

**Town Democratic Committee of Sudbury
Minutes of the meeting of 21 November 2002**

The meeting was convened at 7:30 pm in the Unitarian Church by Chairperson Beverly Guild.

The purpose of the meeting was to begin a discussion of the results of the recent election and to consider how the Sudbury Democratic Committee might become more visible and relevant in political affairs. It is clear that both the state and national Democratic Parties have recently been cast into the Wilderness, so to speak. In this connection, Kate Donaghue, Massachusetts Democratic Committee member, reported on a recent meeting of that Committee at which the poor performance of the party, particularly the defeat of Ms. O'Brian, was discussed. Not surprisingly, problems were found with the nominating convention, poor coordination among different parts of the state and local organizations, lack of a coherent Democratic political program distinct from the Republican program, and failures to communicate with the public and to get out the vote. Ms Donaghue would welcome opinion from individuals: katedonaghue@aol.com or @yahoo.com. The telephone number of the Massachusetts Committee is 617-472-0637

Although many topics were discussed at the 11/21 meeting, a consensus seemed to develop on the need for the Sudbury Committee, and by extension all Democratic town committees, to develop political leadership and become more vocal. Suggested ways to these ends included:

- Hold regular meetings to which, in some cases, the public could be invited.
- Have definite agenda at meetings and discuss specific issues, in some cases led by a speaker.
- Tape meeting and press releases for local cable TV.
- Take positions on issues and have press releases on these matters.
- Encourage Committee members to write letters to the editor and opinion editorials for local papers.
- Invite state and national legislators to meet with the Committee for discussion and to receive political instruction.
- Contact Democrats during the run-up to elections and then get out the vote.
- Connect more strongly with state and national Democratic organizations.
- Invite election candidates to Committee meetings.
- Contact new residents of Sudbury to apprise them of the existence and work of town Democrats.
- Extend to high school students the offer of associate membership in the Committee.

There was also a discussion of political issues on which Democrats have or should have major differences with Republicans. These issues, which could become topics for individual meetings and Committee position statements, included:

- The urgent need to increase funding for Medicare and Medicaid.
- The need to rationalize Social Security funding and truly separate it from political machinations.
- The erosion of civil rights and liberties by the Bush administration in response to alleged threats of terrorists.
- The ignoring or subverting of environmental protections.
- The maldistribution of wealth in the US, including low minimum wage and barriers to unionization.

The need to establish a national, single payer, all-inclusive system of health care.
The need to diminish substantially the military budget and size of the standing military ranks.
Why war with Iraq?: The real reasons.
Foreign policy other than one based narrowly on "American Interests".
Control and public knowledge of security/intelligence activities and budgets.
Election reform to prevent the buying of candidates.
Use of the preferential ballot in elections.
The role and obligations of the media in elections and political affairs generally.
The many violations or abrogations of international law by the Bush administration.
The role and utility of bilingual education in Massachusetts.
Should towns in Massachusetts be supported solely by a real estate tax?

In summary, it was held that Sudbury Democrats ought to develop positions on important issues in keeping with well respected Democratic principles and make these positions widely known. We need to be heard and, in so far as possible, shape public opinion. We need to do this even if we run counter to the conventional wisdom that Democrats should cleave to the political center, a wisdom that seems to lose elections of late.

Announcements

Beverly Guild announced that there are now two vacancies on the town Committee. Suggestions on candidates would be welcomed

It is time to renew our yearly dues, so send \$25 c/o Sudbury Democratic Committee to Helga Andrews (11 Maple Ave., Sudbury) at your early convenience.

The Worcester/Middlesex Democratic Coalition will sponsor a party on 8 December, time and place to be disseminated by email.

The next meeting of the Sudbury Democratic Committee will be at 7:30 pm on 12 December 2002 in the Unitarian Church. General agenda: Continuation of the discussions of 11/21. Specific agenda, if any, will be distributed by email.

Thomas Hollocher, Secretary, 26 Nov. 2002.