

Sudbury Democratic Town Committee (SDTC)
Minutes of the meeting of 16 May 2006

The meeting was convened by Chairperson Beverly Guild at 7:15 pm in the First Parish of Sudbury. Seventeen persons were in attendance, comprising 16 members, and one visitor, David Bertolino of 37 Brewster Road, Sudbury. Mr. Bertolino had expressed an interest in the anti-war and vigil projects of the SDTC. The list of those in attendance is attached to these minutes in the permanent record.

The minutes of the previous meeting of 20 April, which had been vetted by email, were approved without change. Paper copies of the minutes were distributed at the start of today's meeting. The email version of the minutes contained a spelling error that was corrected in the paper copy.

Helga Andrews, Treasurer, reported a balance of \$1520.

Carmine Gentile initiated a discussion regarding what Democratic candidates for Congress we ought to support and how we ought to support them. He believes that we need to concentrate on those races in which a Democratic candidate stands a reasonably good chance of winning and pay little attention to other races. In particular, we ought to contribute time and money to those winnable campaigns by, e.g., calling on phone banks, or going door-to-door, as some of us did in New Hampshire in 2004. Donald Chauls pointed out that a number of organizations already exist for absorbing volunteers for this kind of campaign work, e.g., Democrats for America-Massachusetts. This group is doing phone bank work in congressional districts across the country. Chauls said that he would inform people by email of the next meeting of this organization, and he in fact did so. Henry Noer felt that it is now too early to identify possible Democratic winners. In due course, he volunteered to draw up a list of candidates likely to win and therefore worthy of our support.

Maxine Yarbrough briefly summarized the recent training session in Hudson for Convention delegates. Although Delegate Guide 2006 omits any mention of food and drink, we were advised at the training session that none will be allowed to take food or drink into the hall. Bottled water will be provided free of charge and box lunches will be available for \$10. The most important single requirement is that delegates check in and be seated in their assigned sections by the 11 am role call. Any delegates missing that call will not be allowed to participate and will be replaced by alternate delegates.

Noer indicated that planning was on schedule for the Sudbury 4th of July celebration. It seems likely that Tom Conroy will be able to march with the SDTC. Tom and Pam Hollocher indicated that they must be out of town on the 4th.

Noer also briefly discussed a bill introduced by the Republican majority in Congress regarding commercialization of the internet. This bill would establish special levels of internet service and allow various charges to be levied for these services. Furthermore, levels of service and related charges would be removed from the purview of the FCC. There was apparently no Democratic in-put for this bill.

Tom Hollocher discussed a proposed Charter amendment to be considered at the 2006 convention in Worcester that would impose work requirements of 40 hours over two years as a condition for continued membership in the Democratic Committees of towns and cities. This amendment is printed on p.23 of the Delegate Guide 2006 and was read in full by Hollocher. Although he indicated his disagreement with the rigid form of the amendment and his intention to vote against it, he nevertheless voiced support for the idea that local committees must be maintained as working committees and thus must require active participation of all its regular members. This arises because regular membership is limited to 35. Because there is no limit to the number of

associate (non-voting) or in-perpetuity (voting) members, the fraction of inactive persons in these two categories is not so critical.

With regard to the SDTC, he pointed out that we are currently at 30 members, of whom 8-9 would appear to be inactive. In order to achieve an active membership of 35, we would need to acquire 5 willing workers and seek the resignation, demotion, or dismissal of currently inactive members to make way for an equal number of new members. To this end, Hollocher asked that the SDTC consider the following proposal:

1. A membership subcommittee shall be formed to search actively for Sudbury Democrats who might be willing and able to work with the Committee. This subcommittee ought to include the Affirmative Action and Outreach Officer and the Chairperson. Gerry Glass indicated a willingness to serve on this subcommittee*.

2. Individuals shall no longer be elected directly to regular membership, but rather, shall first be elected to associate membership for a probationary period of one year, after which each may be considered for full membership in light of his record and the existence of openings. This provision is in keeping with the state Charter, Article 2, Section II.

3. When the SDTC is reconstituted every 4 years at the time of the presidential primary election, a positive action shall be required of each member to file for nomination and stand for re-election. The former practice shall be discontinued, under which the Chairperson sees to the re-election of all members, active and inactive alike.

4. Once membership reaches its limit of 35, inactive members shall be approached and asked to resume an active role in the Committee's work, accept transfer to associate membership, or resign (this does not apply to in-perpetuity members). If an individual were to refuse all these options, the state Charter provides for removal of a member by action of a 2/3 vote of a quorum of the Committee (Article 2, Section V). The Charter allows removal for four causes: Failure to attend half of the meetings in any year; public action in opposition to a Democratic candidate; unauthorized use of resources; and conviction of a felony. It would be wise to add to our Bylaws a qualitative requirement for members to participate in the actual work of the Committee, over and above the need to attend meetings.

Although Hollocher presented the above proposal to stimulate thinking and discussion, with action possibly deferred to a future meeting, Carl Offner said that we could adopt the proposal forthwith, inasmuch as we are already empowered to do as proposed. There seemed to be general agreement on his point, but in fact no motion of acceptance was voiced and no formal vote was taken. A possible problem in adopting Hollocher's proposal might be the need, under 4.) above, for an addition to our bylaws to spell out a work requirement for members. The Secretary believes that the opinions of the Chairperson and Vice Chair ought to be heard on this point after an examination of our Bylaws.

The next meeting is scheduled for 7:15 pm, Wednesday 14 June 2006, in the First Parish of Sudbury. The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.

Announcements

If you have not already done so, please forward your 2006 dues of \$35 minimum, c/o SDTC, to Helga Andrews, 11 Maple Ave., Sudbury. Dues were expected on or about 1 January.

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.

Thomas Hollocher, Secretary, 20 May 2006.

*Addendum, 20 May 2006: Tom Hollocher will serve on the Membership Subcommittee.