

## Minutes of the September 9, 2020 Meeting of the Sudbury Democratic Town Committee

The September 9, 2020 meeting of the Sudbury Democratic Town Committee was called to order by Tania Vitvitsky, Chair, at 7 pm, on Zoom. **Attending** were Gary Bean, Peg Espinola, Carmine Gentile, Linda Hench-Gentile, Andrew Bettinelli, Carl Offner, Lisa Kouchadkjian, Hank Sorrett, Jeanne Malone, Mike Ferrari, Henry Noer, Eva Fridman, Barbara Ryan, Jen Roberts, and Sue Rushfirth.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting:** Henry Noer offered a correction to the minutes of the August meeting which was accepted. The minutes as amended were then accepted. The minutes now read, "Henry Noer pointed out that we may not always agree about the content of the website, *and averred that statements posted to the website should be voted on by the Committee.*" [phrase in italics was added at this meeting]

**Treasurer's Report:** There is \$2,036.21 in our account. There has been no activity in the previous month. Sue Rushfirth filed a report with the Office of Campaign and Political Finance on August 24.

**Legislature:** Carmine Gentile reported that the five House bills that are in conference committees with Senate legislators--police reform, the transportation bond bill, economic and housing Development, climate change legislation and healthcare--have not yet been reported out. The Progressive Caucus met recently. The budgeting process continues.

**Carmine Gentile Re-election Campaign:** Carmine described **his campaign kickoff event**--over Zoom--which was very well attended by many local politicians from towns in his district. The campaign is in good shape, with many people volunteering to write **letters to the Town Crier** on Carmine's behalf, and others calling in to take **lawn signs**. **Digital ads** on Facebook will start very soon. **Postcards** have been ordered, to be distributed to people who will send them to friends toward the end of September. Linda will reach out to us later this month around the postcard campaign. Also, there will be the opportunity to join Linda and Carmine on standouts as we approach the election.

Tania suggested that the Committee make a **donation to the campaign**. The eventual figure that the Committee agreed upon (unanimously) was \$500.

Several people agreed to send **questions to the League of Women Voters** to be put to both candidates at their virtual League of Women Voters Candidates Forum being recorded on September 26th. The Forum will be available on demand on local cable channels. [Tania, Peg, Henry, Mike]

**Upcoming Town Meeting (September 12) and Warrant Articles:** We agreed that we were in favor of the following articles: (1) Acquisition of the CSX corridor by the town; (2) going forward with plans for the new Fairbank Community Center; (3) changes to the Zoning Bylaws which would encourage the building of more affordable housing, especially non-age-restricted units appropriate for families; (5) expediting the completion of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Barbara Ryan will be writing to the Crier in support of the Community Center as well as handing out leaflets at TM.

We agreed (after a discussion initiated by Hank Sorrett) that we do not support an article that would fund surveillance cameras inside our schools. Hank has written a letter to the Crier on the subject.

Tania reported that there is a **vacancy on the Sudbury Housing Authority** for someone who is knowledgeable regarding housing, such as architects or members of the building trades. She is now on the Sudbury Housing Authority board.

Gary Bean initiated a discussion of **concerns about the upcoming election**, especially the timetable for getting ballots to those who wish to vote by mail. He pointed out that a lot of tasks, such as labeling of envelopes, could be done beforehand by volunteers. Carmine reported that he has spoken to the town clerk about the possibility of training national guard members to help out--but the clerk would have to reach out for this assistance. Sue Rushfirth, who worked at the polls on Primary Day, described a chaotic scene, with new workers doing jobs for which they had not

been trained. Hank suggested asking the League of Women Voters to weigh in. Hank said he would send a note to Quinton Palfrey who is engaged with the problem, and Jennifer Roberts (who is on the Select Board) also said she would be happy to start looking into it. Jen suggested we make direct outreach to the Select Board. Sue will write something both to the Town Clerk and to the Select Board. Gary Bean offered to help.

We discussed alternatives to voting by mail, such as voting in person as early as possible. People need to be informed that they may do this even if they previously requested a VBM or absentee ballot.

**Discussion of the statement in support of the goals of Black Lives Matter:** Nuha, Sue, Carmine and Gary have been working on draft #4 of the statement, with additional input from Carl, Tom Hollocher and Peg. The final draft will be circulated via email. It was established that we can vote on it by email as well, as long as we make it public, to expedite getting it up on the website. This led to a discussion of the issue of qualified immunity and why it is probably not going to be in the final bill coming out of the conference committee. Carl pointed out that our statement shouldn't be limited to what is in the House police reform bill, which is not as strong as the Senate bill.

**Other:** **Tania** updated us on what her national Ukrainian American group is doing on behalf of the Biden campaign. **Peg** updated us on the weekly phone- and text-banking activities of the Metrowest for Biden campaign, in which several committee members are participating; and **Hank** described his involvement in preparations to litigate election results in swing states if need be. **Carl** brought greetings from former member Maxine Yarbrough who has moved away.

The **Website** is up but needs John Riordan's help to link it to our Facebook page. Tania is the editor but cannot make substantive changes. Lisa asked that we post photos, etc. from the Friday Protest Group to the page. (This is already being done.)

We chose dates for our next meetings: Wednesday October 14 at 7 pm, and Wednesday November 18 at 7 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Peg Espinola, Secretary