The Chair quips, “We expect that framed in you office!”

PCO Appointments

Kimber McCreery, the PCO Committee Chair, announces the new PCOs. Sandon Smith (Seattle – 1455), he canvassed for Obama and Gregoire and now wants to do it for the party. Kathy Good (Dillworth), she is lifelong Democrat and hopes to get to know everyone in her precinct. Ronald Irvine for (Chautauqua), he has been a lifelong Democrat and a PCO before. All PCOs are approved unanimously.

9:11

Good of the Order

Bill Schrier has Constantine bring his check to the front of the room for a group photo. [Meeting stops to take photo]

David McClanahan is the coordinator for the physicians western Washington Chapter at Kanes Hall. This meeting is open to the public and free. Come hear about health reform in the Obama era. Meeting to be held Friday, April 3 at 7:00 p.m., at Kane Hall, Room 120, on the University of Washington campus. Admission is free.

David Coffman announces Equality Day in Olympia. The board for Equal Rights Washington needs money, and they are asking people to give \$8 a month along the way. This will go along way to build the funding. Go to www.equalrightswashington.org.

David Miller is running for Seattle City Council. For more information, go to www.MillerForSeattle.org.

Jesse Israel is running for the Seattle City Council position 6. She is a member of the 36th and the 34th. For more information, go to www.jesseirael.com.

Marcee Stone asks people to come to the Kickoff Event for Vote Clean Seattle. The Campaign kickoff on Saturday, March 14 at 6:00 p.m. in Belltown with Jim McDermott.

9:18

Adjourned