

Sudbury Democratic Town Committee (SDTC)
Minutes of the meeting of 22 May 2003

The meeting was convened at 7:30 pm in the Unitarian Church by acting Chairperson Thomas Hollocher. Fourteen persons were in attendance. It was noted that notice of the meeting failed to appear in the Town Crier. Omissions of this kind need to be remedied.

The minutes of the previous meeting of 24 April 2003 were approved without further revision.

Helga Andrews, Treasurer, reported by email that a check for \$200 was forwarded to the office of the Democratic State Committee and cashed, but not otherwise acknowledged. There remains about \$450 in the SDTC account currently.

Henry Noer led a discussion of the "Patriot Resolution" that had been introduced publicly at the Forum at Town Hall on 8 May. The Resolution will be presented to the Board of Selectmen at 7:30 pm on 10 June in Town Hall (actually postponed to a later date). All SDTC members are urged to attend and bring as many friends, neighbors, and relatives as possible. Efforts will be made to notify other town organizations, e.g., League of Women Voters, the churches, etc., of the event in order to widen support and swell the audience. Prior to the meeting, supporting material will be sent to Selectmen (literature distributed at the Forum and a video tape of the Forum) and a newspaper letter or editorial is expected to appear.

There was an exploratory discussion of whether and how the SDTC should participate in town festivities on the 4th of July. Possibilities mentioned included: Participation in the parade by way of a float or as a Committee marching en mass; operating an information table or booth in Heritage Park; the possibility of some connection with the art exhibition of Deann Rubin in the Hosmer House. Judy Deutsch, Tom Hollocher, Deann Rubin, Carry Pollock, and Paul Pakos volunteered to give thought and, one hopes, substance to the idea of 4th of July participation by the SDTC. Notwithstanding this group, all Committee members are asked to brainstorm the issue and contribute whatever knowledge and support they can to a concrete plan.

Discussion of the impending state Issues Convention of 7 June was initiated by Henry Noer's statement of disappointment that the published Action Agenda for the Convention failed to mention, much less oppose, the USA-Patriot Act. Tom Hollocher commented favorably on the proposed Party Platform. It was suggested that Sudbury delegates to the Convention ought to meet prior to the Convention to discuss the relevant documents and other issues.

Is it possible for town committees to be placed in more frequent or more facile contact with each other? The present means seem to be the occasional Chairs Meetings and the rather loose organization of town committees by legislative districts. Our Chairperson, Beverly Guild, will be asked to consider this question.

There was a general discussion of how the SDTC could construct an email database of registered Democratic voters in Sudbury. Carmine Gentile is investigating whether individuals could be asked to divulge their email addresses at the time they register to vote. The main problem, however, is how to collect the email addresses of people already registered. Suggestions for contact included: Individual letters (effective but expensive); a telephone canvas (labor intensive); newspaper notices and articles; announcements over local cable TV; handbills (also labor intensive); an information booth on the 4th of July. It was suggested that a SDTC website might substitute for an email database to get messages to voters, if its existence were widely known and visited frequently by Democrats. A disadvantage to an email database of voters is that it takes work to keep it current as people move out of town. Jonathan Sclarsic

hopes to take up this issue when he returns from Washington DC at end of summer. The Committee seemed to be in agreement that better ways are needed to contact and organize voters, particularly on short notice.

Letters of inquiry and instruction:

1. Henry Noer urged that Committee members communicate individually with the FCC to protest the proposed rule changes on ownership of TV and radio stations, that are to be decided on 2 June, and ask for further and wider public hearings on these proposed changes.

2. Judy Deutsch composed letters to Sen. Kerry and Rep. Meehan asking that they support pending legislation and a pending resolution in Congress regarding extensions of health care in the US. These letters were approved by a vote of 12 yea and 2 abstentions, and will be signed and mailed by Beverly Guild in due course. They will be kept with these minutes.

3. Tom Hollocher provided information on the Massachusetts Emergency Health Powers Act which was introduced into the Senate as S.597 by Sen. Richard Moore. This bill was introduced by Moore last year, but was not acted upon. The bill, essentially in the wording of the model prepared by the Center for Disease Control, is a draconian measure designed to deal with large events having profound public health consequences, such as the use of chemical agents, biological vectors, etc., by terrorists. Basically it gives to the Governor virtually absolute powers to manage public health catastrophes of any kind. Hollocher believes that there are objectionable aspects to the bill having to do with the great powers afforded the Governor over extended periods, with the unmentioned costs of creating and training the infrastructure needed for emergency action, and with the denial of compensation for certain kinds of potential losses. In addition, there is the question of whether the powers already afforded the Governor of Massachusetts might actually be adequate to deal with public health emergencies. It was agreed that these concerns ought to be brought to the attention to our legislators by letter. To that end, Hollocher intends to compose letters and have them vetted via Committee email. He will also supply websites for the CDC model document and S.597.

Announcements

Remember to pay our yearly dues of \$25 minimum, c/o SDTC, to Helga Andrews, 11 Maple Ave., Sudbury.

The next meeting of the SDTC is scheduled for 7:30 pm Thursday 19 June in the Unitarian Church.

Please remember to submit to the Secretary a copy of text or outline of verbal reports made at meetings, particularly if the report is long or complex.

Thomas Hollocher, Secretary, 23 May 2003.