**The Lakewood Democratic Club**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting held February 23, 2023
Lakewood Women’s Pavilion & Online space at zoom.us**

**CALL TO ORDER**: The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm by President Erik Meinhart. Officers present were First Vice-President Maureen Dostal, Second Vice-President Jeff Pigott, Treasurer Catie McMahon and Secretary Nicole Parke. The President chaired the meeting. The Secretary took notes.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Club said the Pledge of Allegiance together.

**APPROVAL of the MINUTES**: The body approved the minutes from the January 26, 2022 meeting. Charlie moves. Jason Shachner seconds.

**HOUSEKEEPING:** We have a packed house.

We are trying to move away from Zoom but Congresswoman Brown is joining us from Zoom right now.

The club will be socializing at Sauced after the meeting.

**CLUB BUSINESS:** Jeff will be holding up signs signaling how much time speakers have, since we have packed agenda tonight.

**RECOGNITION OF NOTABLES -** Lakewood School Board Member Mike Callahan, Lakewood Lakewood City Councilperson Jason Shachner, CCDP City Leader Karolyn Isenhart, Judge Ashley Kilbane, Lakewood City Councilperson Cindy Marx, Lakewood City Councilperson Tristan Rader, Congresswoman Shontel Brown, County Councilman Dale Miller, Lakewood City Councilperson Sarah Kepple

Candidates Molly Murphy, Ray Tarasuck, Carl Mazzone, Jennifer McTernan.

**CANDIDATES: For first hello, say a few words, up to 3 minutes.**

John Spellacy - thank you for opportunity to introduce myself. Grew up in Rocky River. have lived in South Euclid & Westlake. wife of 30 years. practicing law for 27 years. had great opportunities to fight for fairness & justice, personal injury cases, civil cases. argued in 8th District Court of Appeals, Ohio Supreme Court, U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals. Hope to earn your trust & support. Trust that I will fight for fairness & justice.

Fallon Radigan - Cuyahoga County prosecutor, but lawyer first. In charge of Ohio Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. help most vulnerable people in our community. protect children that don’t know how to protect themselves. taught as children that dangers are outside. now, the dangers are on our cell phones. have to educate children & adults how to keep ourselves safe. this is the best I’ve felt about my job. get to help the community. lawyer for 13 years. grew up in North Ridgeville, lived in Lakewood for ten years in law school etc. went to Magnificat. grew up in blue collar family, dad was truck driver & mom was teacher. hard work pays off. hoping to run for Common Pleas Court in 2024.

Fallon Kilbane McNally - began professional career as Registered Nurse. grew up in Rocky River, went to Georgetown for nursing school, worked way through law school as a nurse at Cleveland Clinic. still pick up shifts there. got to know patient at Clinic who was victim of domestic violence, had brain injury and suffered seizures from husband. realized i wanted to become a trial attorney. worked for Judge Brian Corrigan . Most challenging & rewarding cases are domestic violence.

Diane Russell - considering running in 2024 for Common Pleas Court of Cuyahoga County. Judge Mike O’Malley’s righthand woman. started in child support. worked way up to First Assistant. involved in every part of the office. pride myself on being fair. previously was criminal chief for 5 years. met with defense attorneys, trying to find fair resolution. looking at not just crime, but also person. would like to bring to bench. grew up in Lee-Harvard neighborhood of Cleveland, went to college & fell in love, got married, dropped out of college & had kids. Went to law school with 3 kids! Live in University Heights now. Love living here, love what i do. love the law! this is the next logical step for me. hope to get to know all of you.

Joy Kennedy - Magistrate in Cleveland Municipal Court. been here just a few years. hear criminal & civil cases. listen to both sides & have to make decision. prior to becoming Magistrate, was social worker. trained in conflict resolution. worked with families & children for over 20 years. as lawyer, was with Cuyahoga County Public Defenders’ office. handled all kinds of cases. enjoy what i do, but the county bench will have at least 6 open seats. we need diversity. What we bring to the bench. most judges come from the prosecutor’s office. I will be coming with social worker background, & with public defender background. Lucky to have Judge Jennifer O’Donnell on bench now!

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:**

Marissa Clark - been involved in politics for a long time, working with One Fair Wage. Working to increase minimum wage to match baseline cost of living.

Ahmie Young - here with son William Young. Live up the street from Malley’s. William is first to earn college degree before graduating high school. from Cleveland State! completely paid for by Ohio program. 15-year-old brother has Associate’s in Accounting. Next son is in 7th grade, taking classes at Tri-C. Creating nonprofit to make this possible for more families.

**PROGRAM:**

**Congresswoman Shontel Brown**

117th Congress delivered! Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill - replacing roads, lead pipes, broadband internet access. Making internet accessible & affordable.

Medicare - capped insulin costs at $35/month. Inflation Reduction Act. Made biggest investment in nation’s history to address climate crisis.

not just for today, but for the future

Cap prescription drug costs at $2,000/year for seniors

President Biden vowed not to touch Social Security or Medicare

Postal Reform Act major postal office reform. Heard about delays of mail in Lakewood.

Major legislation for veterans - extended benefits for veterans who have been experiencing devastating effects of toxic waste, like Agent Orange. They should be able to enjoy fundamental rights that we enjoy.

CHIPS & Science Act - infusion of resources make Intel $100 billion project. Intel committed to investing in Tri-C & CSU.

Made nationally recognized monument in Bedford.

Exciting to watch Speaker’s vote at beginning of year. Republicans do not have an agenda. What in the world are they doing? Margins are still as slim as they were when we had majority. Can count on me to continue spirit of bipartisanship.

Reappointed to agriculture, & oversight. Working on bill that will address nutrition & food insecurity in 11th congressional district.

Ranking member on general farming & commodities subcommittee. will be leading charge to help farmers across Ohio. will also be addressing equity issues in farmers getting fair share of credit.

Oversight committee - where all the crazies are! everyone except Matt Gaetz. I need help!

Also on Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party, focused on improving our competitiveness across the globe. Promoting manufacturing & labor. addressing cybersecurity as well. no legislative authority but will be making suggestions.

118th congress will be Congress of implementation, implementing what we did in 117th!

Q: (Erik) What does Black History Month mean to you?

A: Honored to follow in footsteps of my predecessors Louis Stokes, Stephanie Tubbs-Jones, & Secretary Marcia Fudge. Proudly & humbly recognize this is a legacy seat. My peers are trying to erase history. American history is black history, & black history is American history. Some history is ugly, but it is what makes us who we are today. Someone once said, if you don’t know your history, you’re bound to repeat it. Need allies to help us remind everyone of this, and help us grow. Now I’m fired up!

Hope to see you in St. Patty’s Day parade!

**Troy Greenfield:**

You all did an amazing job turning out folks to sign the petition for Protect Choice Ohio. We have over 7,000 signatures turned in to Sate of Ohio for Phase 1. All because of volunteers in this room! did all of this 48 hours. Can you imagine what we’ll do in 3 months when we get to Phase 2? Excited to find out if Ohio Attorney General accepted or rejected our pledge language.

**Patricia Welborn, Founder of Lakewood Black Caucus:**

Good evening! Very happy to be here. In May 2021, sitting in conference room at Westerly apartments with a friend Iman who was property manager at time. He is black. Concerned that black residents who had complaints were not heard by Administration. Black residents treated differently than white residents. Procedure is that you hand in an incident report. As time went by, black residents stopped turning in incident reports because there was no response. Market increase in depression. Healthy Lakewood Foundation had community assessment, came to me and asked if we could gather some black residents to find out our concerns & health problems. Number one issue was depression. Feel unheard & invisible. Pushback from white residents there. Westerly is complex for people 62 years & older. Some pushback is just plain crabbiness! But there was threatening behavior too. Saying we shouldn’t be worried about notes under our door, death threats. We are grassroots organization dedicated to health & wellbeing for black residents. There is a thing called racial battle fatigue. Medically proven that black people suffer higher degree of heart problems, diabetes, weight problems, depression, because of racial problems. We have two main goals, not just working with black residents but white people too, throughout Lakewood. Holding classes. Open to anyone. First was in November. Talk about history of black people in United States. Racism & apartheid is not going away. Watched videos on Youtube. Will be doing class again in March. Purpose of classes is that people need education. Not going to get black history classes for free anywhere. Vital that everyone attend. Classes held on Sunday. We would have no civil rights movement if not for sacrifice of black people. 1 hour per Sunday , four sundays per month, mark your calendars now. As we continue with this, it will change how you do your job. Need you to be an accomplice in changing America. Lakewood is United States. We have queen, Meghan, roundtable (councilpeople), 58,000 residents. We have the same problems here that the rest of the country does. If we can’t solve them here. As the micro, so the macro. Had Black History Month black health forum. We have events open to everyone. Entertainment & education. Also on Anti-Racism Task Force, appointed by Mayor, as is Melanie Swyatt (treasurer of Lakewood Black Caucus).

Q: (Maureen) Can you tell us more about the classes?

A: Classes held at Lakewood Presbyterian Church, fiscal sponsors of Lakewood Black Caucus. Allowing us to use rooms in church to hold events. March class going to focus more on housing discrimination & history of conditions for Black Americans. Homes are money. In 1950s, federal government tore down black homes to build highways. Lack of home ownership prohibited further opportunities. Will also talk about Civil War & Reconstruction, our great opportunity to fix things. 13-year period where things were looking up. this history was not forgotten, it was hidden. Will give everyone opportunity to talk, and ask questions.

Q: (Erik) You’ve talked about trauma that black people experience. How do you cope with that, and what gave you the strength to become activist?

A: Mother was activist. You get a lot of strength from being the first or the only. You can go forward and figure out method of dealing with bias, or you can stay where you are. Grew up watching my mom help people. She was kindergarten teacher. Would come home in winter sometimes without her boots. Put them on 4-year-old who had to walk home in Cleveland snow. Through my mother’s actions, she showed me how to be. You can tell your children everyone is equal, but they are smart and will notice the discrepancies around you. It’s not what you say, it’s what you do. She showed me what my responsibility was to the community.

Q: (Ahmie) What do you need from accomplices to accomplish goals?

A: You have to have education. In the class, I tell people, it’s possible to be two things at once. You can be the most wonderful, kind, generous person, and still have unconscious bias. You can still be insensitive and hurt people.

Q: (Dale) What do you think can be done about efforts to get rid of Affirmative Action, erase black history, etc.?

A: Something I admire about Republicans, they are out here to push their agenda no matter what, by all means necessary. They have fire & belief that pushes them. We have to have the same attitude. They believe so strongly. Know someone here in Lakewood who started group for Conservative Christians. Keith Davey. 100 people showed up to the first meeting! They found time. Why? they are passionate, whether they are right or wrong. We’ve gotten into habit of being too nice. How’s that working? We need to be a force. We cannot be passive. Keith and I are friends. Have to have equal passion. in fight for our lives. fight for democracy. This is my passion. to raise people’s consciousness, and let go of their fear. People are quick to help with food drives, etc., but when it comes to race they back off. They don’t know what to do. I’ll tell you what to do. Geneticists say, we are 73rd cousins at max. We are family! Have to start treating each other as family. We all came from Africa! You moved away, it got colder, you got whiter. Curly hair is about protection near the equator. Your hair got straight bc you didn’t need that protection from the sun. We are 99.9% the same. When you feel that, you won’t ask what can i do? won’t create separation.

***Email Patricia:*** ***queenmistress@yahoo.com***

***​​***[***http://www.lakewoodpresbyterian.org/archives/event/adult-faith-formation-allies-for-justice-2?instance\_id=11449***](http://www.lakewoodpresbyterian.org/archives/event/adult-faith-formation-allies-for-justice-2?instance_id=11449)

**Kortney Mosley, President Young Black Democrats, & Brian Siggers, President Emeritus Young Black Democrats:**

Brian: Great to be in Lakewood. Always happy to be here. Phenomenal leadership team. What you do, we are trying to emulate in Young Black Dems. Want to be able to support you.

I first came back to Cleveland from college in 2016. first job as grassroots organizer with Hillary Clinton campaign. Trump won on my birthday! In organizing with Clinton campaign, told about Northeast Ohio Young Black Dems by friend Gabby Jackson who was also Lakewood Dem. I took torch from her and ran with it. Met with some members, Billy Sharp etc. Fell in love with mission. Became involved after brief political hiatus; Gabby got me involved and I became treasurer. Gabby said it would take all of us. A couple years later Gabby told me she was moving to Massachusetts and asked if I would become president. I initially said no, but gave it more thought and decided I would run for the seat. As soon as I became president, we went into pandemic. We’ve been learning on the fly, but proud of what we’re able to accomplish. Want to continue to work with the board and organization to strengthen partnerships in the region, such as Lakewood Dems. We have a lot of shared goals. Many hands make light work. Together we can flip Ohio blue again! Want to expand our advocacy for the BIPOC community, and make sure Democratic lawmakers are including us in their legislation and agenda. Want to register voters so that we have electorate more reflective of our communities. We have to increase turnout!!! Will take all of us. Let’s elect Democrats up and down the ticket in 2024!

Kortney Mosley: I have big shoes to fill. we have three principles - empowerment, recruitment, & mentoring. Mentoring: we have a lot of members who seek political aspiration so want to make sure we have the best candidates possible. Empowerment: starts with our community, Cuyahoga. Only we can accomplish big things in our community. Work to educate community on why we need to vote. I have legal background, wanted to be lawyer since I came out the womb. Did not appreciate intersection of law and politics. First election was 2008, where I had the opportunity to vote for President Obama. Politics is more than presidential. Need to work with our community to make sure people see importance of non-presidential elections. Local impact & kitchen table issues.

Q: (William) A lot of talk about how our votes don’t count. Hear from my friends and peers that they don’t plan to vote. Don’t feel like it matters. I was taught to always vote but there’s feeling of helplessness. How can we combat this?

A: Kortney - Voter apathy is worse than people who vote against the good of the group. Important to reinforce and educate people on why their vote counts. Presidential elections are what get people out. We neglect these local races where vote counts more. Need to bridge the gap and show people how local elections will affect your concerns.

Brian - dealing with a lot of voter apathy. How do we show people that it does matter? Need to promote voter education. People complain about potholes in their streets, and they want to blame their councilperson. People don’t always know what their voting for and how it affects them day-to-day. People complain “you only come around when you want our vote.” Need to keep consistent presence in community. Show them deliverables, what they got from their vote! Return on investment.

Q: (Ahmie) - your vote doesn’t matter in the big ones. I am Sociologist. It’s trickle, look at what happens locally. Issues people aren’t paying attention to. A household can make the difference. teaching young people they have that power.

A: Brian - need to make sure we’re addressing the issues that individuals care about. Need our accomplices!

Q: (Catie) What changes would make people have more access to the ballot, and feel more informed about what they’re voting on? What can we do better to combat that?

A: Kortney - need to start earlier. weeks before voter registration deadline. People don’t realize they’ve been purged.

Q: (Sarah) Do you have specific plans? Deep canvassing in off years or other specific asks for us?

A: Brian - still developing campaign plan for 2023. Need to show up and canvass every year, including local election years.

[www.neoybd.org](http://www.neoybd.org) will always have most current information & we have email newsletter.

Q: (?) I am Member of League of Women Voters & Democrat. Want to join club here but my passion is voter registration. Just retired a year ago. I go to ? every two weeks to register voters. There were 32,000 new voters in Cuyahoga County this last election, but in black communities they didn’t vote. Need advocate & spokesperson. I’ll help any way I can, but we gotta act. Want to survey these people on why they didn’t vote.

A: Kortney - Ithink you bring up a really good point. We need to work together! We are part of statewide group.

**REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

President: Erik - upcoming events. New Cuyahoga Dems Senior Caucus, ages 55 and up. First meeting March 3rd at County Party headquarters. March 4th Ohio Dems having campaign management training. Also International Women’s March March 8th at Cleveland City Hall. Board has been meeting, have yet to finalize budget but nearing that. Planning out year, updates to come. Reminder to renew your membership! Make sure you sign in at this meeting so you get credit for attending this meeting!

First Vice President: Maureen - thanks to our speakers tonight! March we will focus on women. Will have Judge Tess Neff, Maggie Niedzwiecki school superintendent, Troy Greenfield (Westside field organizer for Protect Choice Ohio), Zoe Toscos (new president of Cuyahoga County Young Dems). In April we will focus on environmental issues.

Political Activism: Protect Choice Ohio ballot language being reviewed. Go to protectchoiceohio.com to sign up for newsletter. Gerrymandering: in January, former Chief Justice of Ohio Supreme Court, Maureen O’Connor, who is “decent” Republican, is heading up effort to get redistricting on ballot again. This initiative would put independent commission in charge. Voter ID law, follow voteriders.org & sign up as volunteer. Not active in Ohio yet b/c playing out in courts.

Cindy Strebig - Brian said tonight, you have to stay in contact with people. have to develop relationship with your neighbors. I sent out postcard to my precinct introducing myself, with contact info, & “see you at Roosevelt!” (voting location). Also, i took Patricia’s class last November! This is a thousand-dollar class!

Book Club: Carol - Tuesday March 21st at 7pm at Bottlehouse. Finishing “And There Was Light”. Chose documentary “All That Breathes” on Hulu. up for Oscar. Conservation efforts in India. Trying to save bird.

Second Vice President: Jeff - we met with Trellis rooftop bar at Studio West 117 for plans for the Summer Supper Thursday August 10th. In May, doing social event instead of traditional meeting.

Treasurer: No update

Secretary: No update

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

County Council: (Dale Miller) - Lakewood has received 3 arbor grants from Cuyahoga County, including recycling center, animal shelter, and stormwater management project. Also bringing circulator bus back to Lakewood, and capital repairs at Beck Center. Working on countywide “pay to stay” legislation in cuyahoga county. Ohio is one of least tenant-friendly states in the country. Also working on wage theft legislation. The county would not do business with companies that cheat their employees out of wages. Say Yes to Cleveland - national model for education, Cleveland one of 5 participants. helping children break cycle of poverty. Expected to receive $3 million in federal 4E reimbursements, but received very little. created funding gap, county willing to help, but the other organizations should pitch in.

City Council: (Sarah Kepple) - Lakewood City Council application on website for arbor funding. $200,000 for each councilperson to allocate. $505,000 working as a group to allocate. March 6th will be beginning the conversations, in the public, at public meeting. Stole Dale’s form.

Lakewood School Board: (Mike Callahan) - Community Health Needs standing committee, product of health needs assessment with Healthy Lakewood Foundation, will have Mark Walter & Lisa Bruening. Hired new football coach, Michael Polevacik, who will teach at Lakewood High School. Collaborated to create more equitable scheduling in elementary schools. Superintendent joining us here next month! In time on the board, being involved in her hiring was so rewarding and awesome.

ODP/CCDP: (Karolyn Isenhart) - emphasize importance of Seniors Caucus! also have Veterans Caucus getting off the ground! Come to March 4th training! Wanted to recognize Kortney as co-counsel and co-parliamentarian of CCDP.

**GENERAL UPDATES:** N/a

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING** - March 30, 2023.

**ADJOURNMENT** - The meeting was adjourned. Motion by ? So moved.

Event notes prepared by Nicole Parke on February 23, 2023.

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Secretary Approval: sign date

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President Approval: sign date

Member & Volunteer Dave Nader shared information on the County’s Solar Co-Op Program.

