

Four Freedoms Democratic Club  
February General Membership Meeting  
February 11, 2019  
The Church of the Holy Trinity, Draesel Hall  
7:00-8:45pm

### Minutes

1. Welcome (2 minutes)
  - a. President Bridget Cusick called the meeting to order, and reminded everyone that the Club has two meetings in February
    - i. One for nominations (current meeting), and one for the vote (February 19th)
  - b. Bridget also reminded everyone that the Club is celebrating its 5th Anniversary with a happy hour event on March 5th at Dorrian's Red Hand
2. Presentation on congestion pricing by Transportation Alternatives (20 minutes)
  - a. Jack Davies from the group Transportation Alternatives ("TransAlt") gave a presentation on congestion pricing, which, if enacted, would levy a flat fee (\$8-10 per day) on cars entering Manhattan below 60th Street during certain periods
    - i. This would tackle two crises at once: gridlock and MTA funding
  - b. By one estimate, the measure would raise \$15 billion over next 10 years, all of which would go directly towards transit improvements
    - i. The legislature has already passed a "lockbox bill" preventing revenues from being used on anything other than the MTA
  - c. Although this has been an idea for more than 10 years, it has not gained sufficient traction until now
    - i. Governor Cuomo is fully supportive this year, and has included the measure in his initial budget
    - ii. Our local electeds are on board, and Sen. Liz Krueger has been especially vocal in her support
    - iii. Alternative MTA funding proposals (e.g., a gas tax or millionaires tax) have not gained support in Albany
  - d. Other cities have implemented congestion pricing, including London and Stockholm, with positive results, including reductions in pedestrian fatalities and air pollution
  - e. Q&A:
    - i. Members expressed concerns about small businesses bearing the cost of deliveries
    - ii. Many expressed support, and noted that it is not mutually exclusive with other revenue-raising measures (e.g., millionaire's tax)
  - f. What can we do to support it?
    - i. Make sure our electeds remain on board, and that it is a priority
      1. State Committee Member Adam Roberts is in Albany today lobbying for congestion pricing and talked to all of our electeds

3. Board recommendation on party office numbers (20 minutes)
  - a. In light of the amendment to the Club's constitution permitting us to run less than a full slate of candidates, the Board has reached out to the other clubs in an effort to ensure that Four Freedoms can maximize its representation at the judicial convention
  - b. Matt Lombardi made a motion to run a slate of 8 candidates for judicial delegate, and 8 for alternate
    - i. The goal would be to guarantee that most, if not all, of the 16 candidates would be elected
    - ii. In years past, we have run a full slate, worked very hard, and yet won only one or a few seats
  - c. Potential candidates were also reminded that running for judicial delegate is a big commitment and must be taken seriously
    - i. The Club expends significant resources on these races, and its endorsement carries weight
      1. We run as a group and want everyone to support the full slate, rather than run just for themselves
    - ii. Candidates are expected to petition often
    - iii. Candidate *must* be willing and able to attend the convention, which will take place sometime between August 8th and 14th
  - d. Discussion:
    - i. Several members spoke in favor of the proposal, arguing that it would ensure that all candidates are committed and would maximize the Club's clout in picking judicial nominees
    - ii. Some member spoke against the proposal, arguing that we do not want to limit number of people who are interested in these positions
      1. Counter-argument: nothing prevents someone from running on their own, using their own resources
    - iii. Some members were concerned that the other clubs won't abide by the division of seats, and will run a full slate regardless of our entreaties
    - iv. Mike Dillon (former President and co-founder) noted that the Club had its genesis in opposition to closed nominations
      1. Counter-arguments: this is not analogous, because anyone can still run for the 8 slots
    - v. Gabe Panek (former president) argued that this would lessen our focus on judicial delegates, which can take up a lot of energy/resources, and allow us to focus on other initiatives
      1. We can try it this year, and reassess afterwards
  - e. Vote on the motion:
    - i. In favor = 35
    - ii. Opposed = 3
    - iii. Abstentions = 1
4. Nominations for party office endorsements (10 minutes)
  - a. Fred Newton
  - b. Sheila Flaxman

- c. Jerry Ferguson
  - d. Frank Wilkinson
  - e. Nancy Lang
  - f. Steve Goldberg
  - g. Arlene Kayatt
  - h. Jeremy Berman
  - i. Abbye Lawrence
  - j. Gabe Panek
  - k. Susan Hochberg
  - l. Elana Schwartz
  - m. Esther Yang
  - n. Dillon (declined)
  - o. Bridget (declined)
  - p. Kim Moscaritolo (declined)
  - q. Ruth Halberg
  - r. Alex Bores
  - s. Matt Lombardi
  - t. Pierre Ratzki
5. Nominations for District Leader (5 minutes)
- a. Ben Wetzler (male, Part A)
  - b. Kim Moscaritolo (female, Part B)
  - c. Alex Bores (male, Part B)
  - d. Josh Kravitz (male, Part B)
  - e. Jill Eisner (female, Part A)
6. Resolution about "state of emergency" and government shutdown (5 minutes)
- a. The Club voted unanimously to adopt a [resolution](#) condemning the Trump administration's tactic of threatening successive government shutdowns, as well as the threat of declaring a national emergency, in order to gain leverage in negotiations over border wall funding
  - b. The Club is also active in a coalition organized by MoveOn, colloquially known as the "Protect Mueller" coalition
    - i. The coalition's goal is to organize instant nationwide protests if Trump fires Mueller, as the group was able to do when Trump replaced AG Sessions with Matt Whitaker
    - ii. The group can do the same in the event of another shutdown, and/or national emergency declaration
7. Committee updates (15 minutes)
- a. Nancy Lang, head of the transit subcommittee, noted that the New York Times recently published an editorial column strongly supporting congestion pricing
  - b. Ben Wetzler gave an update on the state of campaign finance reforms:
    - i. Two coalitions – Let NY Vote; Fair Elections NY – have been pushing a slate of electoral reforms, many of which were included in the recent bill passed by the state

- ii. However, the bigger lift will be to change our campaign finance system to include:
        - a. Statewide matching funds system (similar to the City's system), and
        - b. Ban on all LLC donations
    - c. Ilyssa Fuchs gave up an update on the events committee:
      - i. The 5th Anniversary happy hour will take place on March 5th at Dorrian's Right Hand, starting at 6:30
        - a. Members will receive a drink ticket
        - b. There will be the opportunity to pay dues at the event
      - ii. The event will also serve as an informal petitioning kick-off, and members will be able to sign up for petitioning slots, as well as committees
    - d. Tricia Shimamura gave an update on the diversity and outreach committee:
      - i. Hosting a meeting at Tricia's house tomorrow to discuss efforts to get more young people involved and increase diversity
      - ii. Next week's meeting will feature a presentation on amending the 13th Amendment
    - e. Kim Moscaritolo & John Wagner gave an update on the newly-merged policy & activism committee:
      - i. Next week's meeting (February 19th) will include a meet-up for anyone who is interested in joining the newly-formed group
      - ii. We are hoping to form subgroups to tackle discrete issues, including (but not limited to):
        - a. Criminal justice reform
        - b. Marijuana legalization
        - c. Fair elections
        - d. Transportation
        - e. Mueller/corruption
          - a. Hoping to get people who are passionate to pick their issue and take a leadership role in addressing it
    - f. Jerry gave an update on social media committee:
      - i. Working to organize the first meeting of the year
        - a. One item on the agenda will be the election of a new chair, as Jerry will be stepping aside
      - ii. In the coming year, we hope to see increased coordination between the policy & activism committee and social media committee
        - a. The latter can promote the Club's resolutions via social media
8. District Leader updates (10 minutes)
- a. Kim and Ben gave an update on the status of the County Committee, which will have many more seats in the district than last year, thanks to massive midterm election turnout
    - i. Members are encouraged to contact Kim or Ben if interested in running for a seat

- b. The Club endorsed Jumaane Williams in the Public Advocate race, and will be hosting a phone bank tomorrow in Union Hall at 6pm
  - c. Kim is hosting her annual Galentine's Day fundraiser on Wednesday, February 13th, at Vanguard Wine Bar, 1372 1st Ave., at 6:30pm
9. State Committee updates (10 minutes)
- a. State Committee Member Lauren Trapanotto has been working with Erica Vladimer on creating a subcommittee for sexual harassment
    - i. The Capitol is rife with harassment, which has gone unaddressed
    - ii. The recently proposed laws were grossly inadequate, and the process gave victims no seat at the table
  - b. The legislature will be holding the first hearing on sexual harassment in 27 years on Wednesday
    - i. Members are encouraged to submit comments on the legislature's website
    - ii. But one meeting isn't enough – we need many more, including in NYC
10. Member time (10 minutes)
- a. Jordan Stein:
    - i. Recently elected as the Secretary of Manhattan Young Democrats
    - ii. Wants to coordinate letter writing parties with the Club
  - b. Jeff Gold:
    - i. Groups will be marching to Jamie Dimon's house on Valentine's Day morning because JP Morgan Chase is the largest holder (62%) of debt for private prison companies responsible for child separation detention centers
11. Adjourn