

Sudbury Democratic Town Committee (SDTC)
Minutes of the meeting of 22 April 2004

The meeting was convened at 7:30 pm in the Unitarian Church by Chairperson Beverly Guild. Twenty-five persons were in attendance, as documented by the attached attendance record. The minutes of the previous meeting of 24 March, that had been vetted by email and also available in printed form at the meeting, were approved without change.

Helga Andrews, Treasurer, reported assets of \$782 in the SDTC account

At the March meeting three committees were formed under the titles: Membership/Outreach, Fundraising, and Election/Political. Guild called on these committees for reports, but none was forthcoming. The past month was spent largely in pondering and organizing. Jerry Glass (Fundraising) wrote and distributed by email an appeal (copy on record) that might be appropriate to forward to friends and fellow Democrats in Sudbury in order to raise money for the SDTC. In the ensuing discussion, Glass asked whether there were restrictions on how and to whom the Committee could disburse funds. Could we fund directly the election campaigns of Democrats running for various offices, as well as supporting the State and National Democratic Committees? This question will be considered further by Carmine Gentile and Jonathan Sclarsic. Sclarsic described the need for money to buy political ads, support local candidates, and construct a SDTC website.

Jeanne Maloney reported that she had been contacted to see if the SDTC would sponsor a fund raising event in behalf of John Kerry's campaign during May or June. Considerable discussion followed on questions such as: What kind of event? Where? How many fund raisers could or should we have? Would it not be better to hold one combined fund raiser rather than two or more focused on single candidates? Should an event stipulate an expected contribution? Although these questions were not resolved, there seemed to be general agreement that a potluck supper would be an appropriate device. Judy Deutsch suggested to combine an event with the Wayland DTC, with Russell's garden center as the event's location. Another idea involved the showing of a political video (e.g., "Uncovered") as a fund-raising device. Further planning was turned over to the Fundraising and Election/Political Committees with input from Maloney.

Disagreements between Henry Noer et al. and the Town Moderator, Myron Fox, over the handling of Article 56 of the 2004 Town Warrant, the Resolution opposing the USA-Patriot Act (copy on record).

Background: *Because Noer represented the petitioners and supporting organizations, including the SDTC, for Article 56 and would present the argument for a vote of approval, he initiated procedural discussions with Fox to avoid any misunderstandings when the Article came up. In the course of these discussions, Noer learned that Fox intended to offer the Article for a simple up-or-down vote without presentation or discussion. This procedure was unsatisfactory for several reasons: It assumed that town voters must be fully informed on the merits of the Resolution upon their arrival at Town Meeting; it implied that a Resolution of political protest is inferior to warrant articles of a financial, fiduciary or regulatory nature; Fox was unable to satisfy Noer as to his authority to treat Article 56 differently from other articles. Lack of resolution of this matter prompted Noer to send a letter dated 11 April to Fox in which Noer asks why Fox insists on truncating consideration of Article 56 and states that he will pursue the matter with attorneys and Town Counsel unless the matter is resolved by the end of 11 April. (Note: Article 56 was expected to be considered on Wednesday 14 April and in fact was considered and approved on that date). The letter was signed by Noer "For the Sudbury Democratic Town Committee", but circumstances did not allow for the customary vetting of the letter's contents via group email of the SDTC. Fox took personal umbrage over the letter, and asked, after Town Meeting ended on 14 April, whether*

the letter had been approved by the SDTC. Guild and Gentile, SDTC spokes-persons, informed Fox that they had seen the letter (that night) and supported Noer.

A prolonged discussion of this issue occurred once meeting attendees were supplied with copies of Noer's letter (copy on record). One proposal, suggested by Gentile, Larry O'Brien and others, was to compose a letter of clarification to Fox that would serve to mend fences, but, at the same time, indicate displeasure at the way Article 56 was handled and suggest appropriate procedures in the event of analogous situations in future. There was general agreement for this plan, and an *ad hoc* committee of Carl Offner, Gentile and O'Brien was formed to draft the letter for the Chairperson's signature and perhaps to gain its approval by email vetting, if time and circumstances permitted. However, this left the question of our approval or disapproval of Noer's letter of 11 April hanging. What do we tell Fox on this point, or do we say nothing? Nick Palermo, using the idea inherent in the legal term, *nunc pro tunc*, moved and received a second that the SDTC retroactively endorse Noer's letter to Fox. After vigorous discussion and the withdrawal of a motion by Offner to amend, the motion was passed 13 to 9.

A final issue regarding Fox and Article 56: Noer understood Fox to suggest that Sudbury need not abide by the directives stipulated in the Resolution -- the likely reference being the directives of part (2) and the final sentence following "and be it further resolved that". This idea was received with considerable displeasure, and, in consequence, O'Brien was asked to discover if and when letters and documents are forwarded in fulfillment of these directives.

Noer received a unanimous vote of thanks for his energetic and persistent efforts in bringing Article 56 to Town Meeting and getting it approved.

Tim Garvin agreed to serve on the SDTC and was unanimously elected.

Noer agreed to head our participation in Sudbury Day, 18 September. A fee of \$25 will be charged for each exhibit.

Carmine Gentile was nominated and unanimously approved to serve another term as Democratic Registrar of Voters in Sudbury. The state requires that two additional names be submitted, and Nick Palermo and Henry Noer agreed to lend their names for this purpose.

Tim Garvin thanked the Committee for support in his unsuccessful candidacy as a National Convention delegate earlier in April.

Judy Deutsch suggested that we request the Common Hall upstairs in the Unitarian Church as our regular meeting place. Acoustics are much better.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Announcements

If you have not already done so, please forward your 2004 dues of \$25 minimum, c/o SDTC, to Helga Andrews, 11 Maple Ave., Sudbury. Dues were expected on or about 1 January 2004.

The next meeting of the SDTC is scheduled for 7:15 pm on **Wednesday 19 May** 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. This is the only way to assure that an accurate summary is entered into the minutes.

Jonathan Sclarsic reported that the creation of a voting score card will be considered at the state convention on 8 May. This score card would compare the votes of legislators with the party platform on a variety of issues.

Thomas Hollocher, Secretary, 25 April 2004.