

Four Freedoms Democratic Club
September General Membership Meeting
September 9, 2019
The Church of the Good Shepherd, Roosevelt Island
7:00-8:30pm

Minutes

1. Welcome (2 min)
 - a. Vice President Frank Wilkinson called the meeting to order, and introduced our guest speaker

2. Guest Speaker: State Senator Jose M. Serrano (1 hour)
 - a. State Senator Jose Serrano spoke to the Club about the legislative agenda generally, with a focus on issues affecting Roosevelt Island
 - b. Items on his legislative agenda:
 - i. Tenant protections:
 1. Rent laws were weighted too heavily in favor of landlords, while loopholes made it harder and harder for tenants to afford to live in the City, leading to flight from the city
 - a. The goal in our rent laws should be to retain tenants, as the stability of communities has economic and social benefits
 2. To address this issue, the legislature passed a transformative reform package, with no sunset
 - a. You can read more about the reforms [here](#)
 - ii. Climate and the environment:
 1. Sen. Serrano is part of a climate leadership group, which helped pass aggressive climate protection legislation
 - a. These protections will serve as a model for the rest of the country
 - iii. Gun safety
 - iv. LGBTQ rights
 - v. Women's rights
 - vi. Children's rights
 1. Sen. Serrano sponsored a bill to anchor furniture to walls at daycare centers
 - c. Items specific to Roosevelt Island:
 - i. Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation:
 1. Sen. Serrano supported the appointment of 3 new members of the RI community to be appointed to the RIOC Board
 - ii. Field permits:

- 1. Giving RI residents first dibs on permits for use of the RI fields/public areas
 - iii. Reducing the amount of trees that will be removed during renovation of Octagon Field
 - iv. Increasing RI library funding
- d. Q&A:
 - i. With the F trains to Manhattan often delayed or shut down on weekends b/c of construction, why not use a shuttle bus system?
 - 1. Sen. Serrano wrote to Andy Byford requesting a second subway entrance and additional turnstiles on the north side
 - ii. Helicopters and seaplanes have been flying directly over residences, which is cause for concern over noise and potential danger
 - 1. Sen. Serrano promised to look into this issue, as these flights might violating a rule prohibiting aircrafts over residential areas
 - iii. Most of the rent reformed were aimed at helping rent-stabilized tenants, but most renters are market-rate tenants; what did the law do to help us, and what else can we do?
 - 1. The reforms package *did* some measures that benefit all tenants – including a cap on application fees, increased notice for eviction, and more – but there is room for more
 - a. E.g., a cap or prohibition on brokers fees; requiring good cause for any eviction or refusal to renew a lease
 - iv. Last session, the legislature saw the introduction of the NY Privacy Act, which would have enacted the most expansive data protections in the country, but it failed to pass
 - 1. Sen. Serrano thinks this bill will be a priority in the next session
 - v. A bill to teach LGBTQ history in schools just passed in Illinois; can we pass the same bill in NY?
 - 1. Sen. Serrano thinks this is a ripe subject for NY school curriculums
 - vi. What are the chances of an independent redistricting commission?
 - 1. Sen. Serrano thinks the chances are high, especially given the focus and activism surrounding gerrymandering
- e. Sen. Serrano ended his presentation by inviting anyone with questions or concerns to reach out to him or his office at any time

3. District Leader & State Committee Updates (15 min)

- a. Kim Moscarito gave an update on upcoming events
- b. The biennial County Committee meeting:
 - i. Leadership has still failed to set a date or choose a venue, but we know that it will not conflict with any Jewish holidays

- ii. We are working to get rules proposals onto the agenda by collecting sufficient signatures
 - 1. Unfortunately the rules are unclear as to who is eligible to sign onto the proposals – those elected this past summer, or those elected in 2017 – but we are seeking clarification
 - 2. The rules proposals can be found [here](#)
 - a. Other groups are also collecting signatures on the preexisting proposal to ban lobbyists from serving as County Leader or Chair
 - c. Early voting:
 - i. New York will allow early voting, for the first time, starting in October
 - 1. Voters will have 10 days leading up to the election to cast their ballots early
 - 2. We are short on poll workers; everyone who can to sign up is encouraged to do so
 - d. Party registration deadline:
 - i. The State Legislature passed a bill setting February 14, 2020 as the final deadline to change party to be able to vote in the 2020 Democratic Primary, but the Governor has still not signed the bill
 - 1. Until he does, everyone should operate under assumption that the exiting deadline of October 11, 2019 is still in effect
4. Committee & Working Group Updates (15 min)
- a. Protect the Rule of Law Working Group (Jerry Ferguson):
 - i. The group will be meeting on September 17th to discuss upcoming protests and other actions
 - 1. The group intends to participate, in coordination with MoveOn, in a protest when Trump speaks at the UN in a few weeks
 - b. Health Care Working Group (Barbara Rudder):
 - i. The group is working to understand the 2020 candidates' health care plans and identify the differences between them
 - ii. The group will also debate whether to support a pending city-level bill that would provide universal health care
 - c. Marijuana Working Group (Fred Newton):
 - i. Councilwoman Carlina Riviera is coming to speak to Club at our next meeting
 - 1. She sponsored a bill to end forced drug testing of pregnant women, which the group intends to support
 - d. Events Committee (Matt Lombardi):
 - i. The Club is preparing for our Fall small dollar fundraiser:

1. Dorrian's Red Hand, either the second-to-last or last week of October
 2. Free appetizers, but cash bar
 3. Members will also be able to pay their dues for next year at the event
 - e. Diversity and Outreach (Dov Gibor):
 - i. The 3rd Avenue street fair is this Sunday at 12-4pm, and the Club still needs volunteers to help out
5. Member Time (10 min)
- a. Frank reminded members that President Bridget Cusick's going away party is tomorrow night at Ryan's Daughter, 6:30pm
 - i. Sadly (for us), Bridget is moving to Virginia for a job opportunity
 - b. Ilyssa announced that she quit smoking
 - i. As this is one of the toughest things a person can do, she appreciates any supportive texts or other messages that people could send
 - c. Ronnie announced that the Gristedes on RI will soon become a Food Town
6. Adjourn