**Four Freedoms Democratic Club**

**General Meeting**

**October 21, 2021, 7pm**

**Intro:**

* Frank will be running the show today
* So many people here are wearing our FFDC swag! If you’d like a tshirt or zip up, please email Kim
* Next Wednesday: Fall fundraiser!
  + 3rd Ave Ale House

**Julie Menin, Democratic Nominee for the 5th City Council District**

* First got public service after 9/11, appointed to CB1
* Served as commissioner of 3 city agencies
* This was first census that NY hasn’t lost at least 2 Congressional seats
  + We never want to lose any seats, but we did far much better than what was predicted
* Running against a Republican—but he doesn’t have it on his literature, may not tell people… he also goes back and forth on whether he is vaccinated or not
  + This is highly irresponsible and unacceptable
* Join us for early voting or election day as a volunteer
* Questions:
  + What are your plans for the district?
    - Small business protections 🡪 lower fines, create one uniformed portal
    - Protect renters
    - address storefront vacancies
    - Change the AMI, one that is city-based
    - ULURP Reform 🡪 we can look at the Blood Center issue as a prime example as to why we need to reform it!
  + Where should a biotech center go if the blood center development doesn’t pass?
    - CM Diana Ayala said it would be good in East Harlem
  + City announced a plan for a safe haven homeless shelter. CB8 voted in support of it, as are Brewer and Krueger, but heard there is potentially a lawsuit from the people in the neighborhood… thoughts?
    - Don’t believe a lawsuit will be able to reverse the decision
    - We need to build supportive housing, we have a homelessness crisis
    - Understand there are many in the area who feel like they didn’t have adequate community notice, and notice is really necessary
    - Moving forward, we need to make sure when there is a siting of any facility there must be a lot of community notice and outreach
  + Lowering of quality of life—rodents, garbage, homelessness which isn’t an issue of homelessness but of mental health…what are we going to do to provide adequate services?
    - We spend $1.2B on Thrive, but if you look at the program there are no data metrics. It must be overhauled
    - We need to provide true mental health services
    - Some do not want to go into the shelter system because it’s dangerous, and they’re right. Shame on us for allowing it to happen.
      * $4B into homeless shelter system and no oversight. Oversight is a key reason why I ran for office, we need more oversight.
  + What is your view on whether the Council or State Legislature should determine the rent laws? Right now, State Legislature makes the decision
    - Understand that it creates a tremendous amount of frustration but it would be irresponsible to say the City should have power over something we cannot take over
  + We passed a reso re: transparency. A lot of $ goes to private nonprofits and the city doesn’t put those contracts in a public database. Will you push for legislation around transparency in contracts?
    - Yes
  + A lot of talk of having pre-k and more buildings. But there is no room for people in Carl Schurz park. If we want to have really good preschool programs then we need to have more parks for people. Concerned about the quality of life and access to the parks
    - D5 is the densest districts in the city
    - Lack of open space has real health consequences
    - Esplanade funding oftentimes get stuck for years, we need to make sure this doesn’t happen. $284M is going to NYC EDC, not Parks Department. This is a good thing because EDC has less procurement procedures that take up a lot of time.
  + Concern about education funding. Overcrowding is huge, we need more new schools being built, increasing capacity.
    - Already started conversations with School Construction Authority
    - Can’t allow new development without demanding a new school is built first
  + Any thoughts about the next speaker?
    - I’ve been around a long time, I’ve seen many speaker races, it probably won’t happen until December.
    - Continue to have conversations with those running
    - Haven’t make a decision on who to support, it’s far too early
    - Historic factor is that we might have 30 women coming into council
  + Other than overcrowding issue on schools, any other policies you support for schools?
    - Created NYC Kids Rise program, was just launched citywide so every public school kindergartener will get a college savings account
    - Class size matters, and we have a huge problem on overcrowding
    - Art, music – too many schools don’t offer it! It’s unconscionable. It’s not just a funding issue, it’s a leadership issue
    - G&T: we need reform but we need to get a lot of people input. It should be offered in every single school

**Nominations for Officers and Board**

* We will have 5 days to submit names after tonight
* President:
  + Frank (declines)
  + Jerry
  + John Wagner (not present for the nomination)
* Vice President
  + Frank Wilkinson (accepts)
* Treasurer
  + John Bartos (accepts)
* Corresponding Secretary
  + Jordan Stein (accepts)
* Recording Secretary
  + Kit Morrison (accepts)
  + Erica Vladimer (declines)
* Members at large:
  + Flor (accepts)
  + Ronnie Weintraub (accepts)
  + Erica Vladimer (accepts)
  + Jeremy Berman
  + Gabe Panek
  + Ruth Halberg
  + Alexander Dolce
  + John Wagner
  + Matt Lombardi
  + Amy Schwartz
  + Deborah Freeman
  + Marina Phillips
  + Madeline Peel

**Amendments to the Constitution**

* Currently to amend the constitution you can only do that one time a year, and the board wanted to have more flexibility
  + So it could happen at any regular meeting with enough notice
  + Language that will be voted on before our November meeting was linked in the email, and will be emailed out again a few times

**Discussion of Ballot Initiatives**

* 5 Measures on the ballot- they’re all on the back so turn it over!
  + Senator Krueger had a forum where all of these were fleshed out
  + We will include it in the next email
* 1. Redistricting: Very long! Caps the # of state senators to 63, codifies an end to prison gerrymandering (already outlawed, this just makes sure it can’t be overturned), count all residents no matter of immigration status for terms of redistricting, and technical changes to the laws passed in 2014 including partisanship requirements being removed and moving the deadline for resdistricted maps to be presented.
* 2. Everyone in NYS has the right to clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment
  + Complaint is that it’s very vague, open people up to litigation (comes from oil companies mainly)
    - Everything is vague in the constitution, it’s up to our legislature to flesh that out
* 3 and 4 are related: Right now, the state legislature cannot pass laws related to things like same day voter registration, no excuse absentee ballot because the constitution doesn’t allow it.
  + Voting yes means we are removing the barrier so if the legislature wants to move legislation on these things, they can
  + Voting yes does NOT enact same day voter registration and no excuse absentee
* 5. Civil court action: anything <$25K is in civil court, anything above is in the Supreme Court. This would raise the cap to $50K. The idea is to give civil court more power to handle cases.

**Working Group Reports**

* Redistricting Working Group: Recommends a “yes” vote on Q1
* Elections Committee:
  + Canvass for Menin coming up
  + Great canvass last week, knocked over 100 doors on Staten Island
* Transportation Committee:
  + Gave testimony on congestion pricing based on our club reso
* Community outreach committee:
  + In the process of writing something up that explains local politics that we can put on our website
* Education Committee:
  + Plan to focus on: civics education, preparing for the new administration coming in, mental health support for students/sufficient staffing, academic support, health and safety protocols including COVID testing and vaccination mandates, etc., remote learning issues, monitor use of state and federal funding
* Rule of Law Committee: gerrymandering, promote the idea of presidential responsibility, Religious Freedom Restoration Act
  + The committee was asked if they looked into the Dozinger v. Chevron case. They did but it’s going to be too heavy of a lift
* End of Life Committee:
  + Passed the reso. Currently a bill in the Senate and the Assembly
* Ending Child Marriage:
  + Supported raising the age to marry to 18
  + It passed!
  + A member pushed back and said we should be careful
* Reforming the Democratic Party:
  + Starting to plan out what they are going to do
* Healthcare Committee:
  + Last month passed a resolution concerning DOE vaccine mandate
  + Encourages everyone to fill out their survey on telehealth
* Climate Change and Environment
  + Looking for members!
  + Looking to expand
* Election Reform:
  + Fair elections coalition is still fighting for voting reform on the fed level
  + Club signed onto a bill calling on the fed to act