

## **Albany Democratic Club**

Thursday, January 18, 2018 at 7:00 PM

University Village Four Corners Room

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **7:00 pm Call to Order**

#### **Introductions**

#### **National: Fun with Fascism Exercise - Kathy**

The elements of fascism were discussed with the purpose of recognizing how each of the elements might tie together to point to an emerging issue in our Country. Some of these elements have existed through prior administrations, but the emphasis of the exercise was to look at current examples to increase our awareness of fascist leanings in the Trump administration. The list includes claims of "Fake News," tax cuts for corporations, money in politics, reduction in the power of unions, racism, sexism, homophobia, a powerful police and military to the detriment of social programs, Russian interference in elections, etc.

#### **Swing - Laura**

We wanted to partner with other Albany city projects, but Laura has not heard back from Albany, NH. She and Amy Neil (active with sister district) identified the district. They looked at differences in registration and election results to determine what cities would be considered a swing district.

#### **Tod Abbott, Guest Speaker, Albany Chamber of Commerce**

There's no connection between the Albany Chamber of Commerce and the National Chamber. They have documents going back to the 30s. The Board reflects the political views of the community at large.

They are a volunteer organization to support and build a business community. They encourage business owners to talk to each other. They do citizen and youth of the year awards. They have workshops to support business, like "Getting the Most out of the Stroll." Roughly 150 people come for the Stroll. The City will share ideas with the Chamber. They have a seat on the Economic Development committee. They are not that political. They represent 120 businesses, mostly small businesses. The Board meets every 3rd Thursday at Mechanics Bank usually at 1 pm.

Q: What are some of the top issues? Tod says that they work more on events than issues. They are trying to build membership. They would like to do four annual events to promote

business and to support the Chamber. They had a gala last year. The other event is the honors dinner for youth and citizen awards.

They keep people up do date on City issues. The also let people know of City events. They also have monthly networking mixers.

They have members in Berkeley on Solano. There are some long term vacancies, but there are a lot of people moving in. The Oaks Theater may become a Climbing Gym, but the neighbors don't like them opening to 11 pm.

The monthly mixers have helped people get to know each others. 75% may be the same people, but they get 25% new.

The Spice Shop is doing well. It's exciting to see new businesses. The changing demographics are bringing trendy shops.

What are some of the other nonprofits? The County Library and Strollers and Rollers.

They don't collect data, but they might want to send out an annual survey. People are optimistic right now...good holiday season, and restaurants are doing well.

Q: There are not many chain stores in Albany. Why is that? There are no prohibitions from the City. In the past, the Chamber looked for some chain businesses.

Suggestion - We may want to develop an area around the creek for a walkable area. We may want to vision more like El Cerrito.

Q: Can we get a message out through the mailing list? They don't let us do it, but they will send out emails for us.

Q: Does the Chamber have any questions for the Candidate Forum? Tod will put it out there to see.

### **Announcement - Elenore**

We will screen Abby Ginsberg film April 8 about a Japanese Internment. April 7th was the date families were interned in SF. The time is yet to be determined. The theater rent is \$350 for 11 am. We can have food and drinks in the upstairs lobby. We may want to raise money with sponsors. The theater will sell tickets for us, and Abby is available that date. We can also sell tickets. Tickets should be affordable - \$25. Student discount tickets may be available the week prior.

### **Local - Nick**

Announced Jan 29 Candidates Forum.

There have been four Council meetings. The soda tax revenue was greater than expected, and they will decide later how to spend it. Perhaps bottle water filling stations. They may redo Media Committee. The film festival will be in March. It's growing. There may be ballot measures in November to renew sales tax for public safety, parks bond for Albany Hill and ball fields, maintenance.

Marijuana dispensaries were banned, but they will look at that again in 20 months. The Economic Development Strategic Plan was passed. A measure to level the playing field for boys and girls sports was passed.

Kains and Adams street may get a change in traffic patterns to accommodate bikes. They approved a pilot study for two way bike traffic.

Same mayor chosen, Peggy with Rochelle as Vice Mayor.

Non-binding rent review was discussed. Landlord, City Council, and Diverse Housing group represented, but no direct tenant representation was included.

We will get art on the Greenway. Albany Loop spelled out in blue pipe, and it can be played on.

The Local Hazard Mitigation Plan working group was approved.

The City continues to have closed sessions on the Cross, which is involved in a lawsuit in Federal Government.

## **Decisions**

Joining the Chamber? Benefits according to Bryan: Placement on Chamber's website, advertising for our events, monthly socials where different businesses, chat with council members, the big tent idea for reaching out with the business communities. We could network with the Chamber, build our membership, and build a sense of community.

Unanimous Yes Vote to Join Chamber among members.

## **Candidates Forum**

Please publicize the forum to get the word out for the event. Remind people several times about the event.

Feb. Elections for Club Officers - we will have 1 year terms going forward. Jennifer is interested in the VP position and Bryan is interested in the President position. Gabby is Treasury and Kathy is the Secretary currently.

March should be our endorsement meeting for AD15. We need to check the process. We may want to endorse two candidates since two people will face off in the election.

Treasury Report - \$30 Dues are due! Cash, Check or Credit Card.

We should take donations at the Forum. Gabby will take care of flyers at the Forum.

We have \$825 and spent about \$100 for our annual PO Box.

Candidate Forum needs money for the space and the sound system. Up to \$400 was voted on by the members.

Women's March is coming up.

We will make dues come due each January.

Note: The Four Corners Room is reserved for February 15, the third Thursday of the month.