

Meeting Minutes  
Progressive Democrats of Genesee Valley  
Brighton Memorial Library  
2300 Elmwood Avenue, Rochester, NY 14618  
11 June 2008  
7:00pm – 9:00pm

Taken by Nicholas Wilt

Attendees:

Robin Reynolds Wilt  
Nicholas Wilt  
Laurie Gunther Fellows  
Michael Brown  
Jim Tappon  
Peter Peters  
Bill Benet  
Dave Nevin  
Ann Diehl  
Jim Swarts

1. Statement of Purpose

The attendees reviewed the Statement of Purpose (<http://www.pdagv.org/About.html>). Robin solicited feedback, but no substantive changes were proposed at the meeting. One attendee emphasized the importance of collaborating with other organizations; per the inaugural meeting of May 14, emphasis was placed on candidate support and election-focused activities to complement existing issues-driven organizations and initiatives. After discussion, Robin asked that any additional feedback on, or questions about, the Statement of Purpose be directed to [info@pdagv.org](mailto:info@pdagv.org).

2. Membership Dues

Most of the organization's activities are inexpensive, but not free. The Rochester Public Library System and other venues charge a nominal fee for use of their facilities; festivals charge for booths; many facilities require the organization to hold a liability policy (which we have obtained and cost \$185); the organization also needs things like table banners, printing, copies. Maintenance of the website and P.O. Box constitute still additional expenses.

We are asking that members pay \$35/year in dues, with the caveat that members may opt out of dues in favor of participation.

3. Roles That Need To Be Filled

1. PDA Point Person (acting: Robin Reynolds Wilt)
2. Database Manager (acting: Nicholas Wilt)

3. Treasurer –The FEC requires periodic filings if we create a PAC. Robin says the needed tools are online and that the FEC has people to help. No one volunteered.
4. Media Coordinator (acting: Robin Reynolds Wilt)
5. Candidate Chairs: Jim Swarts agreed to step up as Candidate Chair for Eric Massa.

Robin noted that in light of the national PDA endorsement, Eric will be given opportunities to appear on Air America Radio and the GRITtv television program with Laura Flanders. The PDA Air America Radio program will be broadcast Tuesday evenings beginning June 3, 2008, at 10:00 ET locally on WROC AM 950. Dave Nevin has more information about a local Air America Radio station that gets better reception on Rochester's Eastside. He will forward information to the group. GRITtv airs Mon-Thurs, at 8pm & 1 am ET, on Free Speech TV (DISH Network ch. 9415) & at <http://www.firedoglake.com>. Check out <http://www.lauraflanders.com/> for more information.

Other candidates we are considering endorsing include:

- Louise Slaughter (long-time incumbent of New York's 28th Congressional district). An e-mail inquiring about Rep. Slaughter's interest in an endorsement was sent by Robin Wilt on May 30, 2008, but we haven't received a response;
- Rick Dollinger of Brighton (running against incumbent Joe Robach for the 56<sup>th</sup> State Senate seat);
- Dave Garretson of Greece (running against incumbent Bill Reilich for the 134th State Assembly seat);

Additional candidates who were suggested for consideration include:

- David Koon (incumbent defending the 135th State Assembly seat against former East Rochester mayor David Bonnachi);
- Susan John (incumbent defending the 131<sup>st</sup> State Assembly against Jeffrey Morrow of Rochester);
- Paloma Capanna of Webster (running against Republican incumbent State Sen. Michael Nozzolio of Fayette, Seneca County for the 54th Senate District);
- Jon Powers (running for New York's 26th Congressional district, vacated by the retiring Tom Reynolds);
- Dan Maffei (running for New York's 25<sup>th</sup> Congressional district, vacated by the retiring Jim Walsh).

The complete slate of candidates presented by the Monroe County Democratic Committee may be found at:

<http://monroedemocrats.com/candidates.cfm?id=43>

Supporting Powers and Maffei is difficult because PDA is organized by Congressional District, and PDA-Genesee Valley exists for the 28th and 29th Districts, not the 25th or 26th. In addition, Powers is facing primary challenges and PDA's endorsement process requires that local chapters consider all candidates for a period of time before they can vote on an endorsement.

We would be willing to lend moral and technical support to the creation of PDA chapters in the 25th and 26th Districts, so PDA-GV members are encouraged to recruit anyone they might know who might be interested in founding PDA chapters in those districts. There was a nascent chapter in Buffalo for the 26<sup>th</sup>, but it seems to have gone by the wayside.

#### 4. Fundraising/Publicity Discussion

We had a discussion on ways to raise awareness of the organization and possibly increase membership. Ideas on the agenda included:

- Movie Screenings – there have been successful movie screenings, e.g. Metro Justice projecting movies on the side of the Art House Institute. I think Liz Guthrie volunteered to look into different movies and venues. This seems like it would be more of a morale event than fundraising or publicity.
  - o Jim Swarts cited the successful screening of War Made Easy at the Unitarian Church. He thinks another screening is indicated, to forestall the Administration's propagandizing to manufacture a pretext for war with Iran. Robin thinks a national PDA figure (e.g. Norm Solomon) might be willing to appear at this type of event.
- MG John Batiste event – consensus was No because he is too enthusiastic about rebuilding the military after exiting Iraq
- Congressional Progressive Caucus Speaker Event – As a Rochester native, Mimi Kennedy (PDA Advisory Board Chair ) might be able to facilitate something for us. PDA national is very interested in WNY because of all the red-to-blue opportunities here. Also, the Obama campaign's 50-State Strategy may result in an Obama visit to WNY. Liz thinks he might be coming to Buffalo?
- Summer Festivals – Robin has a comprehensive list. One idea was to make friends with someone in the vicinity and set up a voter registration booth on their property so we do not have to officially rent a booth.
- Farmers Markets – Laurie Gunther Fellows volunteered to look into Farmers Markets, identify good candidates, cost out booths.
- Voter Registration Drives  
We are meeting with the Rochester City School District to discuss on-site voter registration drives in September. This meeting will be with Paul Lampe at the District Central Offices (131 West Broad Street), 23 June 2008 at 2pm. Anyone interested is invited – please RSVP to [robin@pdagv.org](mailto:robin@pdagv.org).

What about college students? They are considered residents of the area where the school is located. The Obama campaign is probably all over this, lots of opportunities for synergy there.