

Four Freedoms Democratic Club
March General Membership Meeting
March 23, 2020
Virtual Meeting via Zoom & Facebook
6:45-8:45pm

Minutes

1. Introduction (2 minutes)
 - a. President Jerry Ferguson called the meeting to order, and thanked members and elected officials for joining the club on its new virtual platform
 - i. He invited everyone to stay engaged by joining the club's Facebook discussion board
2. Update From City Council Member Ben Kallos (20 minutes)
 - a. City Council Member Ben Kallos spoke to the club about his efforts to combat the novel coronavirus pandemic and what resources are available to those impacted by the crisis, all of which can be found in his [newsletter](#)
 - i. He spoke about the need to ensure that hospitals have an adequate number of available beds, and that every child has broadband internet access to enable remote schooling
 - b. CM Kallos praised the club for its innovation in adapting to the crisis, and predicted that we would serve as a model for other clubs to follow
3. Update from Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (25 minutes)
 - a. Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney spoke to the club about the federal response to the worsening global health emergency
 - i. As New York is the epicenter of the crisis, the federal response impacts our community acutely
 - ii. The Trump administration's failures of leadership and strategic errors have already imperiled our ability to adequately respond, costing lives
 - b. Rep. Maloney is involved in drafting the House Democratic response to the GOP Senate relief bill
 - i. The Democratic bill will focus on assistance to our medical system, direct economic relief to workers, and strict oversight of any bailout funds
 - c. Q&A:
 - i. Ben Wetzler – in the package of relief for renters that is being debated, who would be eligible, and when they could expect relief?
 1. The bill would offer multi-family property owners mortgage forbearances, so long as they suspend rent for all impacted tenants
 - ii. Teresa Malyshev – is there anything positive or hopeful in the current situation?

1. The Governor's response has been heartening, as have the heroic efforts of our medical professionals and essential workers
 - iii. Haina Just-Michael – are you concerned about (1) the President ending shelter-in-place procedures too early, and (2) whether the New York primary can proceed as scheduled on June 23rd?
 1. Dr. Fauci has warned us about the dangers of easing social distancing protocols too early, and he has more credibility with the public than the President
 2. House Democrats are looking at ways to shore up vote-by-mail procedures at the federal level
 - d. Rep. Maloney invited members to sign up for her [newsletter](#) to receive daily updates, and to email her office with any additional questions
4. Update From Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright (25 Minutes)
- a. Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright congratulated the club on moving so quickly and competently to a virtual platform, and gave an update on efforts a the state legislature to combat the coronavirus pandemic
 - i. We must place a high priority on assisting frontline medical professionals, including nurses, EMTs, doctors, and medical assistants
 - ii. AM Seawright praised Governor Cuomo's response to the crisis, but has called on him to add funding in aid bills to help the vulnerable homeless population in the state
 - b. Q&A:
 - i. Erica Vladimer – what are the current efforts to provide rent suspension for all New Yorkers, many of whom have lost their jobs and are not able to make rent?
 1. While there is currently a moratorium on evictions, the state is looking at ways to provide rent relief, so as to ensure that there is not a flood of evictions as soon as the moratorium lifts
 - ii. Pierre Ratzki – what is the state doing to ensure that hospitals are not overwhelmed, and that we have enough medical professionals to meet the demand?
 1. The state is exploring all avenues for more hospital beds, including constructing temporary hospitals and seeking assistance from the military
 2. The state has also set up a hotline for medical professional volunteers to ensure adequate staffing
 3. But we cannot ensure that we have enough medical equipment without proper federal assistance
 - iii. Jeff Green – is the state considering rent relief for commercial tenants as well?
 1. Yes, this is on the table
 - iv. Billy Freeland – is there a risk of the legislature rolling back bail reform during this crisis?

1. This would pose a massive health risk, because jails are breeding grounds for disease
 - c. AM Seawright encouraged members to contact her office with any other questions or concerns
5. Guest Speaker Dr. Dana Mazo (30 Minutes)
- a. Dr. Dana Mazo, MD, an epidemiologist and Assistant Professor of Medicine & Infectious Diseases at Mt. Sinai, gave a presentation on the novel coronavirus and how to stay as safe as possible during the pandemic
 - i. Her presentation included information on: the incubation period on different surfaces; the methods of transmission; and possible treatments, among other topics
 - b. Q&A:
 - i. Ilyssa Fuchs – is it safe to go for a walk, and to order food?
 1. Walking is generally safe, and transmission from one person to another as they quickly pass each other is very unlikely
 2. Ordering food is more risky, because the virus could remain on the packaging; therefore, a good practice is to let the packages sit for 24 hours
 - ii. Erica – do we want people who may be sick to stay inside, or to get tested?
 1. In NYC, if you have symptoms you presumptively have the virus, and therefore there is no need to get tested; if your symptoms are not severe, you should stay home
 2. Update, testing (and contact tracing) is still valuable
 - iii. Tricia Shimamura – have you seen any promising experimental treatment trials?
 1. Three main drugs are currently being tested (remdesivir; IL6 inhibitors; hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine); however, the data so far is limited, and there is a danger of hoarding the medicine and thus denying it to patients with known indications
6. Four Freedoms Neighbors Program (5 minutes)
- a. Kim Moscaritolo announced the formation of the Four Freedoms Neighbors Program, which is a new club program to help folks in the neighborhood who need groceries or other assistance
 - i. She invited anyone who is in need aid, or interested in helping out, to email ffdneighbors@gmail.com
7. Adjourn (2 minutes)
- a. Jerry gave a closing message to attendants, thanking everyone for joining, and inviting everyone to be on the lookout for more upcoming virtual events
 - i. Special thanks to Alex Bores, who facilitated all the technical aspects of the meeting