

## Minutes of the Sudbury Democratic town Committee meeting of October 14, 2020

Vania Vitvitsky, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm on Zoom. Also present were Carmine Gentile vice-chair, Nuha Muntasser Outreach Coordinator, Peg Espinola Secretary, Linda Hench-Gentile, John McQueen, Aruna Pundit, Lisa Kouchakdjian, Jennifer Roberts, Marilyn Unger-Riepe, Andrew Bettinelli, Ann Barash, Eva Fridman, Nathanie Fridman, Jeanne Maloney, Henry Noer, Hank Sorrett, and Carl Offner. Sue Rushfirth, Treasurer, was unable to attend but sent in financial information. Len Simon attended as a guest participant.

The minutes of the September 9 meeting were approved.

**Treasurer's report: We have \$1656.26 in our account. There are no bills outstanding.**

**Correspondence:** Tania received an invitation from the Town Clerk, Beth Klein, to be present on October 15 at "ballot testing," in which sample ballots are run through the counting machines to be sure they are in working order, prior to the opening of early voting on October 17. A representative from the Republican Town Committee was also invited.

**The Campaign to Re-Elect Carmine Gentile as State Representative:** Visibility standouts have begun in the Town Center for the past two Wednesdays at 4:30 pm. Both so far have been well attended. They will continue until the week before the election on November 3. Linda Hench-Gentile reported that 2,000 postcards have been sent through Carmine's district, including 1,500 by members of Acton Indivisible. Three mailings have gone out to all households in the district including one from the MA Teachers' Association. A fourth will be sent out closer to Election Day. The letter-writing campaigns involving the Wayland and Sudbury Town Criers have been very successful, with as many as three favorable letters appearing in some weeks. Linda stated that "word of mouth" campaigning and posting on social media should be the focus of our efforts in the remaining weeks, along with the standouts. The Marlborough Chamber of Commerce is seeking to set up another debate between Carmine and his opponent.

**Legislative report from Carmine:** Along with some of his colleagues, Carmine recently met with the chair of the House Ways and Means Committee to discuss their priorities. A major issue has been what to do about the pandemic-related crisis among renters and landlords once the eviction moratorium expires on October 17. Governor Baker is finally making available \$171 million in aid which the House and Senate appropriated months ago, but this leaves a major gap, considering that renters owe a total of \$500 million, or an average of \$5000 each. Baker and the Legislature are moving to close some of the gap. Carmine explained that a tax on offshore corporate earnings [global intangible low-taxed income (GILTI)], which are taxed by many states but not MA, could provide part of the solution. There is agreement that the Educational Opportunity Act, which seeks to equalize the quality of education offered to rich and poor and urban and rural districts, as well as to English and non-English-speaking students and students with and without disabilities, must not be impacted by this issue. Carmine added that the Student Opportunity Act, passed last year, was the first major overhaul of the 1993 state education funding formula. He explained how this formula provides much more aid to those districts that need it, while wealthier communities like Sudbury will also receive modest increases as well.

**Election protection activities:** Three of our members will be involved in voter protection activities related to the election. Tania is planning to work outside polling locations in Massachusetts on Election Day, answering general questions. Ann Barysh and her husband have signed up for training and plan to work in New Hampshire all day on the 3rd. Hank Sorrett is working with several groups of lawyers striving to protect the vote and ensure a fair election,

**Allocation of funds to various campaigns:** After an exhaustive discussion, Carmine Gentile's motion (with two amendments) to give these amounts to the following campaigns was passed unanimously.

- \$400 to the Biden campaign
- \$200 to Gary Peters in Michigan
- \$200 to Sarah Gideon in Maine
- \$200 to Amy McGrath in Kentucky
- \$200 to Jaime Harrison in South Carolina
- \$200 to Mark Kelly in Arizona
- \$200 to Jon Ossoff in Georgia.

The total of these contributions is \$1600, which will leave us with \$56.26 in our account.

**Action taken to express support for Article #3 on the November ballot, purchase of the Sudbury section of the CSX rail corridor:** Guest speaker Len Simon laid out the argument for the acquisition by the Town of this mile-long piece of

land, which could link the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail to a similar trail in Framingham one day, and give us greater access to conservation land we already own. The Committee voted unanimously to support this article. Len asked if we might we take a lawn sign supporting the article, write a letter to the Crier, and and/or post our positive opinions on social media.

**Action taken to express support for Article #4 on the November ballot, funding of the Fairbank Community**

**Center project:** Peg reported on her conversation with Jeff Levine, chair of the Council on Aging, who had various "asks" of the Committee regarding this article: participation in standouts at the Town Center on days when we are not already standing out for Biden or Gentile (Monday Tuesday and Thursday); handing out flyers at Haskell Field on the weekends; and holding signs during child pickup times at the middle and elementary schools. Peg will send the link to sign up for these tasks to the membership after the meeting as well as share Jeff's phone number, as he requested. ([fairbankballot@gmail.com](mailto:fairbankballot@gmail.com)) We will also invite Jeff to provide a sign for our standout on Rte. 20 on Saturday the 18th (see below).

We agreed to have a **special visibility event** incorporating our support for the Biden-Harris ticket, Black Lives Matter, early voting, the Gentile and Markey campaigns, the CSX corridor purchase, the Fairbank Community Center and America itself, as represented by American flags. **This will take place weather permitting on Rte. 20 at the junction with Union Avenue, between 11 and 12 on Saturday, October 17th.** We will invite the members of the Friday Protest Group to join us and will include several of the banners and signs from that protest.

**Statement in support of the goals of Black Lives Matter:** We discussed the most recent draft of the Black Lives Matter statement which Nuha and Sue Rushfirth have been working on, with input from Carmine, Tom Hollocher and Peg. There is general agreement on, and praise for, the progress that has been made in creating a document that reflects our views, along with suggestions for changes, some of them relatively minor. Carl proposed a statement that would include our belief that police officers should be able to be sued in civil court. After a vigorous discussion, Carmen moved that we support the gist of the document as is, for now. The motion was seconded by Carl and passed by all with one abstention.

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, November 18 at 7.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Peg Espinola, Secretary