**The Lakewood Democratic Club**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting held on May 30, 2019**

**Woman’s Club Pavilion at Lakewood Park**

**Erik Meinhardt, President**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by President Erik Meinhardt. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Officers present were President Erik Meinhardt, First Vice-President Maureen Dostal, Second Vice-President Mark Schneider, Secretary, Matt Kuhns and Treasurer, Cindy Strebig. The President chaired the meeting. The Secretary took minutes.

APPROVAL of the previous MINUTES of the meeting held April 25, 2019. (Approved with one corrected typo.)

Housekeeping items noted by the president:

* Invitation to Sauced Taproom after the meeting
* Members are free to get up and e.g. get refreshments during the meeting
* Request to silence phones during the meeting

RECOGNITION OF NOTABLES (7:08) –

Officials and candidates for office were recognized. Current officials in attendance: Sean Gallagher, Dale Miller, Mike O’Malley, Betsy Shaughnessy, Meghan George, Tom O’Malley, Emma Petrie-Barcelona, Sam O’Leary, Dan O’Malley, Nickie Antonio

Candidates for 2019-20 in attendance: Sean Gallagher (Cuyahoga County Court of Appeals), Dale Miller (Cuyahoga County Council), Mike O’Malley (Cuyahoga County prosecutor), Betsy Shaughnessy (Lakewood board of education), Meghan George (Lakewood Mayor), Tom O’Malley (juvenile court), Emma Petrie-Barcelona (Lakewood board of education), Rob McRae (Rocky River City Council Ward 3), Jennifer O’Donnell (Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas), Dan O’Malley (Lakewood City Council Ward 4), Lisa Forbes (Cuyahoga County Court of Appeals), Jason Shachner (Lakewood City Council Ward 2), Sam O’Leary (Lakewood Mayor), Brad Presutto (candidate for Lakewood City Council Ward 2), Lindsey Grdina (Lakewood City Council Ward 1), Tess Neff (Lakewood City Council Ward 1), Emmanuela Grolz(?) (Cuyahoga County Court of Appeals)

The president recognized, as groups, members of the county party central and executive committees, and new club members.

Introduction of evening’s program: The first vice president introduced Lynn Tramonte, founder and director of Ohio Immigrant Alliance; and Bella Sin, activist, historian, actress, instructor and philanthropist. (7:12 p.m.)

**GUEST SPEAKER 1 – Lynn Tramonte**

Ohio is the worst state in which to be undocumented

* Deportation effort based out of a Detroit office that is aggressive, and careless with the law; Ohio’s civil rights defense infrastructure is thin
* Ohio highway patrol actively works with CBP

There is no “do it the right way” for would-be immigrants from Central America; it is nearly impossible for them to obtain formal immigration documents

Trump administration deports people who had work permits and report in to authorities

* Previous administration used discretionary power, here, to respect them
* Now these people report in as they have been doing, but on go handcuffs

People like Bella make Ohio “not completely irredeemable, but we need more help

Volunteers, at-home volunteers, financial help to pay lawyers, all needed

**GUEST SPEAKER 2 – Bella Sin**

Acknowledgement of indigenous land upon which we meet

After immigrating, in Denver started volunteering for rapid-response help

Why we flee Mexico: gun crime, drug violence, serial murder

The 1930s saw mass deportation, and the U.S. is returning to that state today

People drive places like anyone else but don’t know if they will return home or be swept up

Encourage Lakewood to become a sanctuary city

Check on any organization you donate to in support of immigrants — some opportunists just collect and keep

Spoke about work to support families in Norwalk, OH

Mexicans have been singled out for hatred, in particular, by current president

**QUESTION AND ANSWER** (7:28)

Question about becoming a sanctuary city. Lynn: enact legislation that limits what city officials do, with immigration officials, to the minimum requirement of the law. There is e.g. no need to question people about their immigration status.

Follow-up question about retribution. Lynn: Trump has threatened this but has not managed it so far.

Question about people with temporary protected status, who cannot safely return to their country of origin if that is rescinded. Lynn: People do get sent away even after living in the U.S. for 20 years. Trump admin has also cut off anyone who arrived since 2016 from applying, even though the relevant law still exists and was intended e.g. for Syrians.

Concern about information shared by the Rocky River government, and pressure on landlords to demand social security numbers on forms. Bella: It may not be legal to pass information on to a third party.

Bella: ICE can hold anyone for 48 hours even if in U.S. legally.

Lynn: There are 100s of children detained separately from families.

Concern about people having medication taken away and then being hospitalized and fined for it. Bella: I believe that’s illegal.

Question about Census adding a citizenship question. Lynn: Republicans say that Ohio would benefit. But seriously, in the immigration community people are not ready to deal with that possibility because we have no resources to spare for it. “It’s really a crisis out here for individual families. We’re in triage mode” even if you don’t see this all the time, concern for people’s privacy leads us to limit how much we publicize.

Bella: In some cases, media have been very disruptive to immigrant communities. That’s why you don’t see more on the news—reluctance to be used.

Question about what would be a better immigration system. Bella: I came to U.S. legally 20 years ago, I married a U.S> veteran, I still can’t get citizenship because I’m from Juarez. Lynn: Current family-based immigration formulae are complex and restrictive. H1B visas are for advanced degree holders only; there is a provision for farm work but it’s very out of date and growers don’t attempt to use it. In Ohio, immigrants are used as machines then deported when they break down. There should be legal visas for people who e.g. work on a tree farm — I have tried this and it’s very hard work.

Question about the resources shortage in Ohio. Bella: Ohio has denial about the problem. Also, progressives in urban areas are not easily mobilized where the need exists. I am being targeted for my activism work. Lynn: We have very few C4 organizations, and only ~30 immigration lawyers in the state. Legal Aid e.g. is limited in serving non-citizens because it receives federal funds. Hope that ACLU will do more. Immigrants and lawyers are in different areas. So much of what is happening is unpaid volunteering.

Question about the experience of an asylum seeker from the “northern triangle” countries. (7:53) Lynn: Right now the “remain in Mexico” program has people living under bridges. You come to the U.S. for a hearing, lose whatever shelter you had. We should be letting asylum seekers stay here, housing them. The Trump administration intentionally creates ugly scenes and suffering. Bella: Volunteers in Juarez are trying to support the asylum seekers. Human trafficking is a massive danger to them. Trans women of color are particularly victimized. Lynn: Describes projects to help people, prepare them with information; refers to irtfcleveland.org. You can stand up to insist that there is not a right to demand documents from people just taking the bus. Post it on social media. My 15-year-old collected supplies for Norwalk.

Concern about this problem helping Trump win reelection (8:01). Bella: We have to educate people about the real issues, and I will not allow him to win. Lynn: Immigrants are not “sneaking in.” They go to the border and apply for asylum. Some win their case, eventually; most lose. Trump is intentionally creating a situation where people die waiting.

Nickie Antonio adds that U.S. policies make their countries of origin unsafe, and that this will only get worse the longer Trump is in office. Further, U.S. native-born population is actually decreasing.

The first vice president refers people to a resource sheet. (8:05)

The president notes breaking news that President Trump is imposing tariffs on Mexican goods. (8:06)

Candidate remarks 8:08): Sam O’Leary, Tess Neff, Dan O’Malley, Brad Presutto, Lindsey Grdina, Dale Miller, Jason Shachner, Andy Santoli, Emma Petrie-Barcelona, Mike O’Malley, Lisa Forbes, Nickie Antonio, Jennifer O’Donnell, Sean Gallagher

Audit results, presented by Carol Lindley and Emma Petrie-Barcelona (8:19)

* The books balance
* Some reconciliation occurred around the last audit (March 2017) apparently; “cash” in PayPal account was not fully accounted for

PRESIDENT’S REPORT and other comments

* Survey of member interest in marching with club in July 4 parade (8:22)
* Recognition of Gabrielle Jackson who is moving to Massachusetts (8:23)
* Presentation of County Party resolution of memorial for Geraldine Nelson (8:24)
  + Nickie Antonio offered memories of Nelson
* Geri Morse is in rehab at O’Neill’s Bay Village (8:26)
* June meeting may be a debate watch
* Judge Williams-Byers has pneumonia

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT’S REPORT- Update on book club. (8:28)

Jay Ketchaver encourages members to contact Rep. Kaptur’s office with thoughts on impeachment

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT’S REPORT- Summer Supper to be July 11 at Sauced.

TREASURER’S REPORT- The Club has $5,502.62 in the bank (8:32)

SECRETARY’S REPORT- None

Dan O’Malley expresses dissatisfaction with deferral of a club endorsement vote until September meeting (8:34). General discussion follows.

Jason from Rep. Kaptur’s office makes brief remarks (8:41).

The president notes that the City of Lakewood requires the pavilion be vacated by 9 p.m. and has communicated dissatisfaction with the club on this point.

Charles Milsaps asks about county resource guide pamphlets.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING – June 27, 2019.

ADJOURNMENT – Adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Matt Kuhns, Secretary on June 2, 2019.

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Secretary Approval: sign date

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President Approval: sign date