

46th District Democrats
Minutes of the October 20, 2005 General Meeting
Olympic View School, Seattle WA

Meeting was called to order at 7:34 PM

Scott led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair's Report. Scott challenged PCO's to help get materials out in many important races and issues this November. He thanked Chad Lupkes and Barbara Whitt for getting out the Demogram, and encouraged volunteers to speak to Chad about helping in the future.

Pat Emerson announced that the 4600 fundraising event has been postponed, in part because of the earthquake in Pakistan. Chad announced a fundraiser for farmers who lost stock in Hurricane Katrina, a project run by the Olympic View Church. The fundraiser also raised money for a local teacher whose family was a victim of the Hurricane.

Janet Miller announced she has 225,000 pieces of literature with more on the way. The 46th District endorsed over 15 candidates, and they have provided materials for distribution. Voters should start receiving absentee ballots in the mail starting tomorrow. Janet is looking for volunteers to walk those precincts that don't have PCOs.

Scott has sample ballots that can be used when walking precincts.

Credentials Report. Betty said 50 voting members had signed in.

Executive Board Report. Board member Patrick Hogan moved out of the district, and stepped down from the Board. The opening on the Board was posted in the Demogram. Pat Emerson and Scott thanked Patrick Hogan for his fine work on the Executive Board.

Bev Marcus nominated Dana O'Day-Senior. Dana is active in the community, and worked on the Kucinich and Kerry campaigns. In Maine, she was on the state committee. She asked for votes from members, and answered questions from the audience.

Dana was elected unanimously.

King County Report. Sarajane Siegfriedt reported that, due to the later date of the 46th LD meeting in September, there has been no King County meeting since they last met. The next meeting is Tuesday, October 25th.

Membership Report. Betty Means reported that membership this year is up

substantially over last year, but a little below membership in the previous year, prior to the presidential elections. Scott thanked Betty for managing recruitment and tracking of memberships.

Treasurer's Report. Gail reported on expenses and income. Our balance is strong for this point in the year. Gail said she would let us know when the fundraiser is rescheduled.

Resolution - Seattle-Comcast franchise agreement, submitted by Sylvia Haven. The resolution (as published in the September Demogram, with minor typos corrected):

WHEREAS, the Seattle Comcast 10 year franchise agreement currently undergoing City Council negotiations will have long lasting effects on our citizens in this digital age, and

WHEREAS, Comcast lobbies strongly to maintain high profits at the expense their public obligations to maintain fair rate increases and adequate public access, and

WHEREAS, Public input has been negligible due to lack of public awareness and education, and

WHEREAS, Recent court decisions leave open the possibility of a virtual monopoly by cable companies like Comcast to restrict broadband Internet resources, and

WHEREAS, Comcast works actively in opposition to union representation of their employees;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 46th District Democrats urge the Seattle City Council to extend the current Comcast franchise for one year to allow an independent and objective community-based needs assessment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council encourage public education and participation required to develop a fair and equitable franchise agreement that will bring Seattle into the digital age.

Sylvia spoke in favor of the resolution. She said the franchise agreement is complicated and some issues will take some time to become apparent. The resolution would provide time for a thorough independent objective review and report. The proposed agreement before the City would last 10 years.

No one present spoke against the resolution.

The resolution passed by a show of hands.

McDermott legal case. Bill Perry, Trustee of the Jim McDermott Legal Expense Trust, explained some features of the case to the group. McDermott served on the Ethics Committee. Newt Gingrich was the object of about a dozen complaints, mostly regarding GOPAC campaign funding and fund raising. The Ethics Committee settled with Gingrich, and the terms included Gingrich paying a \$300,000 fine, apologizing, accepting a letter of reprimand, and agreeing not to "spin" the settlement. Within 24 hours, Gingrich was heard talking to Republican leaders about how to spin the settlement, which would have been a violation of the terms of the settlement. Representative John Boehner (R-OH) participated in the conference call, using his cell phone from a bowling alley in Florida. Boehner did not speak in the call.

A couple in Florida were driving around, using a scanner trying to intercept calls from their son-in-law, who was having marital problems. The couple inadvertently intercepted the Gingrich conference call. They recognized the significance of the discussion, and they passed the tape along to McDermott. McDermott released the tape to the New York Times.

A criminal charge against Jim McDermott for wire-tapping was dropped. The couple in Florida was fined \$500 under the state wiretapping law.

A year and a half later, on March 10, 1998, Boehner filed a civil suit claiming invasion of privacy. The case has been through the courts to the Supreme Court and back to lower courts. On second filing, the DC District Court found against McDermott, levying a fine of \$70,000 plus hundreds of thousands in legal fees. The DC Circuit Court has been staffed with very conservative judges. McDermott appealed, and a hearing is scheduled for November 15.

Ron Kenyon spoke about First Amendment issues. The Supreme Court heard a case similar to McDermott's, deciding that disclosing an intercepted conversation was permissible. The DC court needed a tortuous argument to reverse that logic and find against McDermott. Ron talked about legal precedents where information originally disclosed under breach of legal duty (like the Pentagon Papers, or Tami Silicio's photo of flag-draped caskets) has been fair game for subsequent public disclosure under the First Amendment. The lower court's landmark ruling against Jim would reverse this precedent. Many news organizations and public interest groups joined in an amicus brief on Jim's behalf.

Ron challenged assertions by Tom Delay that McDermott is a convicted felon. In fact, McDermott faces an adverse finding in a civil suit, which is under appeal. Another false claim is that McDermott could have settled early on. In fact, no offer to settle was ever made.

Bill Perry talked about fundraising. Bill thanked the 46th District and its members for contributing to the McDermott Legal Defense Trust. The recent District fundraiser brought in over \$4,500. Contributions to a legal expense trust are reported publicly. Pro bono legal work would be accounted as a gift. However, gifts are limited to \$50, so McDermott must raise money to pay legal expenses. Total expenses could be several hundred thousand dollars.

Welcomes. Scott welcomed Phyllis Kenney, Ken Jacobsen and Al Runte to the meeting.

I-297 Initiative. Gerry Pollet and Betty Means worked on I-297, which passed by the highest margin in the state. One year later, November 2, a hearing will be held at 7 PM in the U district on the subject of slow progress in implementing the Initiative. Gerry would like everyone to turn out at that hearing,

Hanford is the most contaminated place in the Western hemisphere. A million gallons of waste have leaked from containers at Hanford, already. In 20 years, that waste would reach the Columbia River. The Department of Energy has decided to re-classify the waste to a lower level of public risk. At the lower level of classification, no cleanup would be necessary.

After I-297 passed, Federal agencies resisted implementing the rules, arguing mass lay-offs, and that cleaning up was impractical. A Federal court issued a restraining order, staying implementation of I-297. Initiative supporters argued that the State Supreme Court had jurisdiction, and the Federal Court agreed. In July the State Supreme Court upheld I-297.

School Board candidates. Janet Miller announced a candidates' forum for School Board candidates at 7 PM on November 1.

Sarajane has buttons for PCOs who will be doorbelling.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:19 PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stan Sorscher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Submitted by Stan Sorscher