**The Lakewood Democratic Club**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting held** **Mar 25, 2021
Online space at zoom.us**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm 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 February 25, 2021.

HOUSEKEEPING - Erik updated that the latest minutes are up on the website, and let us know who still needs to renew their membership.

RECOGNITION OF NOTABLES – County Councilman Dale Miller, Lakewood City Council Candidate Kyle Baker, Lakewood Municipal Court Candidate Sara Fagnilli, School Board Member Ed Favre, Councilman Tom Bullock, State Representative Monique Smith, Judge Richard Bell, Judge Deborah M. Turner, State Representative Mike Skindell, County Party City Leader Karolyn Isenhart, Cuyahoga Democratic Women’s Caucus leader Cindy Demsey, Councilwoman Sarah Kepple.

New Member Zoe Toscos introduced herself.

**WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH PROGRAM:**

**STATE REPRESENTATIVE MONIQUE SMITH, ACTIVIST SUSAN POLAKOFF SHAW, ACTIVIST MISTY ELEK**

* Tell us about your district/your organization and yourself: why and how did you get involved in politics?

S: live in Westpark, used to live in Lakewood. After crying & drinking with neighbors, decided to take on local issues together. Wanted better representation at all levels. Started GrassRoots Resistance group organically, meet once a month. Roll up sleeves and do dirty work of activism. Partner with Bay Village Nasty Women. We’re the “foot soldiers.” Group is diverse in age!

Mi: grew up in Mentor, lived in Lakewood, now live in Bay Village. Wanted a better future for kids, motivated by Hilary Clinton’s run for president. BVNW grew out of group text of “mom friends” in Bay Village. Over 760 Facebook group members. Very issue-based at the beginning. Was chairwoman of “reproductive rights committee,” met Susan at Planned Parenthood event in 2017. Raised over $20,000 for Planned Parenthood over two fundraisers. Turned into supporting local electeds. Wanted to kick out Dave Greenspan, state representative. Met Monique and knew she could do it!

Mo: live in Fairview Park, formerly lived in Lakewood. Stayed in Columbus tonight. First campaign got involved in was John Kerry. Someone suggested she run for Lakewood City Council, where she served 2010-2014. Lakewood filled with Democratic talent. Started family, decided to focus on kids. Volunteered on Hilary campaign in 2016. After Trump won, wanted to be done with politics. Stayed involved in Moms Demand Action. Learned about Statehouse through MDA. Alarmed by her state rep Dave Greenspan’s voting record on guns. Then voted for the abortion ban, and knew someone had to run against him. Wanted woman to run against him. Decided to run herself! in the right place at the right time, with the right people involved, with the opportunity to flip district. Talked to Misty which clinched decision to run! Won primary with 70% of vote. Defeated Greenspan in general election despite him being the one Republican who was talking to FBI about corrupt Speaker Householder. Only district in Ohio to flip from red to blue. Used data to advantage. Now serving in Statehouse!

* What worked in 2020 – what should we continue doing? What didn’t work in the campaigns you were involved in – what should we stop doing? What do you wish we did that we don’t do now?

Mo: By 2018, people were organized and motivated by two years of Trump. The electorate changed! Senator Brown suggested looking at areas that were starting to turn blue. Had to focus on running against Trump. Go after suburban voters.

Mi: Need to understand voter trends and who the voters are. Knew women were more politically engaged. 58% of Democratic ballots pulled in primary were women. Targeted women. Motivated volunteers with individualized approach. Make sure volunteers feel supported.

S: took Monique’s message and amplified it. Moe would usually drop in to GRR’s in person meetings. talked to friends in district about Monique and Greenspan. Had conversations everywhere they could. Talking friend to friend :)

* Monique: how is the Ohio Statehouse? What are you surprised about?

Mo: it’s bad! Democrats in superminority. Republicans can pass anything. and they don’t wear masks. Certain legislators are hostile and demeaning towards any Democrats’ effort at good government. Bill Seitz is the worst! has strong influence over how colleagues vote. Incredibly rude. Referred to survivors of sexual assault as “the Me Too crowd”. Doing what she can to “make bad bills better.”

* What keeps you motivated despite setbacks to our cause?

Mo: need everyone to keep at it. Lakewood Dems, BVNW, GRR keeps her going. Need motivated people. Even if you have to “slice and dice” campaign responsibilities into many people, do that. Divy up to keep it manageable and utilize all the talent you can.

Mi: friendship is important. Need people to vent to and rely on. During Monique campaign everyone was dedicated to the mission, but core value was gratitude. Easy to get disillusioned by the nastiness. Lifted each other up.

S: We got Monique there! Cherish the victories. As organizers need to keep everyone informed of the ugly stuff happening in Columbus. Relish the small victories. Scale back to your neighborhood.

* Didn’t seem like you made compromises. How did you balance your district and your own values?

Mo: met women via Emily’s List who had flipped Congressional districts in 2018. One said “I am pro-choice, but i can’t lead with it.” How to approach district over national issues.

S: Mo always told truth. Was approachable and relatable. Wasn’t “politiciany”

* What are other districts in NE Ohio that we see as flippable?

Mo: worried about places like Parma & Bride Sweeney’s district. Target Hudson, Strongsville, Avon Lake. Need to meet voters where they are - stick with bread and butter issues in working class areas.

S: Women who live in Lorain County - GRRWL (Western Lorain). Worked hard for Zach Stepp.

Mi: hope we can work on taking Portman’s Senate seat next year! also hope Anthony Gonzalez is vulnerable. Would like woman to run there.

Erik: need woman at top of governor ticket!

* closing thoughts

Mi: learned so much from Lakewood Dems. lots of knowledge here. might run for School Board!

S: GRR didnt want to reinvent the wheel. work closely with other clubs - like Ward 17 club. People power!

Mo: keep momentum going between elections. Stronger together! Lakewood’s support was crucial in her race. Need to make legislators uncomfortable supporting extremist policies. Can Lakewood Dems mentor Avon Lake Dems, North Ridgeville Dems, etc?

Erik: Women are key to turning Ohio blue!

**Update on Vaccinations:**

Member Eddie Cosma pharmacist with Metrohealth. Work on twitter bot that can disseminate info from ODH better. Monday, everyone 16 or older can sign up for vaccine. Vaccination is completely free. Easiest to sign up online. One out of four Ohioans have gotten at least one vaccine dose. Think June will be herd immunity! eddie.cosma@gmail.com , @OHVaxStats

Johnson & Johnson is safe, effective & available to us

**REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

President: still working on audit being completed by Emma Petrie Barcelona & Chuck Shaughnessy

First Vice President: thanks to speakers! Share topics of interest & suggested speakers with us. April will be environmental & June will be LGBT themed.

Political Activism: For the People Act is in the Senate! Call Portman & Brown ! Call your Senators Sherrod Brown (216-522-7272) and Rob Portman (216-522-7095)

Book Club: Tuesday, April 20 at 7pm we will have our book club meeting using Zoom. https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwtfuiprzojHNRj4EsaaX0uparL8k7tOkWh

In honor of Earth Day on April 22, we will read David Attenborough's new 272-page book A Life on Our Planet: My Witness Statement and a Vision for the Future.

We will also discuss the documentary “David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet” on Netflix. In this unique feature documentary, the celebrated naturalist reflects upon both the defining moments of his lifetime and the devastating changes he has seen. The film addresses some of the biggest challenges facing life on our planet, providing a snapshot of global nature loss in a single lifetime. With it comes a powerful message of hope for future generations as Attenborough reveals the solutions to help save our planet from disaster.

Second Vice President: Hoping to do Summer Supper this year!

Treasurer: Got 5 renewals this past month. About $9000 in bank account. Thanks to everyone who responded with professions.

Secretary: Updating pictures on the website - hoping to use tonight’s picture. Encourage members to get involved in local races this year.

UPDATES

State legislature - No Rep Skindell. Rep Smith: working on budget, started in House Finance. Transportation passed. Ohio has 14th highest ridership of public transportation but 49th in funding, according to Rep Brent. Skindell worked hard to double amount that governor proposed. Group ALEC = American Legislative Exchange Council…. pretends to be nonpartisan, VERY conservative. Source of extreme bills in several states.

County Council - Dale Miller. Christopher Vilan confirmed as sheriff of Cuyahoga County. Will receive $241 million from federal govt through stimulus program. Lots of opportunity for progress / improvement. April is child abuse & neglect awareness month. Learn how to recognize these situations and take positive action. Working with Mike Foley (Sustainability Director) to push federal government to become more involved in preventing toxic runoff into Lake Erie.

City Council - Sarah Kepple, on behalf of Dan O’Malley. Tonight hosted community safety meeting following shooting at Madison Park & MetroPCS. Recorded & live streamed <http://www.onelakewood.com/councilvideos/>. Council had already budgeted increasing lighting at Madison Park. Surveillance videos - do not want to lead to profiling. Used for investigating specific incidents, not 24/7. Also moving forward to have officers in parks. Increased police presence could make black & brown people unsafe? Public crime increasing as we start to come out of our homes. Need to work on gun violence prevention, mental health resources, etc.

 Tom Bullock - City’s developed number of tools over the years to keep city safe. Extended outdoor dining options for city’s restaurants.

School Board - Students went back to school full-time on March 15th. Every staff member has had opportunity to receive both doses of vaccine. 80% of families have sent kids back full time. Continued to offer remote. Watching budget discussions at state level. Receiving money from American Rescue Plan. Planning summer options for learning.

 Ed Favre: Staff working on summer opportunities to get caught back up on education.

 Michael Callahan: commend teachers & administrators for getting us through this.

County Party - Karolyn Isenhart. No updates. Monique had best speech at County Endorsement meeting!

Bottlehouse Brewery back open.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING - Thursday, April 29, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Event notes prepared by Nicole Parke on March 25, 2021.

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Secretary Approval: sign date

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President Approval: sign date