

August 13, 2020 Portland Dems Monthly Meeting (by Zoom)

25 participants

Chair Simon Thompson presided over the meeting.

Stacey Mitchell, Co-Director of the Institute for Local Self Reliance (ILSR) <https://ilsr.org/about-the-institute-for-local-self-reliance/> spoke to PDCC members. Stacey emphasized that over the last 30 years there has been extreme concentration of power and control by major corporations. These practices are sustained by the myth that “bigger is better” and that governments should reduce regulations and oversight of large business. This concentration has been supported by both Republican and Democratic administrations. This leads directly to reduced competition, increased pressure on small businesses, a sharp drop-off of start-up businesses, reduced corporate taxation (local businesses pay a higher tax rate than corporations), and a disinclination to raise worker wages.

Government has been so dysfunctional for so long that we often think it is not possible to do anything. See Stacey’s article in The Atlantic

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/08/americans-can-barely-imagine-congress-works/615091/>

ILSR works with the full recognition that markets are creatures of government policy. It totally matters what the rules are, not merely the quantity of rules. In concert with other associations, ILSR partners to move legislation to help local businesses, and improve the infrastructure that fosters growth, for example: public broadband.

Stacey has received some national recognition for her criticism of Amazon. Individuals can often avoid Amazon by buying directly from the producer. Also, quite a few local businesses offer e-commerce. Look for local directories to expand your awareness of local business services. ILSR wrote the booklet “fighting monopoly power” <https://ilsr.org/fighting-monopoly-power/>

Attending to the interconnections is a key perspective. For example wage legislation needs to be linked to affordable housing. Universal Basic Income (UBI) is often attacked for fear of “running out of jobs”. In truth, increased household income will relate directly to economic growth and more jobs.

Will we have any politicians who have the insight and political will to take on these problems?

PDCC business announcements:

The minutes for the June meeting were approved with 100% voting in favor.

The PDCC had considerable success with the Primary forum we arranged. There were 30 participants and 1000 views.

As you will recall, prior to the primary, the city clerk had reduced Portland polling stations to only one! Due to our efforts and others, all of the polling stations were open. We are currently pushing for weekend voting as well as drop boxes that would allow people to avoid going to the clerk's office.

Vice-Chair Evan reported that the MDP is doing solid work now with a weekly phone banks. Shivani Agarwal, MDP Portland coordinator, has arranged trainings. Tuesday nights are PDCC phone banking times (as well any other time you are available). We need to convince registered Dems who voted for Collins in the past. We are finding people who are supporting Collins while voting for the other Dems. Sign up through this link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfbO9Ec3DWSas670ygdX3-AIMsSh6_X3Ftkrh1r8h1Ji-BACg/viewform

Treasure Kim Walter posted June and July budget reports on the Portland Dems website. The PDCC Finance Subcommittee is reconstituted with Joe Zamboni as the new chair. We anticipate PDCC will have approximately 15K in our account. Kim provided this budget link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rtXeFEUJ6jbTI6IDC9zfSnAIZAtB0S8o/view>

Minutes respectfully submitted by Douglas Lynch, PDCC Secretary