

Minutes of the Meeting of the 34th District Democrats
July 13, 2016 at the Hall at Fauntleroy, West Seattle
Minutes by Lisa Plymate

6:30-7:10PM: Informal meetup of members and representatives of several area non-profits (see below), who provided displays and other informational materials.

7:12PM: Meeting called to order by Chair Marcee Stone-Vekich. Pledge of Allegiance led by Chris Porter. Agenda approved by body. Minutes of last meeting in June approved as written.

Welcome to our neighborhood nonprofit volunteers and directors, who gave brief overviews of their crucial work in our community:

- **WestSide Baby** – Nancy Woodland – provides material items including diapers and clothing to children in west King County – served 35,000 children this past year.
- **HelpLine** – Chris Langelier – agency has worked for 27 years to serve as a “bridge over troubled waters,” helping people pay their bills, buy bus tickets; run hotline to help West Seattleites
- **West Seattle Food Bank** – Fran Yates – in addition to distribution center at 35th and Morgan, do home deliveries; collaborate with other agencies to take additional items
- **White Center Food Bank** – Rick Jump – goal is to provide nutritional foods; also help with finding living wage jobs, affordable housing. *We continue to need volunteers to help with the foodline at the WC food bank on the 4th Wednesday of every month.*
- **Southwest Youth and Family Services** – Steve Dashed – provide education, counseling, case management, serve immigrants and refugees; work especially in youth development and have several sites, centered in Delridge
- **Delridge Neighborhood Development Association** - David Bestock – combining with Nature Consortium; work with Youngstown Cultural Arts Center
- **Navos** – Victor Cruz – provides mental health counseling, works with chemical dependency in hospital and clinic settings – provides primary care and does public health work as well.

Treasurer’s Report: Karen Chilcutt – see full report on-line. Beginning balance 6/8/16: \$12,314.65. Revenue: \$1,088.00. Expenses: \$9,639.51 for ending balance 7/13/16: \$3,763.14. Important expenses included primary sample ballot (\$2,072) ; down payments for our annual garden party/casino night (\$2,674); and further expenses for caucuses, with final bill of \$2,856 for West Seattle High School LD caucus. Marcee emphasized that members need to understand that our district paid entirely for both our precinct and legislative district caucuses, and that this cost was \$28,000 this cycle. We are fortunate that we saved in advance for this and so did not go into debt as other districts did. *We need support at upcoming fundraisers and in memberships.*

Upcoming events for members to participate in – see website for details or contact campaigns:

- 7/23 – West Seattle parade – picnic post parade at Shannon Braddock’s house in Admiral district
- 7/19 – fundraiser for KC Councilman Joe McDermott for U.S. Congress at Russ Brubaker and Peter Quigly’s
- 7/20 – campaign kickoff for State Rep. Joe FitzGibbon at Youngstown Cultural Arts Center
- 8/14 weekend – fundraisers for Patty Murray in West Seattle (Tagney-Jones) and Vashon
- 7/29 – **Casino Night** annual fundraiser (in place of usual Garden Party) – presented by Chris Langelier and Chris Porter – at Duo’s in West Seattle. In addition to games, there will be a silent auction and a chance to clobber a **Donald Trump piñata!**

Recognition of our electeds in attendance: King County Executive Dow Constantine, State Rep Eileen Cody, SW Sewer District Commissioner Bill Tracy, Seattle Schoolboard member Leslie Harris, Seattle City Councilwoman Lisa Herbold.

King County Council Executive Dow Constantine spoke urging support of **Sound Transit 3**. Light rail is coming to West Seattle. Every person will have access; proposals based on our needs to serve all communities and provide connections among them. While awaiting lightrail here, the Rapid Ride C-line will become more efficient. Lightrail stations will come to Delridge, 35th and Avalon and the Junction; will extend to Burien and will go along 405. In the future, should connect the Junction with White Center and Burien. Will serve community colleges, high schools, cultural centers, stadiums. This is a “once-in-a-generation” opportunity. We missed the boat 20 years ago and should not let this pass us by. -Chris Porter moved to endorse and spoke for this, as did Keith Weir, who stated this measure would be providing much needed construction workers’ jobs. **Measure endorsed** by large majority.

Grace Stiller of Burien spoke in favor of **I-732**, for a revenue-neutral carbon tax to address climate change, decrease air pollution, decrease the sales tax and provide tax rebates for low-income families. This measure is endorsed by U.S. Rep. Jim McDermott and supported by State Rep. Joe FitzGibbon. Rep Judy Clibborn feels that issues around revenue can be “sorted out by the legislature” later. Grace Stiller moved to endorse – Duncan Clausen, initiative’s co-director, stated this would be the strongest such bill in the U.S. Speaking against, State Rep Eileen Cody stated the initiative is not revenue-neutral, and that it would pose risks at a time the legislature is facing a crisis in funding education. Measure failed to achieve endorsement. Pro: 41 votes; Con: 32 votes – at 56%, **failed** to meet 60% threshold for endorsement.

Mary Fleck – spoke about Meyers Way parcel, 30 acres of wetland. Just learned this afternoon that Mayor Murray will not sell this parcel, following much community activism to save the area for community uses and educational purposes, thanks also to Lisa Herbold’s work.

8:00PM – **Mayor Murray** spoke to us, per his request. Primary purpose initially was to interact, take Q&As. In view of recent events, he spoke first, most movingly. To paraphrase his remarks, the events in Minneapolis, Louisiana and Dallas this past week were a pivotal moment in our history. The murders of two black men and five white police officers brought back our deep awareness of the “unfinished business of our original sin,” racism. As the President said in his speech in Dallas, if after this we just harden our positions and do not learn from others, we will have lost the potential benefits of the moment. Mayor Murray framed this in the culture of Seattle, where our communities of color are in pain and scared; our police are in pain and scared. We are under a federal monitor. Mayor Murray saw that we needed a new police chief, and he chose one from outside, Kathleen O’Toole; he also replace the entire command staff. The department is now in compliance in 8 out of 9 areas. We are leaders in de-escalation training and a model for the nation. In hiring new officers, 30% are now of color (which exceeds the % of minorities in the city). He wants to change more in terms of accountability, but the federal courts have asked him not to do this until they have time to review the current process. The auditor position will now be full-time, and he/she will examine both practices and complaints.

We did not get where we are in race relations overnight; we will not get out of this situation overnight either. Other systems aside from policing must deal with the issue of race – including the effect of racism in homelessness, rape and other crimes, mental illness. We have to learn to deal with the real anger – and with the police officers who deal with this anger.

We must deal with our growing homeless crisis; this is what income inequality looks like. A hard problem is that the federal government has decreased 2/3 of its funding for homelessness. We need to pass the housing levy, which will provide rental assistance in addition to housing for the homeless, and extra wraparound services for people in such housing. (34th LD has endorsed this already.) Seattle was first city in U.S. to pass a levy to help the homeless.

In terms of other accomplishments, with transportation, we went from 25% of people having bus service every 10 minutes to 75% with this. First city to reach \$15/h minimum wage. Public schools remain a huge problem. Majority of kids in our public schools live in poverty. Stressed importance of summer jobs for youths.

When we speak of “homelessness” in isolation, we may fail to recognize our series of crises, in areas of mental health, addiction, housing affordability and racism. Seattle’s population is 6% African American, but 31% of the homeless are African American.

Mayor next fielded numerous questions from a lineup of 34th LD constituents. These included questions on the enforcement of vagrancy laws; what to do with police officers who cannot comply with de-escalation training; the importance of data-driven analysis based on patterns; problems with pre-kindergarten pilot project assessing best practices for providing high quality education; re-introducing plain-clothed community service police officers; importance of civilian oversight in reviewing police department; tribal recognition disagreements; special problems of homeless Native Americans; recognizing cultural differences in dealing with mental health and addiction issues; lack of mutual agreements between fire departments in Seattle and its surrounding municipalities and unincorporated areas; finding funding sources to create new parks or expand services in existent parks.

The Mayor expressed that after these questions, he felt he had “been in Parliament.”

Many thanks to Mayor Murray for this excellent presentation and interaction. As Marcee put it, there aren’t too many other cities where this would have happened.

New PCO appointed: Treina Aronson of Arbor Heights. Walklists should be available soon through Les Treall. Pamphlets with our endorsements for the August ballot are now available.

9:10PM: Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Lisa Plymate, State Committeewoman