

Newton City Hall

Newton, MA 02459

**NDCC General Meeting Minutes**

1 June 2017

1. **Call to Order**
2. Chair Shawn Fitzgibbons called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m., at the War Memorial Auditorium, Newton City Hall. Attendance: ~75.

**B.** Executive Committee Attendance: 28. Shawn Fitzgibbons, Sharon Stout, Holly Ryan, David Albright, Hannah Banks, Bryan Barash, Rep. Ruth Balser, Betty Chan, Dan Clifford, Allan Cole, Audrey Cooper, Ruth Dain, Susan Davidoff, Robert Fitzpatrick, Sue Fliegel, Carol Fulton, Dmitriy Gridnev, Ted Gross, Larissa Hordynsky, Bill Humphrey, Martina Jackson, Barbara John, Rep. Kay Khan, Ken Krems, Priscilla Leith, Joan McGrath, Caroline Schwarzwalder, Frank Wolpe.

**II. Minutes of the March 2, 2017 NDCC General Meeting**

Motion: Frank Wolpe moved, Carol Fulton seconded the motion, to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2017 general meeting as distributed. Motion passed, no votes against, no abstentions.

**III. Reports of Officers and Ward and Standing Committees**

1. **Outreach Committee**
   1. The outreach committee put together a nice NDCC brochure. Thanks to Carol Fulton, Larissa Hordynsky, Betty Chan, and the committee for bringing this together.
2. **State Committee Update (Sharon Stout)**
   1. The state Democratic convention is this Saturday, June 3, in Worcester (not Lowell as originally planned). There will be many parties Friday night and breakfasts on Saturday morning.
   2. The convention will start at 10 a.m. sharp with roll call at 11 a.m.; delegates must check in with tellers first. If you don’t have credentials come early. There may be lines to get them at the door.
   3. This year’s convention will approve the state party platform for the next four years and vote on changes to the state party’s charter.
   4. Martina Jackson said that a proposed platform, the fruit of many hearings across the state, is available. Many groups are offering amendments to the draft, to be voted on at the convention.
   5. Joan McGrath is this year’s Martina Jackson delegate in honor of her exceptional hard work on behalf of the NDCC and Democratic candidates. Congratulations to Joan!

**IV. Announcements**

1. **Sunday, June 4:** An NDCC event “Civic Engagement and the Asian-American Community” at Social restaurant in Newton Corner, 4:30 p.m.
2. **Tuesday, June 6:** Pride Month flag raising at Newton City Hall, 6 p.m.
3. **Wednesday, June 7:** Newton City Council hearing on citizen position calling for an investigation into possible impeachment of Donald Trump.
4. **Saturday, June 10:** Boston Pride Parade, starts 10 a.m. from Boylston St., events all week.

**V. Old Business**

1. **“Resistance Resolution”**
   1. At the March general meeting Bill Humphrey proposed this resolution to call on our Congressional delegation to resist the Trump agenda as strongly as possible. The resolution was put over until this meeting. In the interim several members contributed to a revised version and, in May, the Executive Committee voted to recommend the amended version to the general membership for consideration.

**Motion:** Bryan Barash moved, Rep. Ruth Balser seconded the motion, to strike Part 3 of Point 3 to avoid ambiguity. Motion passed, no votes against, no abstentions.

**Motion:** Larissa Hordynsky moved, Rep. Ruth Balser seconded the motion, to add the words “and support the Paris accords” to the end of Point 3 in light of the administration’s recent announcement of the United States’ withdrawal. Motion passed, no votes against, no abstentions.

**Motion:** Bill Humphrey moved, Martina Jackson seconded the motion, to adopt the resolution as amended. Motion passed, no votes against, no abstentions.

**VI. New Business**

1. **Housing Statement (Councilor Susan Albright and Susan Davidoff)**
   * + 1. Councilor Susan Albright and Susan Davidoff worked to draft this resolution encouraging more affordable housing in Newton, as a statement of values and principles independent of any current development proposals.
       2. Peter Bruce said he supported the goals of the statement but believed that many of the projects proposed in Newton right now don’t achieve them. Instead they promote gentrification and will drive prices and local taxes up.

**Motion:** Bryan Barash moved, Adam Chaikof seconded the motion, to approve the statement calling for more affordable housing in Newton. Motion passed, no votes against, no abstentions.

1. **Proposed NDCC Bylaws Change (Shawn Fitzgibbons)**
   * + 1. The NDCC bylaws do not allow the committee to endorse in Democratic primaries or in nonpartisan elections (such as local elections). This proposal would change that.
       2. The concern has been expressed that such endorsements would be divisive and alienate members. The Executive Committee therefore voted to recommend a proposal that would allow endorsements only in very limited circumstances, where there is near unanimity.
       3. There would be a 3-step process:
          1. The Executive Committee would have to vote by a 90% vote of those present and voting whether to consider endorsing in a particular race.
          2. The next General Meeting (with a quorum requirement of 50) likewise would have to vote by a 90% vote of those present and voting whether to consider endorsing in that race.
          3. If the 90% threshold is reached on both of those votes, a motion to endorse a particular candidate would require the votes of 90% of those present and voting to pass.
       4. Carol Fulton said that, as a Bernie Sanders supporter in 2016, she would have felt alienated had the NDCC endorsed Hillary Clinton. Robert Fitzpatrick said that the change is designed to give the NDCC the power to endorse only in cases that are very clear-cut, such as when a “LaRouche Democrat” runs in a Democratic primary. He did not believe the 90% threshold would have been reached in the 2016 Presidential primary race, and as a fellow Sanders supporter, would have accepted it had Secretary Clinton received 90% of the vote.
       5. Shawn Fitzgibbons said that, where it seemed likely to cause division, Executive Committee members could take that into account and vote against initiating the endorsement process.
       6. Shawn said he was strongly in favor; Sharon Stout said she was opposed and would vote no.
       7. Councilor Bryan Yates pointed out that, as worded, the proposed language could be read to require three 90% votes to endorse the Democratic nominee in partisan elections. Shawn said that could be reviewed and the language revised at the next general meeting.
       8. Bryan Barash called the question.

A bylaws change requires a 2/3 vote of those present and voting (quorum of 31) to pass. There were 35 votes in favor, 10 votes against, and multiple abstentions. Amendment adopted.

1. **Maine 2nd Congressional District (Rep. Ruth Balser and Jason Paul)**
   * + 1. The NDCC formed a subcommittee to adopt the Maine 2nd Congressional district, the only district in New England currently held by a Republican. The Maine state senate also is Republican-controlled.
       2. Jason has been leading regular phonebanks to recruit Maine Democrats to get involved in building the party’s infrastructure there. Those called have been very receptive.
       3. There will be a fundraiser for the Maine Democratic Party featuring (part-time Maine resident) Barney Frank and the Maine Dems Executive Director at Shawn Fitzgibbons’s house on June 27.
2. **Important State Bills (Bryan Barash)**
   * + 1. There are a number of good bills that need help getting through the state legislature – they are listed on the last page of the agenda packet. Please call your representatives and ask friends and family elsewhere in Massachusetts to do the same.
       2. Two in particular should be highlighted:

**Motion:** Bryan Barash moved, Jason Paul seconded the motion, that the NDCC endorse Senator Creem’s bill to provide for automatic voter registration. Motion passed, no votes against, no abstentions.

**Motion:** Bryan Barash moved, Jason Paul seconded the motion, that the NDCC endorse an Act restoring financial transparency in presidential elections,” sponsored by Sen. Michael Barrett of Lexington, which would require candidates to release their tax returns in order to appear on the Massachusetts presidential ballot. Motion passed, no votes against, no abstentions.

1. **Raise Up Massachusetts (Robert Fitzpatrick)**
   * + 1. The Raise Up MA coalition, over 150 organizations, has three priorities right now:
          1. The “Fair Share” Amendment, which would impose an additional 4 percent tax on income over $1 million, is expected to pass the constitutional convention on June 14 and will be on the ballot in 2018. Rep. Ruth Balser urged members to support it, saying the revenue is badly needed to maintain and expand services in difficult budgetary times.
          2. Raising the state minimum wage to $15 by 2021, indexed to inflation thereafter. If the legislature does not pass pending bills by late July, we will collect signatures to place the issue on the ballot in 2018.
          3. Providing paid family and medical leave to all Massachusetts workers. Likewise, we will collect signatures to place this issue on the ballot if the legislature does not pass the bills.
       2. Our legislators support these initiatives, but please contact them anyway and please let others around the state know to do so. We are holding daytime phonebanks where people can be patched through to their legislators immediately, and those have been effective.
       3. If we need to collect signatures in the fall, volunteers will be needed for that.

**VII. Adjournment**

**Motion:** Martina Jackson moved to adjourn, Bryan Barash seconded the motion. Adjourned: 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert K. Fitzpatrick

Secretary, NDCC