**The Lakewood Democratic Club**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting held** **May 27, 2021
Online space at zoom.us**

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

Officers present were President Erik Meinhardt, First Vice-President Maureen Dostal, Second VP Mark Schneider Secretary, 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 April 29, 2021.

HOUSEKEEPING - Adjoining after the meeting at Sauced!

RECOGNITION OF NOTABLES – State Representative Mike Skindell, Lakewood City Councilperson Sarah Kepple, Candidate for Lakewood City Council Kyle Baker, Ohio Board of Education Member Meryl Johnson, Lakewood City Councilperson Jason Shachner, ODP Chair Liz Walters, Lakewood City Councilperson Tess Neff, Candidate for Lakewood Municipal Court Judge Sara Fagnilli, Lakewood City Councilperson Tristan Rader, CCDP City Leader Karolyn Isenhart, Judge Thomas O’Malley, Cuyahoga County Councilman Dale Miller, Candidate for Lakewood City Council Susannah Selnick, State Representative Jeff Crossman, State Senator Nickie Antonio, School Board Member Betsy Shaugnessy, School Board Member Ed Favre, Lakewood City Councilperson Tom Bullock, Candidate for Lakewood City Council Mark Schneider

**PROGRAM: Liz Walters, Chair of the Ohio Democratic Party**

Q: How has your career as an activist shaped your view of our mission?

A: Thank you for being here and continuing to work on behalf of Democrats! Thanks to Senator Antonio for doing press conference to welcome President Biden, and to State Rep Crossman for introducing a bill to expel Larry Householder. Grew up in Cuyahoga Falls. Was a Girl Scout! Mom was troop leader, worked for Girl Scouts throughout high school and college. Applied for fellowship in DC to do lobbying on behalf of Girl Scouts, right after passing lobbying reform. Brought girl scout cookies to elected officials! grew up with single mom & grandparents. Grandfather went through home hospice, did not pursue treatment -- prescription drug costs through the roof. Mom was nurse but not member of union with benefits. Felt obligated to improve conditions for working families. Worked nights at Hospice, went to school during the day, volunteered on Obama campaign. Became community organizer on Obama’s campaign. worked for Congresswoman Betty Sutton when ACA was passed.

Q: Democrats continually fail at messaging despite the obvious corruption of the GOP – from First Energy/Larry Householder to ECOT. What is our positive message? What is our negative message?

A: Being a democrat right now means we have a positive message to tell. When Democrats lead we reopen America! Lift up working families, reopen schools, put money in your bank account. we feel pressured to match what the other side does. We have good stories to tell! [website](https://ohiodems.org/show-your-support-of-the-american-rescue-plan/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=ohiodems&utm_content=1+-+Will+you+take+two+minutes+to+share+what+&utm_campaign=em21_210325_ARPaction_engg_gq_act__ODP_ettx&source=em21_210325_ARPaction_engg_gq). Republicans are stealing from you!!! They are stealing money, opportunity, health. They are funding charter schools, energy companies, & “stand your ground” laws. They have poor public health policy. There has also been possible unemployment fraud!

Q: Diversity is our greatest strength, but it can also trip us up because we aren’t in a cult like the other side. How do we harness our diversity/big tent to get more done?

A: We have diversity of coalition and members. We’ve been white-focused for too long. We need to lift up black leaders, voters. We’ve been tricked into believing we can win blue collar workers OR urban residents. We can do both - populist democratic leadership speaks to a lot of people. The race-class narrative. Black people don’t just live in Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati. 20 Ohio counties where the population is more than 5% black.

Q: How do we build the bench in redder parts of the state?

A: 1. start by showing up. organizing outside of the electoral cycle. all year long!

2. be more supportive of the work that county parties are doing. get in touch with residents interested in running for office, target lists for down-ballot races.

3. We always “autopsy the past election to death.” We’ll never see the same electorate again. Look ahead! whats the population & migration pattern in the state? Ohio is aging. 71 corridor is the only part of the state that’s growing. We have to compete everywhere, but we need to invest where we can grow our support.

Q: How do we win statewide? how do we deal with redistricting?

A: Ohio voters passed constitutional reforms. Legally required to have more competitive districts. objective groups need to hold republicans accountable. Mandate under law to convene a commission. partner with NRDC. what can maps look like?? We will launch communications plan: this is what fair maps look like!

Ohio is not a red state. Ohio is a gerrymandered state, a voter suppressed state, place where republicans have ensured that Democratic votes can’t be counted or cast in the first place. Bad maps suppress turnout!

Need to recruit good candidates. Need to build back organization that can support nominees & candidates. Digital, volunteer-driven system. tell narrative on republican corruption.

Intentionally reaching out to people of color & women to empower them to run for office. Hold space for them.

Q: Lakewood has a ton of volunteers that help in election years. Data gets lost. How do we make sure that all of these volunteers & data don’t get lost?

A: Depends on who’s capturing the data. We would like to equally share data. Sometimes national campaigns aren’t the best partners on that. We’re doing massive audit of voter file. Phoenix is a raw data collection system? We need to make sure we’re sharing good data with candidates & campaigns.

Q: What is the GOP strategy? How do they cultivate candidates and what is their messaging strategy that is so successful (and does it work on Dem-leaning voters?)

A: Ohio has the worst voter turnout in the midwest. Republican power in Ohio comes from us not engaging possible democratic voters. We don’t engage with voters. GOP strategy is “keeping the state warm for Trump.” We need to reach more voters. Kathleen Clyde, elected from Portage County for the past 10 years, was called a child molestor at polls for being a Democrat.

Q: Do you see Trump's taking down of disloyal GOP officeholders or candidates as being an opportunity for Democrats?

A: Their chaos helps us, but we can’t rely on it.

Q: How do you make sure people of color know they're welcome to run for office?

A: We’re recruiting candidates for state office, calling them. We also need to work with county parties to make sure they are making people feel welcome, as well. We need to do more leadership development.

Q: What can we do to prepare?

A: make sure your lists are up to date - emails, phone numbers. Lean in with your local candidates this year! Invite All On the Line Ohio to do a training at our meeting! funded by Eric Holder.

*from Jay Ketchaver: We make calls every Wednesday to push for fair maps. Please join! Even if you can’t call on Wednesdays, sign up and you’ll get a cheat sheet emailed to you so you can call when it’s convenient. https://www.mobilize.us/opalmissionvote/event/379261/*

Q: how do you prevent burnout?

A: Spend time with family who are frontline workers. I’m also making time to get to know people as humans. Trying not to be transactional in relationships.

Q: How do we bring more attention to the GOP corruption?

A: Democratic House members are doing a lot of work. Retweeting them and spreading them on Facebook! Go through contact list in phone - who are 10 people you can reach out to spread the word?

Q:Why was our voter turnout so low in Cuyahoga County?

A: Voter purging is a problem. Majority of loss comes from City of Cleveland - not an accident. Make sure people are registered, get out there and talk to folks. Register people to vote!!!

Q: Any plan to get corporations involved in voter registration?

A: currently working to get our big businesses to speak out against voter suppression bills. 501c3 groups might be more effective.

**REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

President: No report. Need update on audit. Should be close to done.

First Vice President: June will recognize LGBT pride & speak on trans rights, as well as speaker on redistricting. No meeting in July.

Political Activism: Please keep calling Senator Sherrod Brown & tell him we need to pass For the People Act!!!! Also, we make calls every Wednesday to push for fair maps. Please join! Even if you can’t call on Wednesdays, sign up and you’ll get a cheat sheet emailed to you so you can call when it’s convenient. <https://www.mobilize.us/opalmissionvote/event/379261/>

Book Club: Meeting June 15th at 7pm on Zoom. Reading Anne Applebaum’s “Twilight of Democracy: The Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism.”

Second Vice President: taking leave of absence from exec committee to run for Lakewood City Council. Still working on Summer Supper. Reached out to city to inquire about women’s pavilion - some hvac work being done. We will possibly go back to in-person meetings in august or september!

Treasurer: $9,943.42 in bank account and 79 members. have some checks that need to be deposited. endorsement in september, after primary.

Secretary: Minutes from this year’s meetings on website. PLEASE use reusable bags at grocery stores.

UPDATES

State legislature -

* Senator Antonio: passed legislation to keep homeless shelters from being taxed. Just passed bill that protects seniors in long term care facilities by allowing guardians/loved ones to put cameras in their rooms. Thursday June 17th fundraising event on Zoom! Assistant Minority Leader in Ohio Senate, getting ready to pick up some seats next year!
* State Rep Crossman: introduced resolution to expel Larry Householder. Wanted Republicans to clean up their own mess, but they aren’t doing anything. Need to amplify the message of corruption, push Speaker to schedule hearings. Just one in a series of scandals that will continue to happen.
* State Rep Skindell: pleased with the transportation budget. increased funding. repealed much of HB6. Diane Grendel wants to ban teaching of race theory…. HB294 is scary voter suppression bill. June 5th townhall tour.

State School Board - Meryl Johnson: critical race theory bills in the House are very dangerous. Currently state board is 11 elected members, 8 appointed members. Appointees have made it possible to have a majority, believe in equity and justice.

County Council - Dale Miller: Cuyahoga County been very active recently on diversity and inclusion. Made Juneteenth a county holiday. Any county employee can take off on Election Day to work as poll worker.

City Council -

* Sarah Kepple: Express Parking passed out of committee, allows people to pull up to restaurants and get to-go food in their car. Goes to full Council June 7th. Looking for applicants to the Public Art Advisory Board. Foster Pool survey! Memorial Day event at Lakewood Park cemetery in Rocky River, looking for people to plant flags Monday morning, 10am ceremony. Block party permits available for the summer!
* Tom Bullock: budget initiative to take public input on use of a portion of American Rescue Plan funds. Significant amount coming to Lakewood. Ongoing discussion around Madison Park.

School Board - Betsy Shaugnessy: in-person high school graduation tomorrow at Lakewood stadium, outdoors. Working toward transition to new Superintendent. Lakewood beats to our own drum, committed to teaching “actual” history of race.

County Party - Karolyn Isenhart: get involved in local council races! Remember that we are all neighbors. Can’t let republicans take any more power. Please don’t speed down clifton!

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING - Thursday, June 24, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Event notes prepared by Nicole Parke on May 27, 2021.

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Secretary Approval: sign date

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President Approval: sign date

Public Art Advisory Board

 http://www.onelakewood.com/publicart/

 Foster Pool at Lakewood Park Survey

 http://www.onelakewood.com/make-your-voice-heard-take-the-lakewood-park-foster-pool-infrastructure-improvements-survey/

 Memorial Day

 Lakewood/Rocky River Joint Veterans Council

 Lakewood Park Cemetery

 8:30am Flag Planting

 10am Ceremony Summer events update: http://www.onelakewood.com/city-of-lakewood-2021-summer-events-update/