**The Lakewood Democratic Club**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting held on April 25, 2019**

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

**Erik Meinhardt, President**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:07 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 on March 28, 2019. (Approved)

RECOGNITION OF NOTABLES –

Officials and candidates for office were recognized. Current officials in attendance: Nickie Antonio, Mike Skindell, Tristan Rader, Emma Petrie-Barcelona, Chris Glassburn, Sam O’Leary, Patrick Carroll, Dan O’Malley, John Litten, Dale Miller, Meghan George, Ed Favre, Michael Russo, Maureen Clancy(?).

Candidates for 2019 in attendance: Jennifer O’Donnell (Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas), Dan O’Malley (Lakewood City Council Ward 4), Jason Shachner (Lakewood City Council Ward 2), Meghan George (Lakewood Mayor), Sam O’Leary (Lakewood Mayor) Dale Miller (Cuyahoga County Council), Anton Krieger (North Royalton City Council), Brad Presutto (candidate for Lakewood City Council Ward 2), Lindsey Grdina (Lakewood City Council Ward 1), Laura Rodriguez-Carbone (Lakewood City Council Ward 1), Tess Neff (Lakewood City Council Ward 1).

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

Introduction of evening’s program: The president spoke about environmentalism and the anniversary of the 1969 Cuyahoga River fire. (7:11 p.m.)

**GUEST SPEAKER 1 – Sunny Simon, Cuyahoga County Council District 11**

Background of plastic pollution problem (7:13):

* Great Pacific Garbage Patch is growing
* Lake Erie is second-most plastic-polluted of the Great Lakes
* Plastic gets everywhere; animals are choked and poisoned by plastic
* 319 million pounds of plastic are discarded each year in Cuyahoga County

Attempts at a plastic bag fee

* States and nations are steadily introducing fees or bans
* Simon attempted to introduce a county plastic bag fee in 2012—“shot down hard”
* With Miller, tried again in 2017

Current legislation for single-use plastic bag ban

* Hope of moving legislation out of committee May 1, approval by county council late May, taking effect October
* Marketing/education campaign to follow
* State of opposition to plastic bag restrictions
* The “Progressive Bag Alliance” industry group, resembles big tobacco’s disinformation efforts
* Preemption legislation models from PBA and ALEC, may appear in Ohio General Assembly
* Public opinion shifting in favor; “The hate mail I’m getting is diminished”

Audience question from Nickie Antonio, about plastic in the air (7:23 p.m.): discarded plastic mostly goes two places, landfills (where toxic additives leach out for 100s of years) and waterways, but some caught in trees e.g. photodegrades in the air and we breathe in plastic particles.

Audience question from Emily Christescu, about pushing to reduce other sources of plastic waste: Simon says she would love to pursue this as well, e.g. drinking straws.

Audience question from Dan Alaimo about Lakewood’s place in the issue: It produces lots of discarded bags and is exposed to the result of its own and other communities’ waste.

Audience question from Steve Bennett about recycling plastic bags: Simon says that she is researching precisely how bags are recycled in Ohio, but that they do get recycled if people return them to stores—few do so.

Audience question about the low price of petroleum: This is a minor factor, and the reduced market demand for recycling plastic is more a product of China halting imports, and of the chemical complexity of plastic products compared with e.g. glass or aluminum.

Audience question from Maureen Dostal about whether dog-doo bags are biodegradeable: They are but only if left exposed to the elements.

**GUEST SPEAKER 2 – Mike Foley, Director of County Dept. of Sustainability**

County promotion of solar energy (7:31)

* Installed solar panels atop a Brooklyn landfill (few structures can go on top of a landfill), and are powering county buildings; won a national Solar Project of the Year award
* Solar co-op program
* County Council has approved solar installation on roofs of three county buildings; cost of power generated will be below 10¢ Kw/hour, less than most local governments pay for power

State of greenhouse gas pollution in Cuyahoga County

* Overall about a 10% reduction since 2010, mostly owing to electricity sector
* Transportation emissions continue increasing; decline of RTA exacerbates this
* Per-person figure is better than some metros but worse than many, even Detroit

Impact of changing climate in Cuyahoga County

* The county’s average temperature is now about one degree warmer than the 100-year average
* Already moved from one growing season to another since 1990
* Lake Erie ice coverage has declined dramatically since 1953, which allows invasive species to expand
* More rain is falling and storms are more intense

County departments have assessed vulnerability, impacts of changing climate

* Mosquito population e.g. is now larger; disease from it and other vectors is on the rise
* High heat days correlate with mental health problems and crime

Climate Action Plan for Cuyahoga County

* Areas of focus: energy, transportation, health, land use, ecosystems (understanding and protecting)
* Action items: green bank; rooftop solar; transit-oriented development; $1 million/year planned for trees over next 5 years; EV charging stations; traffic signal timing; downtown microgrid

Audience question (inaudible): RTA is slated for more funding in current state budget, within a context of dismally low transit funding in Ohio, generally

Audience question about “3C corridor” high speed rail: Ohio passed legislation to create it, under Governor Strickland, then Gov. Kasich killed it off

Audience question about the “hyperloop”: NOACA is working with a company to study it

Audience question from Alaimo about oil price increases: People buy more fuel-efficient vehicles when that happens, but county must work to reduce transportation emissions anyway

**GUEST SPEAKER 3 – Kathleen Rocco, County Solid Waste District**

It’s time to reevaluate what should go in the recycling bin.

Five items that should be recycled:

1. Metal cans (not e.g. foil, pie pans, aerosol canisters)
2. Paper cartons (not frozen food containers; some are wax- or plastic-lined)
3. Glass bottles (not Pyrex objects e.g. measuring glasses)
4. Paper products (including cardboard, and even pizza boxes, just not pizza)
5. Plastic bottles, jugs, and jars with a round neck or cap; put the cap back on to recycle it too (not tubs or clamshell containers)

Items that should not go in the recycling bin

* Shredded paper. Place it in a paper-only pick-up bin (“Paper Retriever” e.g.)
* Straws, forks, plastic cups (“cups is a dirty word in recycling”)
* Plastic bags, or any films (e.g. wrappers, Ziploc bags)
* Plant containers. Styrofoam. Needles. Hoses. Christmas lights.

Audience question about rinsing bottles: Empty them, rinse them, washing not necessary

Audience question about size of tubs: Can’t recycle tubs regardless of size

Audience question about putting lids back on glass bottles: Yes

Audience question from John Litten about a video of the presentation: A good idea but does not currently exist

Audience question about fabric: Take even damaged fabric to a clothing donation site (e.g. Value World, but not Goodwill)

Audience question about dropping off items for composting: Lakewood had a site but does not, now; Rust Belt Riders has a dropoff and is considering pick-ups; Rocco will lead a composting seminar on May 7.

Audience question about yard signs: Bring these to us, and we can recycle them, along with a surprising number of odds and ends.

Audience question about yogurt cups: leave them out of the bin.

Audience question about crayons: some schools can take them.

Audience question about home meal delivery kits: most is waste except the box.

Audience question about box tape: it’s not a big deal, don’t worry about it.

Audience question about Whole Foods recycling yogurt cups: possible but can’t verify.

Audience question about remembering all this: Rocco has brought reference guides.

Councilperson Simon invites people to May 18 VegFest. (8:24)

Candidate speeches: Lindsey Grdina (8:26), Tess Neff (8:29), Jennifer O’Donnell (8:32), Michael Russo (8:34), William Vodrey (8:35), Jason Schachner (8:36)

Announcements from president (8:38)

* Saturday cleanup at Edgewater Park
* Wear club t-shirts, some are still available
* Note other items on the evening’s printed agenda

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT’S REPORT- May meeting’s topic is immigration.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT – Endorsement voting planned for September meeting.

TREASURER’S REPORT- The Club has $5,365.49 in the bank

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT’S REPORT- Please help with the Summer Supper.

SECRETARY’S REPORT- None

State House report from Rep. Skindell (8:45)

* Skindell committee appointments
* Legislation introduced
* Erosion-control measure passed late last year
* Budget process; possibility that GOP will try to put FirstEnergy nuclear bailout in budget

Other announcements:

* Lakewood City Schools updates (8:51)
* Dale Miller fundraiser and ice cream social (8:53)
* Recognition of Sen. Antonio’s efforts against abortion ban (8:54)

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING – May 30, 2019.

ADJOURNMENT – Unofficially adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Matt Kuhns, Secretary on April 27, 2019.

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Secretary Approval: sign date

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President Approval: sign date