Minutes for Portland Democratic City General Meeting July 6, 2017

Sarah Alexander, Vice President presided over the meeting. Twenty-two members attending. Sarah@portlanddems.org

Materials distributed:

Agenda for July 6

Minutes from the June 1, 2017 meeting

Platform Draft v. 7.6.17

**Minutes from June 1 were approved.**

Sarah provided a platform update, distributing the current draft of the platform. We will vote in August on the platform, online or in person. Vote on each line of every policy of the platform. A line in the platform must receive a two-thirds vote to be approved. A line that does not receive two-thirds vote will be dropped from the platform. Voting will begin August 1 and close midnight August 11. The August meeting of the PDCC will have presentations of each of the sections of the platform, allowing for questions and discussion.

A group of experts have been queried regarding the platform. Their responses will be made available until July 15th.

**The members voted this evening on the above process for review and voting on the platform. Passed unanimously.**

Members broke into small groups to discuss the platform and provide feedback to member of the Platform Committee.

Emily Postman, Chair of the Issues Committee reported that the committee has worked for weeks to address three issues endorsed by the PDCC: Enhancing democracy and the elimination of voting barriers; Increased Internet access across the city; and increasing affordable housing.

Enhancing democracy:

Numerous potential ways to enhance democracy require approval at the state level: online voter registration, voter registration through driver’s license, sending ballots via mail to registered voters, designated early voting. However, several initiatives may be done without state approval: conduct voter registration in high schools, mobilize voter participation through churches, coordinated rides on election day, encourage part of day off/paid day off, voter registration drives (partnering with others, such as Coffee By Design, Boy and Girl scouts). There was strong membership support for one or more voter education days.

The Issues Committee recommends checking into an early voting day. It is not clear whether or not this requires state level approval. Plans are to contact the Maine Secretary of State.

Increased Internet access:

There are two issues, creating a connected digital network that spans Portland, and making connections between the local network and the global Internet.

Connecting a digital network that spans Portland might use inexpensive wireless routers can be used to create a local network. Connections can be made through walls, out of windows, and from rooftops. With a good line of site (LOS) between routers they can make quite long connections. In less ideal circumstances, shorter-range connections may still be possible. Water and metal are the materials that block microwave radio transmission.

Making connections to the global network may be more of a challenge. Most, perhaps all, of the local residential Internet service providers (ISPs) forbid sharing your Internet access, so either a commercial plan that allows sharing the Internet needs to be negotiated, a less restrictive ISP needs to be discovered, or we need to get our own direct connection to the Internet backbone. Some research should be done to see whether places like the University of Southern Maine have a quality Internet connection that they could share.

Even if we have issues with finding Internet connections that we can legally share, we can still start building a local network with local servers and communication applications.

PDCC members brought attention to the Former Mayor Michael Bloomberg has announced the American Cities Initiative that will give out $200 million for innovative projects. Portland may be a prime candidate to receive such funding for enhanced city wide Internet.

Increasing affordable housing:

Fair Rent Portland is fostering a referendum for the fall. They are currently engaged in collecting petitions. The Issues Committee recommends that Fair Rent Portland be invited to make a presentation to an upcoming PDCC full meeting.

<https://fairrentportland.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/fairrentportland/>

**A motion was presented to accept the three initiatives that are listed above. A specific action being to contact whomever is needed within the city administration to apply for the Bloomberg grant. Passed unanimously.**

The July to September budget was distributed. Sarah Alexander stressed that additional GOTV funds will be added later when it is clearer what funds are needed.

**The budget was approved unanimously.**

Patrick Delgado announced that a PDCC Summer Picnic is planned for August 12 on the Eastern Prom. This will be a meet and greet occasion as well as a fundraiser. Plans are to have active engagement so that participants may engage with thought leaders and change makers. We need assistance for this event. Musicians are needed. Meet every 2nd Thursday at 6:20 at Bard Coffee to discuss and plan.

Sarah Alexander noted the Treasurer report as no unexpected revenues or expenses.

Michael Langenmayr, Chair of the Candidate Committee indicated he hopes to have citywide and school board forum. Districts D4 and D5 are of particular interest.

Sarah Alexander indicated no update for By-Laws. PDCC members of the By-Laws concurred.

Matheux Knight is working on the PDCC calendar and Facebook event page. Plans are to have information, meeting dates, and contact information for all PDCC committees.

Community Announcements

Harlan Baker made a community announcement tat the Cumberland County Democratic Committee (CCDC) will have a gathering July 23rd at the Kiwanis Beach in Sandish, $4 admission. There is 1000 feet of lakefront beach. So bring your swimsuit to the picnic. There is changing rooms and bathroom facilities. Also there is parking. The Kiwanis Beach is located off of Route 25 in Standish after you pass the junction of Route 113. We are all members of the CCDC.

Harlan Baker also announced a stop racism demonstration every first Friday.

Gwnne Williams announced that Carl Pease is offering a parliamentary procedure class. Contact Gwnne is you are interested.