**The Lakewood Democratic Club**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting held November 17, 2022
Lakewood Women’s Pavilion & Online space at zoom.us**

**CALL TO ORDER**: The meeting was called to order around 7pm by President Erik Meinhart. Officers present were First Vice-President Maureen Dostal, and Treasurer Catie McMahon. The President chaired the meeting in person. The Secretary took notes via meeting recording at a later date.

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

**APPROVAL of the MINUTES**: The body approved the minutes from October 27, 2022. Maureen Dostal moved; Cindy Strebig seconded. All in favor.

**SOCIAL:** The club will be socializing at Sauced after the meeting. We do not have refreshments at the meeting today.

**RECOGNITION OF NOTABLES -** Lakewood School Board Member Mike Callahan, Lakewood City Councilperson Sarah Kepple, CCDP Executive Director & Lakewood City Leader Karolyn Isenhart, Lakewood City Councilperson Tom Bullock (via Zoom), Lakewood School Board Member Nora Katzenberger.

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:** Rob

**CLUB BUSINESS:**

At October meeting we received nominations for Club Officer positions 2023–2024. No contested races. Bylaws allow us to do vote by acclamation.

Nominee for President - Erik, “it’s a privilege to serve in this role. I look forward to doing this for the next two years, as we gear up for 2024 election, continue our success and do even more. Would like to start up more committees and get some new people involved. 2024 will be busy with presidential election and Sherrod Brown on ballot.”

Nominee for First Vice President - Maureen, “Also honored to be on the board of this club. I really enjoy role I play, working with these fine people, now including Jeff. I book the speakers for the club, constantly looking for speaker ideas. Send your ideas my way!”

Nominee for Second Vice President - Jeff Pigott, “I’ve gotten to know many of you over last couple years. Been active member for last two years, Book Club too. Excited to join board and serve as second VP. Role is to take charge of fundraising, particularly Summer Supper. Has become robust fundraising event! Look forward to continuing that and cultivate some new fundraising opportunities/events. Help get Democrats elected. Had a blast doing the GOTV campaign. Looking forward to continuing to engage voters and club members.”

(Erik - we did go through a lot of funds! Spent a lot recently; we were busy this year. Thank you for stepping up and doing this!)

Nominee for Treasurer - Catie, “My job is to account for money going in and out. I’ve enjoyed getting to know everyone, working on the club, making sure that we are getting out there and supporting this cause that we’re all a part of.”

(Erik - since we became a FEC PAC, lots more work! Have to make sure we’re reporting accurately.)

Nominee for Secretary - Nicole Parke, can’t be here, currently in Vegas, but not gambling. She is organizer with SEIU, in Vegas for union organizing conference. She sent me a message to read: “Hi Lakewood Dems! I’m sorry I am not here with you tonight. I have been traveling for work this week. I wanted to thank you all for allowing me to serve as your secretary for the last two years! This role has allowed me to feel closer and more connected to all of you, my fellow activists and politicos. For those of you who don’t know, my introduction to Lakewood Dems was back in 2017 when I was working on Senator Nickie Antonio’s campaign! Her campaign was also my introduction to what it means to be a dedicated Democrat- putting the hours in leading up to Election Day to ensure you’ve made every effort to elect the right people in the right places. After her victory, I “caught the bug” and continued working on campaigns, first in Colorado in the fall of 2018, and then in florida in the spring of 2019. But, I really wanted to be back here, fighting the good fight where I believe we need it most. I now work for SEIU 1199, the healthcare and social service union, representing about 1,000 workers across northeast Ohio. Serving on Lakewood Dems and working for the union has aligned my passions and career and brought great people into my life. I look forward to another 2 years of learning, growing, and getting to know all of you better — and working to elect democrats as much and as often as we can! Thanks all and I’ll see you at the holiday party!”

Nomination from floor to confirm officers, by voice acclamation, to elect Erik Meinhart President, Maureen Dostal First Vice-President, Jeff Pigott Second Vice-President, Catie McMahon Treasurer, Nicole Parke Secretary.

April moves, Charlie Bango seconds. All in favor! Unanimous voice vote.

Swearing-in will be in January.

**PROGRAM: Professor Tom Sutton**

Was our speaker right after Dobbs decision. He is professor at Baldwin Wallace, Lakewood resident, expert on all things local and Ohio politics. You may have heard him on NPR on Election Night or on Channel 5 WEWS.

Tom: Good evening everyone! Good to be back. Going to try to tell the truth and make it filled with hope. Looking at Midterm elections.

(Showing powerpoint)

Look at numbers related to 8 urban counties…

Where are the gaps we can fill?

The name of the game from start to finish is turnout.

Just today (11/17), got to 218 republicans in U.S. House.

In Ohio, we had Governor, Senate race.

Not a good night for Nan Whaley. One of the biggest margins we’ve seen between two statewide candidates ever. 500,000 votes between the two.

264,000 vote difference between Tim Ryan & JD Vance. 7 pt spread. This is more accurate representation of gap that a statewide Democrat needs to close.

By county, Nan won Cuyahoga by 14 pts. Used to believe that if you won 65% or more of Cuyahoga County, you won the state. Franklin County now the largest county. Franklin now reliably Democratic, but no longer have Northeast Ohio region of counties turning blue. Summit still is, but not Lake or Lorain.

With exception of Summit, Stark, and Lorain counties, urban counties’ turnout was less than turnout statewide. This is first reason Democrats didn’t do well statewide.

Hamilton County used to be completely red, until 15-20 years ago. Dewine won by 4pts; Tim Ryan won by 14%. Ticket splitting! Summit, Lucas, Lorain counties also split. Stark County becoming reliably Republican.

Now only looking at vote differences, not percentage wins. 2020 Biden/Rrump race, 2018 Governor & Senate races. 2018 only 4 pt margin between Dewine and Cordray. Democratic Governor primary, had 3 women who all dropped out. All support went to Cordray. Look at where Sherrod Brown won, by 300,000 votes. Cordray lost by 165,000 votes. Difference of 465,000 votes. That difference, statewide, is the difference that Trump won by twice. Tells me it’s possible! The demographics of Ohio haven’t changed that much in last 4 years. A little growth in Cincy, a little growth in Columbus. Otherwise, we’re all just growing older. Cuyahoga County majority are 60 and older.

Looking at this, see where Democrats should target. But Democrats have given up the rural vote. Never too late to try to get it back. They have same needs as urban residents.

Map of Ohio by voting tendencies:

 Congressional districts 3 and 11 “packed” with Dems. (gerrymandering packing & cracking)

Greg Landsman won! Steve Chabot has been a target for years. Somehow Republicans drew a district that was D+1 for incumbent Chabot… what’s going on behind Ohio GOP’s closed doors?

Marcy Kaptur and Emilia Sykes against extreme MAGA candidates. Both districts were leaning Republican. Sykes had strong name recognition, especially compared to opponent (who was also married to Pittsburgh Steeler, which didn’t help).

CD6 used to be Ted Strickland’s district.

Don’t write these areas off! All of these show hope.

Shontel won by 117,000, but should have been more. Should be more voters.

Sykes won by 4pts.

Marcy won by 13 pts in district that was supposed to be R+14 !

Greg Landsman won by 5 pts!

All of these add up to something statewide.

Ohio Senate now 26-7; Bob Hagan & Tina Maharath lost. Ohio House 68-31.

Ohio Supreme Court election was abysmal for Democrats.

Ronayne won by 28%.

Looking ahead to 2023, 2024:

Ohio Supreme Court much more conservative majority. These maps will be accepted until 2032 most likely.

Redistricting efforts, Issue 1 tried to get partisan balance. Need independent nonpartisan redistricting commission. Michigan did this! and they flipped their general assembly! And approved protection for abortion rights.

Reproductive rights: making efforts to get on ballot. Meanwhile, Frank Larose wants to raise threshold of approval for statewide initiatives from simple majority to 60%. Ohio General Assembly will likely approve. But, if get enough voters out to surpass threshold, will be ok! Democrats will need 60% anyway. So far, other states have seen much more than 60% turnout to protect abortion.

Sherrod Brown will likely have tough opposition. Some Republicans may run just to build name recognition for 2026 Governor race. Jim Jordan?

Presidential race: likely Trump, Desantis, Pompeo, Pence, Nikki Haley? Will Biden run again? All 3 U.S. House Dem leaders just stepped down, making way for new leadership.

In Ohio, have to increase urban county voter turnout, and engage with rural voters. Untapped resources in Mayors of these cities! Lakewood is the model for voter turnout.

Is Ohio a red state? Stop waiting for Nationals to come in and help us; they see us as red state. So is Kansas.. with Democratic governor, and they just voted to protect abortion. Need grassroots organizing in rural areas. Will take careful planning. Tim Ryan is not loss, it’s step forward. Move away from what was being talked about at national level; focus on local level. Fight back against rhetoric that Democrats are socialists; start owning patriotism. ACLU just did survey of Trump-supporting voters in Southeast Ohio.

Margins were anywhere from 20 t0 35 pts in rural counties. Vance was the “default” vote.

Are there examples of pairing urban and rural clubs to support? Should look at other states. Tempting to look at Georgia, but state has rapidly grown, especially in comparison to Ohio. But, we see this in religious organizations – larger churches supporting smaller churches in other areas.

Is Sherrod Brown at risk? Yes.

Movement of Governor controlling Ohio School Board goes back to Voinovich increasing number of seats so that majority is appointed by Governor. Dewine used his power to put far-right people in seats in order to appease the far-right. Actually puts more pressure on Governor to impact direction of education.

Would like to see some radical action when it comes to teachers. Should be school walkouts. Legislators are telling doctors and teachers how to do their jobs. Educators can take action through unions.

Why didn’t Dems lose overwhelmingly nationally? 538 polling: inflation was permanently top issue. We learned: 1) can’t run just anyone for office and expect to win because inflation is someone else’s fault. 2) at local level, some voters realized Biden admin or anyone else can’t do anything about inflation.

“Trump effect” didn’t help many candidates, especially first-time candidates.

I do not have data on Ohio women voting, but heard that many registered and voted for first time (or first time in a long time) after Dobbs decision.

One theory - Tim Ryan focused too much on “Trump persuadables.” Pointed all messaging to them, lost some Democrats. Didn’t inspire or connect with progressives. For Governor, there was public perception that Dewine was moderate and/or reasonable (similar to John Kasich).

I believe Ryan’s focus on swing voters did lose black voters; we saw dropoff in Cleveland compared to Mayor Bibb’s win in 2021. Could have had wider message or segmented message. Was effective message in many areas (including his home district), but not others. In urban impoverished areas, not seeing change no matter who’s in power. Should be connecting urban municipal leaders’ success to state & national candidates.

Why didn’t abortion rights motivate voters here in Ohio? By September, abortion had dropped well below inflation in polls. Lots of attention with Dobbs etc, but by the fall the issue had faded. Nan Whaley didn’t have resources to promote. Tim Ryan mentioned but didn’t push. Ohio is older state; maybe abortion doesn’t inspire us as much.

Why didn’t we hear more about extending broadband access to rural areas???? This is part of infrastructure bill that Democrats passed.

As organizers, we talk to Republicans, but what are we using to persuade them?

How much did having party designation on ballot affect Ohio Supreme Court outcome? It did have strong effect. The court elections had 15+ spread (in-between Vance +7 and Dewine +25). Republicans spent money and could blatantly label candidates as Democrats, associate them with Democrat agenda.

Dark money ads promoted judicial candidates with messaging that judicial canons prohibit candidates from doing.

Court was priority for Republicans after success of Dems last couple years, and redistricting mess.

If Desantis is nominee for president, and culture wars are at center of his campaign, would this be good or bad for Ohio Democrats? It could be bad because culture issues effectively turn out republican voters. It could be good if paired with Desantis really trying to keep Trump supporters, and he takes it too far. How much more can you succeed from beating up trans people? for example. Also depends on economy & world affairs over next two years. Is a recession on horizon? U.S. House going Republican may be best thing to happen to Democrats. Kevin McCarthy cannot compare to Nancy Pelosi, who is one of the most effective House Leaders in the history of our country.

Very little effort to turn out college voters in Ohio. Reliance on efforts that were not happening. My students don’t want to talk about politics. They say, “I don’t want to lose friends and family.” Unfortunately, I could not argue with this; I’ve lost friends and family, and know others have, too. They want to vote, but don’t want to get involved in campaigns etc. There is also an assumption that young people don’t vote (this is false; young vote is increasing). Young folks not going to college should be targeted just as much. At Baldwin Wallace, 30% of student body turned out to vote. Pretty good! We should keep bringing this up - Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates.

Heard that Democratic clubs, etc supported extreme right-wing candidates in hopes it would benefit Democrats. Apparently happened in New Hampshire? (Zoom video cuts)

Tim Ryan outraised Vance by 4-to-1 margin. National Dem money went to other states. Did this help or hurt downballot races? It helped congressional. Statehouse wasn’t affected by Tim Ryan as much as affected by gerrymandering. Some seats uncontested. Householder, before indited, was running for reelection and won 100% of vote because no opponent. You never know! Get someone in every seat.

We have to “play the long game”. This is a lot of why Republicans have power they have today.

In 2018 Ohio passed redistricting reform with overwhelming support. Given political nature of state right now, what are chances that we can pass constitutional amendment of anti-gerrymandering with more than 60% of vote? Most voters believe on some level that things should be “fair.” They might have skewed view of what “fair” is (i.e. 2020 election fraud claims). The structure would have to be nonpartisan independent commission. We have a bipartisan system that runs every counties’ boards of elections and it works!

Democrats won Arizona, where Republicans were so adamant about election fraud that many Republicans didn’t vote.

Ohio redistricting reform focused on halting splitting of cities, counties, which caused “packing and cracking.”

Funding for Ryan vs Whaley vs Ohio Supreme Court - Ryan was by far most well-funded.

**REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

President: Erik - Holiday party Thursday, December 15 at Bottlehouse Brewery on Madison at 6pm. Entry & food is free! Thank you everyone who volunteered this campaign season. We have great model to build on.

First Vice President: Maureen - also wanted to say thank you to everyone who volunteered. Looking forward to 2024.

Political Activism: Sarah Kepple - the next two Tuesdays, at Sauced 6-9pm and Natures Oasis 11:30am-1pm writing letters through Vote Forward to Democrats in Georgia. Please let me know if you will be attending.

Book Club: Tuesday, December 12th at 7pm. No book but will be watching “Our Great National Parks” presented by President Barack Obama on Netflix. January, will be reading “The Book of Hope” by Jane Goodall.

Second Vice President: No report

Treasurer: Erik - $4,747 in account as of today. Had almost $12,000 before sample ballot!

Secretary: No report

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

Statehouse: N/a

State Board of Education: N/a

County Council: N/a

Lakewood City Council: Sarah Kepple - committee appointments available. Congrats to Jeff, new member of Board of Zoning Appeals. We have openings on Architecture Review Board, advisory and education board, public art advisory board, citizens advisory committee. Also, recycle your yard signs at Lakewood recycle center on Berea Rd.

Lakewood Municipal Court: Tess (not present but sent ahead of time) - exciting update from the court! I was thrilled to receive news Tuesday that Lakewood Municipal Court was one of the 51 Ohio courts in the State of Ohio to receive a grant to help alleviate Covid backlog for cases, for warrants, to make significant technological updates, implement the help kiosk, among other needs. We worked tirelessly and we were under a short timeline to compile all the necessary information and to meet the requirements for the application deadline this past July. Honestly, I am so very proud of this accomplishment because it truly was a longshot given the hurdles we had to overcome to gather the necessary data and information. We were awarded $425,000 which is the maximum amount issued, and there were only a few courts in the state that received this amount. The monies are critical for the court’s and community’s needs. This award will literally allow the court to modernize and progress from a 1950’s operational mode to today. I plan to write an article for the Lakewood Observer to detail the spending plan. In addition, this grant alleviates a potential financial burden for our funding source, the City of Lakewood. The grant is a big win for us all!

Lakewood School Board: Mike - joined Ohio School Boards Association in Columbus. Opportunity for us to deep dive in district’s robust plan. Much appreciation for my fellow board members and our district leadership. Work hard to meet every student where they’re at. Look at our “vision of a lakewood graduate.”

 Nora - we have fielded many bills from Statehouse that have threatened progress we are making in district to support LGBT kids. State board of education passed resolution to advise school boards across state to reject federal decision to protect LGBT kids under Title IX. As Lakewood Board, we are preparing resolution to come out against state board of education’s advisory. We have promise of local control so they have no effect on what we actually do. But we feel compelled to speak up about it. In Columbus, there was session on how districts can support LGBT kids. Overwhelming interest and support for this! Very uplifting!

ODP/CCDP: Karolyn - lots of info coming from County Party in next couple months. From Lakewood’s perspective, Lakewood is model for the county. Central & Exec Cmte worked with club and electeds to turn out voters. So much work to do. We have to expand! Also, Congrats to Senator Nickie Antonio who is Minority Leader! Senator Kent Smith now Minority Whip.

**GENERAL UPDATES:** N/a

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING** - January 26, 2023.

**ADJOURNMENT** - The meeting was adjourned. Motion by Sarah, seconded by Catie. All in favor.

Event notes prepared by Nicole Parke on January 20, 2023.

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Secretary Approval: sign date

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President Approval: sign date

from chat:

* **Tom Bullock**27:51
* Hello!
* **Tom Bullock**34:52
* Maureen I can make speaker suggestions if you’d like
* **Tom Bullock**41:47
* Congratulations!
* **Tom Bullock**01:02:06
* The Ohio House is split 68-31 and the Ohio Senate is 26-7, according to Gongwer
* **Tom Bullock**01:03:55
* Largest House majority for GOP since 1967 and largest Senate since 1951
* **Catie Mcmahon**01:09:41
* Any questions?
* **Erik Meinhardt (he/him)**01:26:13
* does anyone in the zoom room have questions? if you can type them in the chat we will pass them along to Dr. Sutton
* **Tom Bullock**01:39:39
* Yes my question: Can we ask you follow up questions as a team of local Lakewood Democrats digs into what we did this year that did/didn’t work? (ie Since your presentation is so great today you’ve earned the job of Guru of Strategy for Lakewood Democrats!)
* **Tom Bullock**01:44:25
* I had that thought myself
* **Jacquie Davis**01:49:20
* Very much an issue… loss of family relationships d/t political views.I understand those fears, especially when I was youngerJacquie Davis
* **Mary Ann Marsal**01:51:18
* Video for zoom froze
* **Erik Meinhardt (he/him)**01:51:26
* sorry we are reconnecting
* **Mary Ann Marsal**01:54:05
* I also had a question - comparison of funds contributed by the Democratic Party to Tim Ryan and Nan Whaley and the women running for the Ohio Supreme Court
* **Erik Meinhardt (he/him)**01:56:30
* thanks, I'll pass along the question