**The Lakewood Democratic Club**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting held** **August 26, 2021  
Online space at zoom.us**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by President Erik Meinhardt.

Officers present were President Erik Meinhardt, First Vice-President Maureen Dostal, Treasurer Catie McMahon, Secretary Nicole Parke. The President chaired the meeting. The Secretary took notes.

APPROVAL of the MINUTES - The body approved the meeting minutes from June 24, 2021.

HOUSEKEEPING - Minutes are always on website. Also, members are gathering after the meeting tonight at Sauced in Lakewood! BE SURE TO VOTE IN PRIMARY SEPTEMBER 14TH.

RECOGNITION OF NOTABLES (many gave a quick intro/update, in parentheses) – Judge Kathleen Keough, County Councilperson Dale Miller ([update is at end of minutes]), Judge Maureen Clancy (court is getting back to jury trials), Judge William Vodrey (come down to justice center sometime!), School Board Member Betsy Shaugnessy (school started, in person full time, all staff and students wearing masks), School Board Member Ed Favre (very glad we have new buildings with full air-conditioning), Lakewood City Councilperson Jason Shachner (introducing baby daughter Olivia!), Cuyahoga County Democratic Party City Leader Karolyn Isenhart, Lakewood City Council candidate Kyle Baker (coming from soccer at Lakewood Park), Magistrate Kira Krivosh (son started first grade, looking forward to Summer Supper), Judge Mary Eileen Kilbane (in Denver for wedding!), Lakewood City Council candidate Mark Schneider, Lakewood City Councilperson and candidate Sarah Kepple, Lakewood Municipal Clurt Judge candidate Sara Fagnilli (Saturday morning meet and greet for all candidates <https://www.facebook.com/events/4285850714783282/?ref=newsfeed>), Lakewood City Councilperson and candidate Tristan Rader, Lakewood City Councilperson and Lakewood Municipal Court Judge candidate Tess Neff (excited to return to the court where I worked for 10 years, earned reputation of trust honesty and integrity), Judge Rick Bell (at judicial conference next week so can’t make it to Summer Supper), Lakewood City Council candidate Susannah Selnick (happy 19 days until primary and women’s equality day and dog day), Lakewood City Councilperson and candidate Tom Bullock (update about city budget, hope earned support after many years, always willing to listen), Judge Sherrie Midday, Judge Gayle Williams-Byers

**PROGRAM:** We are so excited to welcome Judge Sherrie Miday (Cuyahoga Court of Common Pleas) and Judge Gayle Williams-Byers (South Euclid Municipal Court). They will be discussing our topic of "Innovations in the Judiciary" - Miday specifically about her High-Risk Domestic Violence court docket for offenders most at-risk of murdering their intimate partners and Williams-Byers specifically about her night court, specialized mental health docket, and livestreaming court proceedings. There will be time for Q&A, so feel free unmute to participate or post your questions/comments in chat.

**Judge Sherrie Midday**

* Elected in 2016, started term on Court of Common Pleas - General Division, up for reelection in 2022, thanks for getting me elected and helping us do the good work
* experience as domestic violence prosecutor, passion for domestic violence survivors, worked in courtroom of Judge Ronald Adrian (national speaker and influencer on intimate partner violence), appointed by Judge Russo to sit on county task force and got high-risk domestic violence docket underway
* in courts around country, started specialized domestic violence dockets. talked about it for many decades. sometimes criticism of specialized dockets. but provide wrap-around services for people they serve, provide better outcomes for victims. the offense of intimate partner violence has many nuances, unlike other crimes. when cases reach felony level, lots of consistencies. docket has been in existence and successful for the last year. dedicating time and resources to an ongoing problem. typically male offenders - couldn’t we just ship to prison? looking for appropriate response. not a treatment court or treatment docket. what are we accomplishing by locking up an offender with no intervention, treatment, etc? often dealing with addiction (alcohol), unaddressed trauma, PTSD. if go to prison and are released, try to put resources into preventing recidivsm. intimate partner homicides average 16 a year in cuyahoga county.
* if behavior unaddressed, violence will escalate. years of research and specialized approaches have taught us that risk of future violence can be predicted and there are ways to reduce that risk. 30% of offenders have priors. 25% of homicides involve children at the scene.
* spousal homicide is singlemost predictable serious crime in america. when we can predict we can reduce the risk. other jurisdictions have been successful, working with mentor courts in san francisco and minnesota.
* docket established to reduce risk of violence or homicide. must be intimate partner violence, include allegation of strangulation or use of firearm. these have highest risk of homicide. use collaborative approach - work as team of highly trained professionals. get together every week to discuss and staff cases, monitor risk, address noncompliance. meet with participants weekly. offender is more in compliance when they interact with judge on regular basis.
* courts around country and in ohio have specialised dockets post-sentencing (of probation). in doing research, relationships are most volatile/victims at highest risk of homicide when break in relationship. inherit cases right after they’re arraigned, defendant must agree to be on docket, judge assigned must agree to transfer the case to the docket. received 1 million dollar grant from DOJ. dedicated prosecutor, public defender, victim advocate, social worker. work closely with cleveland municipal court and sherriffs department (GPS unit). in first 7 months, reached goal of 50 cases per year. most defendants are in compliance, getting sober, not violating no-contact orders, have housing, gainfully employed, relationships with children, addressing their trauma. and victims feel safer! havent had homicide on docket yet.
* 400 cases in 2019 met criteria for docket; hoping to expand beyond 50 cases. there is a need and there is results. Ohio Supreme Court hoping to replicate throughout the state.

**Judge Gayle Williams-Byers, South Euclid Municipal Court**

* “second home of lakewood”
* apologize for delayed appearance
* had night court docket tonight, completed just before meeting.
* Judge Midday shows so much passion!
* the way that we’ve approached justice in the past is not the formula moving forward
* felony system often sees litigants who struggle with mental illness, addiction, drug abuse, childhood trauma, and response has traditionally been incarceration only
* previously used incarceration as only solution without doing deep dive into root cause issues
* focus on, how did litigants get here?
* judges deliver better justice when consider all factors
* usually “fine and cost” our way out of problems, whether or not it was productive for defendants
* wait for them to reoffend! response always the same. not truly trying to solve problems
* took bench in 2012. approached justice in innovative way. started the only night court in cuyahoga county
* received call from colleague - why are you doing this? why would you accommodate defendants?
* for years, we’ve blown the opportunity to help defendants. wanted to help people be responsible, make justice work! before they become reoffenders
* wasn’t immediately well received in community. took awhile to get justice system partners on board.
* people want to be legally and financially responsible.
* but not just enough to have night court. must be fearless and creative in sentencing. judges should be interested in finding best solutions for individuals in front of them
* some cases require prison, but most involve re-tooling or redirecting. how to engage in parenting? in significant other? how to respond in times of crisis?
* some people, didn’t have money to feed children, reaction was to steal something. often trying to keep roof over their head, keep job, can’t pay parking tickets, etc.
* often need to address mental health decline. address root causes. people dealing with so much.
* NEVER KNOWN ANYONE TO STOP DRINKING OR BEATING THEIR PARTNER BECAUSE OF A FINE.
* need judges who are committed and passionate to help deal with WHY OFFENDER IS THERE and help ensure behavior is not repeated.
* only specialized mental health docket among all suburbs in cuyahoga county. “suburban drug court” program. no services available for someone who is struggling. approached cleveland municipal court - got $1 million grant to refer individuals to treatment
* past 9 years, that grant has been renewed to now extend to every suburban community in cuyahoga county
* behavior is happening everywhere - need this approach everywhere. “can’t pretend it away”
* cap of 35 litigants on mental health docket. 7 graduating classes now!
* once defendant moves to specialized docket, they become a client. after every phase, celebrate. light at the end of the tunnel!
* some say “ this is the first time i’ve graduated from anything” !
* still have clients to keep in touch and continue sobriety
* pandemic has caused struggle for many individuals
* highlights of career - see individuals progress
* specialized mental health docket requires certification from Ohio Supreme Court. must be recertified every 4 years
* has MBA and does all the grantwriting! provides clothing and housing to clients

**Q&A**

Erik: This is the first time in DECADES that Lakewood is seeing a change in Municipal Court Judge. Judge Carroll has been committed to bail reform, but this is opportunity to think about new reforms that could be put in place.

Tess: Is data collected on success rate of individuals under Judge Miday jurisdiction?

Judge Miday: Dr. Jeff Kretschmar at Case Western Reserve is doing evaluation of success of program, come to every meeting and hearings. had meeting today with advisory committee (all stakeholders); missing link right now is a test group to compare our outcomes to cases that meet criteria but haven’t gotten on the docket

Tess: Is docket certified under Ohio Supreme Court?

Judge Miday: We don’t have criteria of substance abuse and we are not treatment court, so can’t be certified right now. hope to petition Ohio Supreme Court to create new criteria. 90% of participants have alcohol addiction, but technically not treatment court

Nicole Parke: Judge Miday, have you been involved with the introduction and progress of Aisha’s law in the state legislature?

Judge Miday: I’ve been in contact with Rep Boyd, who wrote letter in support of implementation of our docket.

Maureen Dostal: Judge Williams-Byers, how many nights a week do you have night court? how did you combat resistance?

Judge Williams-Byers: for night court, husband only lets her have it a couple nights a week. found success doing it even just once a month - fourth thursday of the month - with exception of november and december b/c of holidays. to inform litigants, talk about it at arraignment. individuals call court when theyve been cited, mention right away. resistance was not from litigants; resistance was getting prosecutors at court. began scheduling cases and prosecutors just had to show up. prosecutors also realized it worked. police dept is also pleased with it because cases handled efficiently.

Tom Bullock: was juror for judge midday’s court! blended compassion with a just sentence. she has my support

Rob Mcrae: for judge williams-byers, how has live streaming been received?

judge w-b: lots of mystery around how a court operates. when digital doors open, makes a huge difference. not everyone desires to be live streamed, but believe the public needs it.

Cindy Strebig: what other innovations would you like to see?

Judge Miday: sentencing pilot with supreme court to reduce discrepancy in sentencing. working on bail reform. need to have discussions that include community partners. important that judges be involved in community. need to restore public’s faith in justice system. support candidates who want reform!

judge w-b: many innovations on horizon. would like to see investment of resources in education of judicial system. judges and lawyers speak different language. courtroom is intimidating. need to have more education and transparency of judicial system. whether youre in municipal court or common pleas court, address trauma that judges, lawyers and jurors experience. would like to see funding for counseling for jurors who participate in rape or murder trials like they have in washington.

Judge Miday: court of common pleas does provide counseling services for jurors. Judge Miday communicates this with jurors, who contact service provider and provider bills the court. Glad that judge would like to see that on municipal court.

Judge w-b: kudos to common pleas court for providing that service

erik: how do we convince the public to invest in these programs, and remove the need for both of you to write grants?

judge w-b: need education! stop seeing municipal court as a piggy bank. reframe it as a justice system.

judge midday: county court has resources to invest in community. Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O’Connor has encourage judges not to overfine defendants, especially when also incarcerating. we are stewards of county resources and taxpayer money.

Erik: thank you for coming and for being innovators in your world. you are frontline workers. thank you for your service

at summer supper, will have candidate for Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Jennifer Brunner. Current Chief Justice Maureen O’Connor is retiring.

**Brainstorm for candidate questionnaire, ahead of endorsement meeting next month:** Have a question you want candidates to answer on the Lakewood Dems questionnaire? We'll brainstorm ideas for questions to ask city council at-large, school board, and municipal court judge candidates ahead of our September 30 endorsement meeting. If you want something specific answered, this is your chance to share your ideas as these questionnaires will be publicly available before our endorsement meeting.

The club will be endorsing at our September meeting! we have funds to spend and create sample ballot to distribute. In the fall of 2020 we distribute 7,000 sample ballots through USPS and to doors. will do one mailing for the candidates we endorse. A candidate will need 60% of vote to get endorsement. What questions do you want asked of candidates for Council At-Large, School Board and Municipal Court Judge?

Cindy: ask judicial candidates what innovative ideas they have for lakewood court, ask council and school board their innovative ideas as well?

Nicole Parke: ask candidates top three concerns for community, and how they plan to address them

Chuck: if delta variant continues to rear ugly head, what would you anticipate doing to help our community overcome it?

Erik: how do we address affordable housing crisis? how do we prepare lakewood for climate change and how do we lead the county to be more sustainable?

Maureen: what have they done to get democrats elected up and down the ballot? why are you interested in public service, why this particular office?

Catie McMahon: What ideas do they have to address violent crime in Lakewood?

Karolyn: do you support women’s right to choose? what are you doing for sustainability and protecting recycling policy? For school board, what about policies that are affecting young girls and objectifying them/what they wear? How do we protect trans students?

Carol: How would the candidates support new business growth in Lakewood?

Erik: for school board and council candidates, should recreation dept not be under board of education? should it be under the city?

Grant: fyi I think it's an unfair question to consider rec under board or city. there are several issues that question neglects such as who pays for what. just for 1 example. just saying.

karolyn: how do we address traffic speeding?

andrew harant: For judges—what will they do to address and advocate for equity in cases and sentencing?

Cindy Strebig: since we make decisions based on revenue streams, what would candidates do with unlimited wallet?

Nicole parke: what made them choose to live in lakewood?

Jeanne Mackay: Council Candidates: Noise Nuisance, along the lines of Karolyn's question, has been increasing with all of the speeders, motorcycles, no muffler trucks and cars. Anything that can be done with ordinances?

**REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

President: Chuck and Emma will present on audit next month. Please come to Summer Supper next week! Shontel Brown will be joining us, and potentially Marcy Kaptur. Steph Howse, phil robinson and juanita brent will all be there. possibly monique smith. We are requiring proof of vaccination, or covid test within 48 hours of event. We are hoping to be outside, and offering tours of distillery! Andrew Harant: You can get free Covid test kit at most libraries.

First Vice President: thanks to speakers! if you have ideas for future programs please let me know. currently working on october. november we are expecting Nan Whaley!

Political Activism: Jay couldn’t join but Maureen shared that action item should be to call sherrod brown and tell him to pass for the people act and john lewis act.

Book Club: Carol - september 21st meeting at bottlehouse. One Summer by Bill Bryson. By the way, Andy Meyer emailed club; Harmony Hicks’ mom passed away. harmonyhicks@gmail.com. Her mom Amy passed in July.

Second Vice President: [Mark Schneider is on leave of absence].

Treasurer: $10,300 in bank account right now. Still getting submissions for member renewals - yay!

Secretary: in order to vote at endorsement meeting next month, must have paid dues, lakewood resident, registered democrat, have come to 3 meetings in the last 12 months.

UPDATES

State legislature - [no one present]. Redistricting town halls happening now - You can submit written comment to the redistricting commission here: <https://www.redistricting.ohio.gov/public-input>

County Council - Dale Miller: district not likely changing too much with redistricting, renewing lease with Cleveland Indians/Guardians, looking forward to Summer Supper

City Council - Tristan: comments about lakewood hospital site development; within next 30 days we will have new proposal. Claimed domain <http://lakewoodpit.com>. LOL.

Sarah Kepple: this Saturday last madison park block party, from 4 to 6 pm. <https://www.lakewoodoh.gov/city-of-lakewood-making-major-investments-at-madison-park/>

Taking applications for Anti-Racism Task Force - <https://www.lakewoodoh.gov/lakewood-city-council-seeks-new-members-for-anti-racism-task-force/?fbclid=IwAR0Zt84PYlONQ45afPH3sAje93wEbpjl-R60E_ASf0ZC8mScWMCIKPaKlac>

ADA Task Force  Reviewing proposals from consultants to help with Transition Plan -please contact Ohio Statehouse to support virtual public meetings HB 43. Difficult to have meetings in person due to lack of accessibility- good to do meetings remotely. HB43 would allow public meetings using modern technology. Let our reps know we support this bill.

Tom Bullock: budget priorities meeting and process starting; please reach out to councilperson about it. annually or every 5 years (?) try to come up with priorities. use your voice to give your input on the budget. about $20 million remains from covid funds, original $50 million used to improve infrastructure, prevent homelessness in lakewood, just now deciding what we could do with the rest of the funding

Tess: attended monday the planning commission ‘s meeting about resurfacing of hilliard road between warren and riverside! bike lanes being installed. new grates to prevent pulling of water. crosswalks will be redone with stamped brick. important that project get finished by end of next year, because reconstruction of Hilliard bridge begins in 2023. italian creations owner concerned about resurfacing, which will take parking away from their business. city engineer going to meet with them to try to come up with alternative.

Jason: next month going to propose accessory dwelling units to address affordable housing, also aging initiative ?

School Board - Ed: planning to keep kids in school as safely as possible.

County Party - Karolyn Isenhart: endorsement meeting for School Board in early september. women’s caucus - will be endorsing in cleveland mayoral race after the primary. for council, county party lakewood exec committee endorsed Sarah Kepple, Mark Schneider, Tom Bullock who all reached 60% threshold.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING - Thursday, September 3oth, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting was adjourned at 9:02pm.

Event notes prepared by Nicole Parke on August 26, 2021.

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Secretary Approval: sign date

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President Approval: sign date

Notes in Chat:

* kira krivosh: My CMBA Racial Equity and the Law group is doing a Hot Talk on September 2nd at noon on Race and Redistricting, <https://www.clemetrobar.org/?pg=events&evAction=showDetail&eid=109010>
* From Cynthia Strebig to Everyone: (8:59 PM)

 Add to you calendar: Lakewood Chamber of Commerce and League of Women Voters hosting Candidate Forum, Tuesday, September 28 7-9P. City Hall Auditorium