

Four Freedoms Democratic Club
January General Membership Meeting
January 22, 2020
The Church of the Holy Trinity, Draesel Hall
7:00-9:00pm

Minutes

1. Welcome (10 minutes)
 - a) President Frank Wilkinson called the meeting to order and invited Vice President Jerry Ferguson to conduct the rest of the meeting

2. Congressional Endorsement Debate & Vote (25 minutes)
 - a) Many members had the chance to attend the 12th Congressional District candidate forum last night
 - b) The Club debated which candidate to endorse, and members spoke in favor of their preferred candidates
 - i. Many members spoke in support of incumbent Representative Carolyn Maloney, praising her experience, powerful position as head of the Oversight Committee, attention to her District, and accessibility to the Club
 1. Some voiced concerns about her past votes, including her votes in favor of the Iraq War and against the Iran deal
 - ii. Many members also spoke in favor of Club Member Erica Vladimer's candidacy, praising her work reforming the sexual harassment rules at the State legislature, good judgment, and progressive positions
 1. Some voiced concern that, if elected as a freshman, she would not have the influence that Representative Maloney currently holds
 - c) Debate was closed and the members voted, via ranked choice voting
 - i. The results (announced later): 24 votes for Carolyn Maloney; 17 votes for Erica; 2 votes for no endorsement; 1 vote for Lauren Ashcraft
 1. The Club thus voted to endorse Carolyn Maloney with a majority on the first ballot

3. Introduction of 2020 Club Officers (5 minutes)
 - a) All of the candidates for Officer positions were running unopposed, so all were elected without the need to hold a vote – the positions are as follows:
 - i. President – Jerry Ferguson
 - ii. Vice President – Frank Wilkinson
 - iii. Corresponding Secretary – Alex Bores
 - iv. Recording Secretary – Pierre Ratzki
 - v. Treasurer – John Bartos

- b) Each of the Officers briefly introduced themselves to the Club
4. Speeches from Executive Board Candidates (20 minutes)
- a) The following 10 candidates ran for the 8 Board Member-at-Large positions:
 - i. Jeremy Berman
 - ii. Jason Bohner
 - iii. Flor de Maria Eilets
 - iv. Ruth Halberg
 - v. Arlene Kayatt
 - vi. Matt Lombardi
 - vii. Marina Phillips
 - viii. Amy J. Schwartz
 - ix. John Wagner
 - x. Esther Yang
 - b) Each of the 10 candidates gave 90 second speeches in support of their candidacy
 - c) The members then held a quick Q&A with the candidates
5. Executive Board Elections Debate & Vote (20 minutes)
- a) All of the Member-at-Large candidates were asked to leave the room to allow the voting members to openly debate their candidacies
 - i. Members spoke in favor of the candidates; all agreed that we had an embarrassment of riches to choose from
 - 1. Jordan thus made a motion to, following the vote, approach the candidates who did not receive enough votes and relay to them our appreciation for their candidacy and work for the Club
 - a. The motion was adopted unanimously
 - b) Debate was closed and the members voted, by choosing up to 8 candidates
 - i. The results (announced later), in order of votes received:
 - 1. Ruth Halberg
 - 2. Matt Lombardi
 - 3. Marina Phillips
 - 4. John Wagner
 - 5. Amy Schwartz
 - 6. Jeremy Berman
 - 7. Flor de Maria Eilets
 - 8. Arlene Kayatt
6. Surprise Visit from City Councilmember Ben Kallos (5 minutes)
- a) City Councilmember Ben Kallos, making a surprise visit, congratulated the members on our involvement in the Club and thanked us for our work

- b) He spoke in favor of Representative Maloney and her work on delivering Articles of Impeachment against President Trump
 - c) He spoke about his legislative priorities, including:
 - i. A universal afterschool proposal
 - ii. A ban on the use of toxic pesticides in public parks
 - d) He then engaged in a Q&A with members:
 - i. Are there any opportunities to get involved in Special Education initiatives?
 - 1. He holds a policy night on the second Tuesday of every month
 - ii. Which legislatures and groups are supporting the universal afterschool bill?
 - 1. He is its principal author, it is co-sponsored by Councilmembers Debbie Rose and Mark Treyger, and it is supported by various education and children's advocacy groups
 - iii. What can we do about lead in our drinking fountains?
 - 1. The City Council has passed several bills requiring further testing of Parks water fountains
7. Constitutional Amendments Debate and Vote (10 minutes)
- a) The Board presented proposed amendments to the Club Constitution:
 - i. Move the annual elections meetings from January to November of the previous year, in order to let the new Board and Officers hit the ground running at the start of the new year
 - ii. Define the length of Board terms as one year, as it is with Officers
 - iii. Make the Constitution consistent with our Working Groups structure
 - b) All of the amendments were adopted unanimously
8. Nominations for State Committee and Judicial Delegate (5 minutes)
- a) The Club accepted nominations for State Committee:
 - i. Lauren Trapanotto
 - ii. Adam Roberts
 - iii. Nancy Lang
 - 1. Nancy later withdrew her nomination, as she had misheard and believed the Club was taking nominations for County Committee; instead, she entered her nomination for Judicial Delegate
 - b) The Club accepted nominations for Judicial Delegate:
 - i. Frank Wilkinson
 - ii. Jerry Ferguson
 - iii. Pierre Ratzki
 - iv. Abbye Lawrence
 - v. Esther Yang
 - vi. Matt Lombardi

- vii. Arlene Kayatt
- viii. Steve Goldberg
- ix. Fred Newton
- x. Ruth Halberg
- xi. Alex Bores
- xii. Flor de Maria Eilets
- xiii. Jeremy Berman
- xiv. Joseph Stern
- xv. Zach Paszakowsky
- xvi. Susan Hochberg
- xvii. Brian Mangan
- xviii. Joan Roberts
- xix. Jordan Stein
- xx. Finn Dusenbery
- xxi. Marina Phillips (declined)
- xxii. Amy Schwartz

- c) The Club will continue to accept nominations for the next 5 days via email to either Jerry or Alex

9. District Leaders Report (5 minutes)

- a) District Leaders Kim Moscaritolo and Ben Wetzler announced a screening panel for the 6th Municipal District judicial vacancy, to held on February 7th
- b) Ben gave an update on the Fair Elections Campaign's work on elections reforms
 - i. Unfortunately, the Commission that Governor Cuomo formed to examine elections reforms delivered disappointing results, including rules to exclude 3rd parties from ballot access and watered-down campaign finance regulations
 - 1. The Fair Elections Campaign will be pushing for a replacement bill

10. Working Group Reports (5 minutes)

- a) Amy Schwartz gave an update on the Education Committee, which is working with other organizations to travel to Albany in order to advocate for the distribution of more Foundation Aid funding to New York's schools

11. Member Time (5 minutes)

- a) Ilyssa Fuchs thanked Esther for her service on the Board this past year, and thanked Jason for his service on the Youth Board
 - i. Frank took the opportunity to thank Ilyssa for her work on the Board, and to express that we will all miss her, as she is moving soon and will not be able to remain as active in the Club

- b) Jerry reminded members that our next meeting will be on February 20th, while the Spring Fundraiser will be held on April 23rd at Bohemian Spirit

12. Adjourn