

Plymouth Area Democrats

Meeting Minutes for the February 16th, 2011 Meetings held at the Plymouth Regional Senior Center.

Prior to the meeting, Ellen B Fine addressed the attendees and asked that they work in favor of HB 495, on pesticides, and asked for phone calls to Reps in support of passage.

1. Call to Order – Bob Lamb – Welcome to all in attendance
 - Reported on KTHO – over \$22,000 for fuel assistance. An idea conceived by Deb Reynolds. Martha Richards took it and ran with it. All proceeds to the Plymouth Area Community Closet. It's a bi-partisan effort – and is the primary source of funds for PACC.
2. Elected Guests: Suzanne Smith and Jim Aguiar, state representatives
3. Other Guests: Phil Preston and Deb Reynolds, John Barriere, Political Director of the NH Democratic State Party, and newly elected Grafton County Democrats' Chair and Vice-Chair – Martha Richards and Sue Ford; PSU Democrats President Amber Barbagallo and the large group of students from Eric McLeish's class.

Vice Chairman Paul Phillips – Gave an update on the recount of the Jim Aguiar's state Rep race. The recount was challenged. Jim Aguiar won by 2 votes – 100 state reps lost by less than 400 votes.

4. Nationally, 45 million people voted in 2008 but significantly less voted in 2010.
5. Per the PAD by-laws 4 officers elected for 2 year terms. Each year we will have an election for officers. This year, PAD will hold elections for Vice Chair and Treasurer. Next year, elections will be held for Chair and Secretary.

Paul Phillips will run for another 2 year term.
Bob Therriault is running for Treasurer.

Attendees were asked to consider running and to contact Bob Lamb if they had any questions about the responsibilities of these two positions.

Carole Heuser is away and she asked Barbara Fahey to take notes for February.

6. Other Business – locally it's so hard to run for office. Mike Conklin was introduced. He is a candidate for the Plymouth Selectman. He talked about his experience with CADY, the ZBA, and CGSB. He mentioned there are 4 candidates for two positions. He was asked by Martha Richards to describe why he is running. He said the 2 warrant articles for the new Fire and Police stations, each estimated at 3 million. He said everyone agrees they need to be done and he thinks we should, interest rates are low. He is opposed to the Northern Pass. Dick Lewis – Chair of the Plymouth Zoning Board. He moved here with his wife in 2002. He is the city planner for Franklin, NH (for almost

7 years). He will recuse himself on the issue of the Northern Pass. He moved here because of the vibrancy of the town. He enjoys working with boards, with people, keeping good relations with the University. He talked about family neighborhoods, resource protection, and community planning. There are some regulations on the books that are not all that effective. He lives on Keeble St (among many student apartments). Martha Richards asked him how he would vote on the Northern Pass and he said he would have to recuse himself. She said she wants all 44 towns along the Northern Pass to be unanimous in denying the building of the Northern Pass. He said he was with Seabrook and with his position in Franklyn creates a fence he needs to straddle.

7. John Barriere, Political Director of the NHDP spoke as to what activities are going on at the state party. Questions were welcomed. John said he was a UNH student when Sen. Barack Obama visited campus and that got him involved. He was pleased to see PSU students are involved and encouraged anyone who is interested to contact with Amber or contact John. They need interns and staff. John said the recent election was very unfortunate. "More to ruin NH" – per Gov. Lynch. The NH Republicans said their first order of business would be jobs but instead

- it was to raise the 40 year ban on guns on the House floor
- to try to kick out his boss, Mike Brunelle, because he was a democrat (and was in a position to possible influence the vote on minimum wage?)
- Take away student's right to vote
- Then they tried to take away gay and lesbian's right to marry
- Voted to force the Attorney General to void the National Healthcare
- Stop Planned Parenthood funding
- Stop funding kindergarten. Described it as wasteful spending.
- And comments in the newspaper showed a hatred for public employees

John said they are trying to communicate with constituents through their Friday Brown Bag lunches. They heard after the election they had been too slow. Every Wednesday night on the phone there are updates during legislative session.

Neighbor to neighbor programs to reach Independents. Republicans lied to the Independents when they said their agenda would be fiscal, fiscal, fiscal. Instead they

- Raised the gun ban
- Tried to oust Mike Brunelle
- Disenfranchise students
- Take away kindergarten

John asked if we are getting emails. Everyone said yes. If not, contact him at JohnBarrier@NHDP.com

Paul Phillips asked about the proposal in the House. Would the speaker be shamed into stepping back on the ledge re: Mike Brunelle? They are back-peddling fast. The Constitution allows Mike to do both. The other education issues were about kindergarten and the definition of an "adequate education" – whether the arts, foreign language, technology and other subjects should be included. 103 people came, 102 were against, and 1 was for it.

The Manchester Union Leader had two editorials supporting Mike Brunelle.

Home Schooling – get rid of all regulations – very few people attended to support this action. Some showed up to protect. The Home Schooling people did not show up because they knew how the committee is going to vote.

Gay and lesbians right to marry – tomorrow – Feb 17th. About 500 people will go – wearing red. If it passes in the House, still had to go to the Senate and could be overridden. Show up in Concord, be public, even if it doesn't pan out.

Currently the House and Senate have Republican majorities, so they can override Governor Lynch's veto.

Even some Republicans are surprised their own party by supporting marriage equality. 25 Republicans voted against "right to work".

Don't give up. Veto Day is a long way away.

8. One of the students said "there is a generational feeling of hopelessness or they don't care. Because we don't know about these things (described tonight) or we just heard about them. She asked if anyone had thought about using Social Media. We don't understand how it works. I feel lost"

John Barriere said we need to reach out. Even he is perplexed by some things – like how the retirement system works, how Medicare works. It's a lifetime learning process. Don't just come tonight because of your class. Come again. 45 million people voted in 2008...it's hard to get everyone out.

Deb Reynolds said lots of people even in their 30, 40, 50s are not that knowledgeable. Go to the NH General Court website <http://gencourt.state.nh.us>

The PSU Dems said all are welcome even if not a Dem. They meet once a week, at 7:30 in Room 304 Rounds, every month. They are trying to raise excitement. The Clock (PSU student newspaper) is trying to cover some bills.

Suzanne Smith said "Come to Concord" re: Right to vote, HB 176.

Bob said we found out the parties get interested in students only every 2 years so we decided to build a better relationship with the students. We extended an open invitation to our monthly meetings. And Dr .Sheryl Shirley, PSU Professor is a member of the PAD.

Paul Phillips and Maureen Lamb said the PAD are accessible on Facebook.

Sue Ford – said if we cannot answer your questions call John Barriere. John left his cards. He can get the answers. There are 6-7 full-time staff members – we are there to help.

Jim Aguiar won by 2 votes – 100 state reps lost by less than 400 votes.

9. Elected Reps: What is Going on in Concord

Rep. Suzanne Smith – we used to be in the majority and now we are not. Things are very difficult in Concord.

Rep. Jim Aguiar said there 152 Democrat 5 years ago. The moderate Republicans are gone. There were republicans who were good people, reasonable and moderate. He said The Pledge of Allegiance is recited before most committee meetings now – and that recently the chair of one of his committees finished it “with liberty and justice for all, the born and the unborn”. Jim challenged him on this –saying to us the chair can’t steal the pledge of allegiance for his own political agenda. Since the Civil War the Republicans have been the majority in NH until 2006 and through 2010. Now the republicans are trying to roll back everything. Including rolling back every fee – most passed prior to the Democratic majority in 2006. For example, the fee paid by Pesticide companies the State uses to clean up. Jim’s committee is looking at 90 fees to roll back. Repealing a shoreline fee that protects waterways. Their committee voted to keep this particular fee 10-6 but the House did not listen to the committee’s recommendation. Regarding Mike Brunelle – he was only remotely connected to the minimum wage but one of the Republican members on his committee voted against the waterways fee even though he lives on a lake. Jim’s committee voted to increase the room and meals tax from 8 to 9%. This represents \$27 million additional dollars per Suzanne Smith.

Paul Phillips asked what can we do to prepare for 2012?

Every ten years because of the Census there is redistricting. There will be two reps because Plymouth State has grown.

Suzanne Smith encouraged people to go down to Concord.

Sign in to show you are for or against certain bills. There are 1000 bills every year. There is a public hearing and if you sign in you can also speak for or against.

Sheryl Shirley – Funding – big cuts for USNH reduce benefits, cut salaries, many cuts – then tuition will go up. NH students have the highest debt ratio.

10. Sue Ford and Martha Richards – Grafton County Democrats

Sue Ford:

Bill will be discussed next Thursday on Same Day Registration.

Domicile – students and servicemen and women. Wear green, white and black or whatever color to make a statement, show your support, make everyone notice.

Martha Richards – the power lines are in my back yard but Northern Pass lines must not succeed. Real Estate values will go down, 135 foot towers, gazillion watts; – this has galvanized the North Country. Franklin, a poor town economically, will benefit but it is just one town out of 44.

Martha mentioned she and Sue as Co-Chairs of the Grafton County Democrats attended the successful meeting in January at the Common Man in Plymouth. Over 75 people in attendance. We will work hard. It is an uphill battle. We need to get our message to our legislators and form committees, write letters to the editor.

Next meeting of the Grafton County Dems – May 21st. It will be in the Upper Valley and will focus on business. This includes the Upper Valley, the Plymouth Area Dems, and Northern Grafton.

There are signup sheets for the three committees:

- Communications – talking points, letters
- Legislative Committee
- Technology Committee – Deb Grant and Maureen Lamb

“We are going to take back New Hampshire”

Tim Arsenault was introduced – he is with “Organizing for America for 2012”

Next Meeting on March 16th

Adjourned 7:59

Notes submitted 2/23/2011 by Barbara B. Fahey

