

Four Freedoms Democratic Club  
February General Membership Meeting  
February 20, 2020  
The Church of the Holy Trinity, Sanctuary  
7:00-9:15pm

### Minutes

1. Welcome (5 minutes)
  - a) President Jerry Ferguson called the meeting to order
    - i. He informed members that, going forward, meetings would be held on the 3rd Thursday of the month, as this makes it easier for our elected officials to join
2. Black History Month Presentation: Guest Speaker Galen Kirkland (25 minutes)
  - a) Galen Kirkland, founder of Council of Elders in Harlem and former Commissioner of Human Rights for NYS, spoke to the club about his group's work in the community
    - i. The Harlem Council of Elders, founded in 1993, brings together exemplary senior members of the community to promote activism among young people, and to them with provide positive role models to look up to
    - ii. The group is an entirely non-profit organization, with no employee salaries and all funds going to the programs
  - b) Q&A:
    - i. Fred Newton – how do we counter the reactionary backlash to bail reform?
      1. Bail reform was necessary to end the unfairness of people remaining in jail simply because they are poor, and we should reserve judgment about the facts of particular cases in the face of sensationalized headlines
    - ii. District Leader Ben Wetzler – what is the most challenging part of ensuring that youth remain engaged even after a program ends?
      1. There are not enough heroes and heroines in our society today, and fewer beacons to follow; if we can provide positive role models, that impact will be long-lasting
    - iii. John Wagner – how do we ensure that there is enough diversity and representation in higher education?
      1. We can invite more academics to visit middle and high schools, and show the youth that this is a possible path for them as well
  - c) What can the Club do to support the work of the Counsel of Elders?
    - i. The group always needs funding
    - ii. The club could encourage the formation of a similar organization in this neighborhood

3. State Senate and Assembly Endorsement (10 minutes)

- a) The club considered endorsements for the upcoming state legislative races, all of which are uncontested
- b) State Assembly – incumbent Rebecca Seawright
  - i. A representative from AM Seawright’s office spoke on her behalf, and discussed her commitment to advocating for her constituents and promoting a progressive agenda
  - ii. Ben made a motion to endorse AM Seawright for reelection by acclaim, which carried unanimously
- c) State Senate – incumbent Liz Krueger
  - i. The Board unanimously supports Senator Krueger, as she has an excellent record and continues to be a strong advocate for progressive reforms
  - ii. A motion was made to endorse Senator Krueger’s reelection by acclaim, which carried unanimously
- d) State Senate – Jose Serrano
  - i. Frank moved to endorse Senator Serrano’s reelection by acclaim, citing his excellent record of accomplishments and responsiveness to his constituents; the motion carried unanimously

4. Judicial Endorsements (20 minutes)

- a) The club considered endorsements for the upcoming judicial elections
  - i. District Leaders Kim Moscaritolo and Ben Wetzler first gave the club a primer on the judicial selection process and the role of judicial delegates
- b) Several judicial candidates spoke to the club about their accomplishments and vision for the judiciary, including:
  - i. Judge David Cohen (Civil Court Judge and Acting Supreme Court Justice);
  - ii. Judge Alicea Elloras-Ally (Family Court Judge); and
  - iii. Seth Steed (Managing Attorney of the Criminal Defense Practice at Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem)
- c) A motion was made to endorse the three judges currently facing reelection to Civil Court (J. David Cohen, J. Michael Katz, and J. Laticia Ramirez) by acclaim; the motion carried unanimously
- d) A motion was made to endorse Seth Steed for Civil Court judge; the motion carried unanimously

5. State Committee Endorsements (5 minutes)

- a) The club considered endorsements for the upcoming State Committee elections
- b) The club heard from incumbent State Committee Member Lauren Trapanotto
  - i. Lauren spoke about her accomplishments as a member of the progressive caucus, and as co-chair of the subcommittee to address sexual harassment

- ii. Further, as a member of the rules reform committee, Lauren helped change the deadline to register as a Democrat in order to be eligible to vote in the presidential primary
- c) Fellow State Committee Member Adam Roberts could not attend the meeting, as he was on a plane flight
  - i. Members spoke up in support of his reelection
- d) A motion was made to endorse Lauren and Adam by acclaim; the motion carried unanimously

6. Judicial Delegate Endorsements (30 minutes)

- a) The club discussed how many delegates and alternates to nominate total
  - i. The Board has unanimously recommended that the club nominate 8 delegates and 8 alternates, in order to ensure that the election is not contested and all of our candidates are elected
  - ii. A motion was made to nominate 8 delegates and 8 alternates; the motion carried unanimously
    - 1. The club will therefore choose 16 candidates, with the top 8 receiving the nomination for judicial delegate, and the next 8 receiving the nomination for alternate judicial delegate
- b) All of the candidates were asked to commit to the following before asking for the club's nomination:
  - i. To be available to attend the convention, which will be held sometime between August 6th and August 12th; and
  - ii. To gather petition signatures for their and the other nominees' candidacies
- c) The following candidates all had the opportunity to speak in support of their candidacies for 2 minutes:
  - i. Jeremy Berman
  - ii. Sheila Flaxman
  - iii. Fred Newton
  - iv. Nancy Lang
  - v. Arlene Kayatt
  - vi. Susan Hochberg
  - vii. Alex Bores
  - viii. Ruth Halberg
  - ix. Frank Wilkinson
  - x. Abbye Lawrence
  - xi. Steve Goldberg
  - xii. Jordan Stein
  - xiii. Joseph Stern
  - xiv. Esther Yang
  - xv. Joan Roberts

- xvi. Zak Pasikowski
  - d) Other previously-nominated candidates did not speak, for the following reasons:
    - i. Brian Mangan – withdrew
    - ii. Amy Schwartz – withdrew
    - iii. Matt Lombardi – could not attend
  - e) After speaking, the candidates were all asked to leave the room, to allow discussion among the members
7. Remarks from State Senator Jose Serrano (10 minutes)
- a) Senator Serrano thanked the Club for its unanimous endorsement for reelection, and spoke about his agenda for the next legislative session, which includes progressive reforms and a focus on arts & culture
8. Update on the Census (5 minutes)
- a) Jason F. Reischel, the head of the NYC office created to promote the census, spoke to the club about the importance of answering the census by July 31 to ensure that NYC does not suffer from another disenfranchising undercount
9. Committee and Working Group Solicitations (20 minutes)
- a) Every committee and working group is now headed by two co-chairs, and these leader took the opportunity to introduce themselves to the club
    - i. Social media committee
      - 1. Co-chairs: Sarah Lasker & Jeremy Berman
      - 2. Next meeting: March 12th
    - ii. Diversity & outreach committee
      - 1. Co-chairs: Tricia Shimamura & Marina Phillips
      - 2. Next meeting: March 21st
    - iii. Events committee
      - 1. Co-chairs: Matt Lombardi & Adam Roberts
    - iv. Policy & activism committee
      - 1. Co-chairs: Kim & John W.
    - v. Working groups
      - 1. Education working group
        - a. Co-chairs: Amy Schwartz & Debra...
        - b. Next event: public hearing next Saturday at the academy of medicine regarding foundation education funding
      - 2. Health care working group
        - a. Co-chairs: Lee Wiggins & Fleur de Maria Eilets
        - b. Next meeting: March 17th
      - 3. End of life working group
        - a. Chair: John Wagner

4. Rule of law working group
    - a. Chair: Jerry (but looking for new leadership)
  5. Elections working group
    - a. Ben & Kim invited interested members to take leadership roles in helping the club maximize its impact on the 2020 elections
  6. Climate action working group
    - a. Chair: Mike Shatzkin (but looking for new leadership)
  7. Public transit working group
    - a. Chair: Nancy Lang
- b) Any members who are interested in getting involved were encouraged to introduce themselves to the chairs after the meeting

10. Member Time (5 minutes)

- a) Ben gave an update on upcoming elections activism, including:
  - i. The special election in Pennsylvania on March 17th, for which the club will be holding a letter-writing campaign on March 7th;
  - ii. An upcoming primary election in the neighborhood 73rd District, where incumbent Democrat Dan Quart is facing a right-wing challenger; the club will be coordinating volunteer opportunities
- b) Alex Bores informed members about an organization he has founded to provide cyber security training for electoral candidates and their staff
  - i. He invited anyone who knows a candidate or campaign that could benefit from such a training to contact him

11. Announcement of Judicial Delegate Nominees

- a) After tallying the votes, the club announced the nominees for judicial and alternate judicial delegates:
  - i. Judicial
    1. Alex Bores
    2. Frank Wilkinson
    3. Esther Yang
    4. Arlene Kayatt
    5. Abbye Lawrence
    6. Susan Hochberg
    7. Jordan Stein
    8. Ruth Halberg
  - ii. Alternate:
    1. Joan Roberts
    2. Nancy Lang
    3. Steven Goldberg
    4. Matthew Lombardi

5. Jeremy Berman
6. Joseph Stern
7. Zak Pasikowski
8. Sheila Flaxman

12. Adjourn