**The Lakewood Democratic Club**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting held** **March 31, 2022
Online space at zoom.us**

**CALL TO ORDER**: The meeting was called to order at 7:07pm by President Erik Meinhardt.

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

**APPROVAL of the MINUTES**: The body approved the minutes from February 24, 2022. Maureen moves; Steve seconds.

**RECOGNITION OF NOTABLES -** County Councilman Dale Miller, Annie Matia-Rahm on behalf of judicial candidate Anne McDonough, Judge Deborah Turner, Judge Tess Neff, State Rep Mike Skindell, Lakewood Councilperson Tom Bullock, CCDP Executive Director & Lakewood City Leader Karolyn Isenhart, Judge Lauren Moore, judicial candidate Kevin Kelley, Lakewood Councilperson Jason Shachner, State Senator Nickie Antonio, North Olmsted City Councilperson Chris Glassburn, State Board of Education Member Meryl Johnson, Lakewood City Councilperson Sarah Kepple, Judge Lisa Forbes, Judge Richard Bell, Darryl Torbert on behalf of Congresswoman Shontel Brown, Marvin Hayes on behalf of congressional candidate Nina Turner, School Board President Betsy Shaugnessy, Judge Maureen Clancy, judicial candidate Michael Ryan

Annie Matia-Rahm on behalf of Anne McDonough: Hello! I am Annie Rahm, representing Anne C. McDonough who is running for Juvenile Judge. Sign up here for a yard sign: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/16n2JPStDOie-BFDMITwmCl0Fs0mKVtnbHzO7jSoRYS8/edit>

Darryle Torbert on behalf of Shontel Brown: Meet and greet at Sauced: <https://www.mobilize.us/shontelbrown/event/449275/>

Campaign office opening: <https://www.mobilize.us/shontelbrown/event/448454/>

Marvin Hayes on behalf of Nina Turner: Nina Turner Meet and Greet  The BottleHouse Brewery and Mead Hall, 13368 Madison Ave, Lakewood, OH 44107 Friday, April 1, 5pm - 8pm

**HOUSEKEEPING**: We will be going to sauced after the meeting!

**PROGRAM:**

**Chris Glassburn, North Olmsted Councilperson and the Democratic Mapdrawer from the Ohio Redistricting Commission:**

Drawn maps for Ohio Senate and Ohio House, as well as Congress. Didn’t receive census data until August 2021. Were supposed to have finished maps by September 2021. Republicans have refused to abide by the rules and work with us. Ohio Supreme Court has rejected maps multiple times. Most recently, round 4 of drawing state leg maps and two rounds of congressional maps. The rules are simple and intentions clear; Republicans refuse to follow in good faith. Ohio Supreme Court getting more specific about how exactly the maps should look. Seats should be 54% Republican, 46% Democrat. In Ohio House, 54 R seats and 45 D seats. In Ohio Senate, 18 R and 15 D. Republicans saying those maps are impossible to achieve, despite getting hundreds of maps from the public that match that description. Ohio Supreme Court expressed intent to hold contempt hearings. Suddenly, Republicans could draw maps. Need to have independent map drawers and draw them in public. Republicans nominated independent mapdrawer from California, Democrats nominated one from Florida. In five days, got it done. Republicans wanted to “decouple” as many incumbents as possible. Map was as close to following the rules as Republicans had gotten. Speaker of House and president of Senate voted down their own independent mapdrawers’ map because “didn’t have enough time to look at it.” Instead, passed a different map that was minimally (0.25%) different from 3rd round map. Now, lawsuit in federal court as well. Republicans now have to explain why they should not be held in contempt of court in Ohio Supreme Court. Round 4 Republican map expected to be shot down. Will there be 5th round or will federal court (who has set deadline of April 20th) intervene? Federal court has suggested keeping districts we have today or approving round 3 map?? in federal hearing, three judges (including two Trump appointees) couldn’t make sense of Republicans. Will be settled by April 20th, but we don’t know how. Federal court has left enough time for them to draw their own maps if needed. Very likely we will have General Assembly primary on August 2nd. Ohio taxpayers will be stuck paying for two primary elections ($20-25 million additional). State legislature has until Sunday night to move May 3rd election but doesn’t seem like Republicans want to. Republicans strategize that creating false emergencies helps them. Congressional maps, if we move forward with them, will have 10 republican safe seats, 3 competitive, 2 safe Democrat seats.

Q: (Erik) do you think Republicans were always going to reject their independently drawn maps? What is their strategy?

A: No one knows what 3-judge federal panel going to do. Have the Republicans won? I don’t think so. They expected the courts to “bail them out” but the courts haven’t done that. Courts may be opposed to gerrymandering, and they especially can’t stand blatant disregard for rules. Republican independent mapdrawer has a bit of a “rap sheet,” worked in states across country, has had testimony thrown out for lying to judges, had maps thrown out for disenfranchising minorities egregiously. We weren’t expecting him to follow rules. But, he & Democrat drawer Professor McDonald proved it was possible to draw map according to the rules. Did in 5 days what Republicans have said is impossible for the last nine months. Their map was more compact than every Republican map that’s been submitted. Republican staff have not worked with us at all, had no communication with independent mapdrawers. Independent mapdrawers discovered I was the only one who would tell them if they were making technical violations. Can’t say whether Republicans ever intended to take the independent mapdrawers seriously.

Q: (Karolyn) Didn’t the Ohio Supreme Court rule that the Congressional map was unconstitutional as well?

A: Court ruled first map unconstitutional. Court has not yet ruled on 2nd map. We believe that the Court will reject them because Republicans safely have ⅔ of seats. Map is presumed constitutional until it is not.

<https://davesredistricting.org/join/752c5ed0-2adb-4fb9-8fc2-055e554ce800>

Ohio House: <https://davesredistricting.org/join/a8a0ccb3-78ef-4ef4-a0dc-ede911ed3908>

Ohio Senate: <https://davesredistricting.org/maps#viewmap::977a62db-803f-45de-96db-debec663f062>

Independent House: <https://davesredistricting.org/join/cff004d9-ce5b-445b-b08a-fbcc82f4e8ed>

 Independent Senate: <https://davesredistricting.org/join/c0fe2a48-5485-44ad-a191-acfcfd57e876>

Dave’s uses slightly different combination of election results than official Ohio data, believe it slightly underrates Democratic performance.

Q: (Nickie) If the independently drawn map was approved, how would it look?

A: This map was most Democrat-leaning of any that have been considered by Republicans. It was perfect ratio in House, with 3 competitive R and 3 competitive D. Competitive considered 50-52%. In Senate, 2 competitive D and 0 competitive R. Overall, would have been 15 Democrat seats in Senate.

Q: (Nickie) I thought the district needed to be at least 54% Democrat to consider Democrat safe?

A: This is a point of contention. Independent mapdrawers: 50-52% considered tossup. Couldn’t decide if 52-54 also a lean? Mapdrawers tried to be mindful of having equal number of 52-54 on each side.

Q: (Nickie) When President Huffman said there was a map that drew me out of the legislature. Can you explain how that would have happened?

A: Section 5 of Ohio Constitution outlines that State Senators elected to four-year terms, alternate by 2 years. This year, even-numbered members not up for reelection; have two years remaining on their term. Guaranteed to keep serving as senators. Where they will represent is determined by what district has the most of their previous district. When “ungerrymander” Matt Dolan’s district, could easily draw Lakewood into his district. Matt Dolan, if lakewood drawn in his district, would automatically represent us. No constitutional protection for the odd-numbered seats who are up for election. Nickie would have to move. President Huffman tried to claim that this would be unconstitutional if happened to a Republican, but no problem if happened to Democrats. I wanted constitutional amendment that kept all current serving Democratic and Republican legislators in their seats. When independent mapdrawers brought this up, used most of what I suggested.

Q: (Lisa Forbes) What is the criteria from constitutional amendment that puts us in this situation?

A: There are two sets of rules - 2,3,4,5,7: State Senate districts comprised of 3 house districts. Supposed to keep house districts in the same county in the same senate district if possible. Then, if can keep whole cities in a district, should do that. If have to split citiies/townships, limit the number of cities/townships that you split. Then, look at ratio of districts from past 10 years (54-46), don’t favor or disfavor one party, and try to make it compact. Independently drawn maps meet most of this criteria, clearly shows this can be done. State board of education districts, each made of 3 state senate districts, being affected by gerrymandered senate districts. Governor gets to pick which 3 senate districts are combined. Governor directly using this as opportunity to gerrymander board of education seats.

Q: (Tom Bullock) First, how is your baby? Can you share accurate maps down to precinct level? Plain Dealer maps aren’t granular enough.

A: Shared links in the chat. Process was supposed to be done at the end of summer. Around that time, had my first daughter. I like to remind Republicans they are this late with maps. Maps are now “two teeth” late!

For the supposedly deep concerns of Speaker Cupp and President Huffman, they have not been concerned with keep Democrat incumbents in office. Clearly hypocritical.

Q: (Erik) Where has Governor DeWine’s leadership been? or any of statewide leaders? Cupp and Huffman running the show.

A: Seven members of Redistricting Commission. Speaker and Senate President have their own mapdrawers. Refuse to share with statewide leaders. Statewide leaders don’t have ability to draw their own maps. Most recently, Gov. Dewine said he was going to take the lead… wanted to put mapdrawing staff in the same room to work things out… but already tried that and Republican mapdrawers haven’t engaged. Governor Dewine has made promises he hasn’t followed through on. Auditor Faber has voted with the Democrats the last two rounds.. despite feeling like the Democrats haven’t earned seats? but seems to have some loyalty to the rules.

Meryl Johnson: The State Board of Education districts include three senate districts. Because of the gerrymandering, I went from 2/3rd of Cuyahoga County and 1/3rd of Lake County to Ashland, Medina and Wayne counties and a little bit of Cuyahoga. Can you comment on this? Whish would seriously limit the voice of people of color in making a decision on the board

**Ohio Board of Education member, Meryl Johnson**

Was recently targeted with unfairly-drawn Board of Education district over refusal to vote to repeal a resolution condemning racism. Correct pronunciation of name - Meryl like “pearl” or “girl”

State Board has 11 elected members; 8 members are appointed by Governor. Resolution to condemn racism and advance equity was passed July 14th, 2020 with vote of 12 to 5 with one abstention. 8 appointed members helped pass this. Resolution can be found on [honestyforohioeducation.info](https://www.honestyforohioeducation.info/).

Linda Haycock, Stephanie Dodd, Laura Kohler, and I did a lot of research to put together this resolution. Needed to do this for our children of color. We can’t make anyone do anything as far as this resolution goes, but we strongly recommended all Ohio school districts begin a reflection and internal examination of their own involving all members of their school community, to examine all facets of schools’ operations, with a special emphasis on curriculum, hiring practices, staff development practices, and student discipline. Directed Ohio Dept of Education to reexamine academic content standards, and require implicit bias training for all state employees and contractors and created that requirement for all members of state Board of Education.

<https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/State-Board/State-Board-Meetings/State-Board-Meetings-for-2020/July-2020-Meeting-Minutes-Final.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>

We became target for all the crazy racists out there. One meeting, we had 21 people come to speak against this resolution. Had to sit there and listen to this garbage.

New board members joined after fall of 2020. New member Brendan Shea wanted to rescind resolution. Martha Manchester wanted to hold on to original resolution, but created her own instead.

8 appointed members were threatened that if they didn’t vote to rescind resolution, they would be kicked off the board. Laura Kohler and Eric Poklar chose not to vote to rescind resolution. By vote of 10 to 7, this resolution condemning racism was rescinded.

“To them, the resolution no longer exists. But to me, I talk about it all the time.” I told them the work would continue.

I was recently asked, would state board of education come out against House Bill 327 that would censor our classrooms and prohibit our teachers from teaching truth? Based on vote of 10 to 7, we won’t have the votes to do that.

The bill defines sex as biological sex, denies existence of systemic racism, would not allow state agencies to deal with “divisive subjects”, would prohibit requiring teachers to teach anything against their beliefs, would require teaching American civil rights movement “objectively,”, would not allow state-funded institutions (colleges) to use state funding “in support or promotion of any divisive subjects”, would prohibit teacing inequality of gender or race, would allow teaching licenses to be revoked for violation of this bill, would allow parents to sue teachers, school districts, etc. for “injunctive relief.”

Conservatives have weaponized critical race theory, which isn’t taught in k-12. CRT is taught in law schools, says that systemic racism exists because of government policies. Started with Professor Derek Bell and Kimberle Crenshaw. Conservatives have made CRT umbrella term for anything that acknowledges racism.

I got a diverse group of 13 students together to express opposition to the bill. Group was called SPEAK - Students Promoting Equity And Knowledge. Held zoom meetings. Wrote Letters to the Editor. 10 letters out of 13 students. Published in community newspapers. Encouraged students to speak at school board meetings.

Important to get our students out in the communities. Need to learn and respect each others’ differences.

State Board is currently working to hire State Superintendent - 27 applicants, narrowed down to 7 candidates.

Q: (Erik) Can you talk about your current election?
A: I’m termed out. I’m trying to find someone to run in my spot, but the way it’s currently drawn, we wouldn’t be able to get a person of color to represent this district. But, I still have radio show every Saturday at 1pm! <https://wruw.org/show/its-about-justice/>

Q: (Rep Skindell) I’ve known Meryl for my whole legislative career; she was very active in Cleveland Teachers Union. She inspires me immensely! HB 327 has stalled because of Sarah Fowler Arthur’s comments on Holocaust. We expect before summer that it will pass. 16 states have adopted a bill like this; 34 states have introduced a bill like this.

A: (Shares “Ruby Bridges Goes to School” book banned in Tennessee)

Q: (Chris Glassburn) answering Meryl’s question… It would be logical to put all of Cuyahoga County’s senate districts in one state school board district. Every state school board member who voted for resolution has had their district drawn in strange ways, drawing them out of district.

A: (Meryl) We have four democrats on the State Board, call ourselves a “posse”. The way the maps are drawn now, Christina Collins would have to run in a district she doesn’t live in.

Q: (Chris) They are also purging Republicans who showed decency and supported the resolution.

(Erik) Seems like a lot of people here want us to look more like Russia!

From Chat:

Erik: I heard that Advanced Placement US History credit would not be given by College Board for Ohio high school students b/c of this bill since there's no guarantee they are actually learning history?

From Betsy Shaughnessy to Everyone: (8:26 PM)

 The College Board has made that statement - we have recently been told Lakewood would be one of 50 school districts i the country that can teach an AP Black History class and this would put us at risk of losing this opportunity. Betsy

From Chitra Walker to Everyone: (8:29 PM)

 Thank you, Meryl, for a wonderful, informative and passionate presentation! I am so grateful for what you are doing on our State School Board!

**REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

President: Erik - working on permanent place to meet in person. pushing city council to pass ordinance to allow community meetings at Cove. if not moving along, will go back to women’s pavilion which is starting meetings again in April. April meeting in person, mark will give details. decided not to do endorsement meeting yet given all the chaos around the maps and primary election.

First Vice President: Maureen - Thanks to speakers. Complex subjects that they helped simplify.

Political Activism: Maureen (Jay not present) - Jay wanted to emphasize votefwd.org

Book Club: Carol - still reading Unthinkable by Jamie Raskin. Watching movie on 2014 uprising in Ukraine. Meeting April 19th at 7pm at bottlehouse.

Second Vice President: Mark - thanks to our guests! Thursday April 28th at 6pm at Sauced - in person meeting!!!!

Erik - in person meeting could also be endorsement meeting! will give 21 days notice

Treasurer: $10 and roughly 100 members. Thanks for submitting renewals and new membership applications!

Secretary: working to get all the links in the facebook group!

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

Statehouse: Senator Antonio - working on Capital budget right now. Lakewood has a few projects - Foster Pool, the bridge project, the Beck Center. next couple weeks, will be taking up the capital budget - all brick and mortar projects. 20+ million dollars comes to Northeast Ohio.

Btw, i am running for reelection, wherever that is, lakewood will be part of it! thanks to everyone who came to fundraiser at the music box

Rep Skindell - also running for reelection! fundraising event next thursday april 7th at the harp 5-7pm

State Board of Education: (already heard from Meryl)

County Council: Dale - Lakewood application for streetscaping approved by the county, update coming on American Rescue Plan money

Lakewood City Council:

Councilperson Kepple - will be seeing first proposal of development plans at City Council meeting monday april 4th ; Hospital Development Site Information: https://www.lakewoodoh.gov/city-of-lakewood-recommends-plan-to-redevelop-former-lakewood-hospital-site/

Cove Community Center opening Tuesday April 12th, ribbon cutting at 5:30pm, Mayor’s State of the City address at 6pm, open house at 6:30

Councilperson Bullock - working on baseball fields at Kaufman park, Madison park with board of education

Working with Councilperson Rader and Mayor George to propose 100% clean power at an affordable price to anyone in Lakewood who wants it as a default option

Lakewood School Board: President Shaugnessy - came from program where Dr. Greanoff’s students presented on Civil War on the idea that we must speak the truth and teach the WHOLE history. We are committed to maintaining the standards that Lakewood has!

 Senator Antonio - so encouraged to hear this! instead of backing off, Lakewood is leaning in

CCDP: Karolyn - holding meetings for candidates for Central Committee! ODP’s regional organizer will be coming, based on Ohio City, excited to meet all our volunteers! Hopefully we can meet him at April or May meeting.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING - April 28, 2022 at Sauced at 6pm!

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting was adjourned at 9:02pm. Betsy moved; Chuck seconded.

Event notes prepared by Nicole Parke on March 31, 2022.

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Secretary Approval: sign date

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President Approval: sign date

From Michael Ryan to Everyone: (8:52 PM)

 Good evening Lakewood Democrats. I’m sorry I couldn’t speak during the candidate portion of the meeting, because I had a Bard of Director meeting. This is Judge Michael Ryan and I’m thankful for your previous support and hope to get your votes and support in May and November. I’ll see everyone in April.