

Sudbury Democratic Town Committee (SDTC) Minutes of the meeting of 15 February 2007

Chairperson Beverly Guild convened the meeting at 7:15 pm in the First Parish of Sudbury. Twenty-four persons were in attendance, comprising twenty-one members and associate members and three guests. The attendance list is attached to these minutes in the permanent record. The guests were Susan Offner and Michael O'Connor of Sudbury, and James Eldridge, who is Representative for the 37th Middlesex District comprising Boxborough, Harvard, Lunenburg, Shirley, and parts of Acton and Lancaster. His telephone and email are 508-274-0055 and james@repeldridge.com.

The minutes of the previous meeting of 17 January 2007, which had been vetted by email, were approved without modification. Paper copies of the minutes were distributed at the start of today's meeting.

The Treasurer, who was absent, submitted a written report that is entered into the permanent record. In short, we now have \$701.76 unencumbered. The \$500 contribution to the Hosmer House in memory of our former member, Winifred Fitzgerald, has been made. A plaque* prepared by Judith Deutsch, was also forwarded for display in the Hosmer House with the contribution

Recent Caucus: The Chair led a brief discussion of the conduct of the recent Sudbury Democratic Caucus to elect delegates to the 2007 Massachusetts Democratic Convention. All seemed to agree that it was conducted well and was a success, particularly in engaging some new, young people as delegates.

Peace vigil: Susan Thel reported that the weekly peace vigil is beginning to attract new people from outside the SDTC. In view of the possibility of war with Iran, she suggested that "no attack/war against Iran" ought to become one of the poster themes of the vigil.

New member: Susan Offner (soffner@ix.netcom.com), wife of Carl Offner, was nominated for Associate Membership and unanimously elected. Welcome aboard, Susan!

What Congress ought to do now: The document being prepared by Susan Offner and Donald Chauls, that enumerates urgently needed legislation to remedy social problems in the US and is directed toward Congress, was further refined and discussed at meeting. A number of comments were made in support of or opposition to parts of the manuscript and Susan duly noted these. She hoped soon to generate another draft incorporating the comments that will then be vetted by email.

Subcommittee in support of Representative Tom Conroy: In response to nasty and unwarranted Republican attacks against Conroy, that have appeared recently in The Sudbury Town Crier and elsewhere, the Chair suggested the need for a subcommittee to organize letters of support for our newly elected Representative and to attend Conroy's periodic meetings with Sudbury voters. The subcommittee thus would follow Conroy's political progress and lend support in so far as possible. Three persons volunteered for the subcommittee: John Greeley, Jeanne Maloney, and Gary Bean.

High school senior award: Some years ago, the SDTC made an annual award to a senior student at graduation, and some believe that an award of some kind ought to be reinstated. A subcommittee, comprising Jeanne Maloney, John Greeley, and Maxine Yarbrough, was assembled to investigate the matter and report back to the Committee regarding criteria and mechanism for an award.

Affiliation with Mass-Care: Judy Deutsch proposed that the SDTC become an affiliate of Mass-Care, an organization comprising some 90 member organizations, the mission of which is to establish a single-payer health care system in Massachusetts. Support for a single-payer system is indeed a plank in the platform of the Massachusetts Democratic Party. It was unclear whether a Democratic town committee can enter into such affiliations with an organization that lobbies

extensively for its desired ends. There may be statutory limitations. The request for affiliation was tabled until the next meeting, and Carmine Gentile, a lawyer, was asked to look into the legal issues.

Meeting with James Eldridge: Eldridge was one of a few Clean Elections candidates in the recent election cycle and is considering whether to run for the seat of US Representative Martin Meehan should he vacate it to become Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts. Eldridge is a decidedly progressive Democrat, and supports, besides clean elections, Cape Wind project, the Regional Greenhouse Gas initiative, single payer health care, increased minimum wage, and other socially responsible plans and programs.

Transfer of the SDTC website, sudburydems.org, as per the motion of 17 January 2007: This topic was the subject of a long discussion, starting with minutes of an Executive Committee meeting of 8 February recorded by the Vice-Chair, Carmine Gentile. These minutes are entered into the permanent record. In brief, the Executive Committee asked Henry Noer to transfer administrative authority for the website to the SDTC, as per the motion of 17 January, by 15 February (today). Noer failed to honor the request by that date. The Secretary, Tom Hollocher, distributed a report on Noer's manipulation of the website, which is also placed in the permanent record. Basically, in late January Noer took down the website and in early February changed the registrant of the domain name from the SDTC to Henry Noer, these acts undertaken without consultation or permission of the Committee. In consequence, use of a SDTC resource was denied by one of its members.

Eric Shienbrood, Carl Offner, and Hollocher are in process of registering the domain name, sudburydemocrats.org, and setting up a new website as property of the SDTC.

Because it was not rescinded, the motion passed on 17 January continues in effect and there remains an obligation to return sudburydems.org for use by the Committee. This matter may become moot once the new website is operational.

The next meeting is scheduled for 7:15 pm sharp, Tuesday 13 March 2007 in the First Parish of Sudbury.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm.

***Wording of the plaque:** "Win Fitzgerald served our Sudbury Democratic Town Committee and our Democratic values extraordinarily well for many years – working for candidates in Massachusetts and other states, organizing special events, cleaning up after them, sharing her and Fit's home and grounds for some of them, all the while being level-headed, patient and understanding. We miss her."

Announcements

If you have not already done so, please forward your 2007 dues of \$35 minimum, c/o SDTC, to Helga Andrews, 11 Maple Ave., Sudbury. Dues were expected on or about 1 January 2007.

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.

March is Democratic Action month. In Massachusetts, 10 forums are planned on grass roots organizing, one forum in each congressional district. Consult Donaghue's Dispatch for times and places.

The Middlesex and Worcester District will sponsor a brunch on 25 March to honor Democratic workers. Cost is \$25 per person.

Thomas Hollocher, Secretary, 20 February 2007.