

45<sup>th</sup> LD Democrats  
General Meeting Minutes  
December 3, 2008

### **Call to Order and Flag Salute**

The meeting was called to order by Martin Chaney, Chair, at 7:03 p.m. followed by the flag salute.

### **Adoption of the Agenda**

The agenda was adopted by a show of hands.

### **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of the last month's meeting, previously posted on the website for review, were adopted by a show of hands.

### **Introduction of Visiting Elected Officials and Candidates**

Martin recognized Richard Cole, Redmond City Councilmember. Richard declined to speak.

### **Elections Director for King County – election January 14<sup>th</sup> through February 3<sup>rd</sup>**

- Jason Osgood
  - Passed out copies of his press release and recapped his recent campaign for Secretary of State. He then gave an overview of the creation of the Elections Director position as an elected office.
  - Jason shared he belief that the position needs to be kept fair and non-partisan, as well as his belief that the party should rally around the best candidate to win election.
    1. **Comment:** Noemie Maxwell shared some of the results from the Secretary of State race, including that Jason received around 60% of the vote in King County. She believes much of this stemmed from support received through the legislative districts. He did well given the circumstances of getting a late start and not having as much funding.
    2. **Question:** What is your feeling about Democrats who feel there is a need to get a strong progressive in this office? **Answer:** Jason stated he agrees with this belief. He supports the idea that there is a need to have open records that can be confirmed and make certain eligible voters have the chance to cast their votes.
  - Martin noted that filing period is December 10 – 12. Also, there will be a King County forum with candidates on December 15<sup>th</sup>. Our LD will take up the question of making an endorsement at the January meeting.

- Michael Lofstedt asked if we will be doing GOTV for this election. Martin noted that this is something the PCO Support Committee should take up after the reorganization.

### 3 Strikes Reform – Noemie Maxwell

- Noemie joined us from the 47<sup>th</sup> LD to share information about work being done to reform the 3 strikes law. She emphasized why the 3 strikes law is so unjust, why support is powerful right now, and what people can do to help get it reformed.
- She noted that the state party passed a resolution supporting reform of the 3 strikes law at the June convention. Also, the 45<sup>th</sup> LD approved a similar resolution previous to that time.
- The promise made when passing the original law was that most violent criminals would be locked up together. However, most processed under the law are convicted of medium and lower offenses. She spoke about how the percentage of African Americans processed under the 3 strikes law is so disproportional to the population.
- Noemie reviewed different types of non-violent crimes that fall under the 3 strikes laws even though it was intended to address violent criminals. She noted that there is currently a bill in the legislature to removed Robbery 2 (no weapon) from being included.
- Research has shown that with the reforms being suggested a very small number of people convicted of serious crimes would be released compared with the overall number of people affected. It would save millions of dollars of expenses associated with keeping the people incarcerated. She also shared a list of groups who are supporting the resolution and legislative changes.
- Noemie noted that help is needed in convincing Frank Chopp to support these efforts. Also, she requested that we let her know if we are aware of any organizations in the area that would be willing to have presentations on this topic.
  - **Question:** How many are currently incarcerated under the 3 strikes law? **Answer:** Approximately 300.
  - **Question:** Why is the current bill focused on Robbery 2 and not more drug offenses? **Answer:** In Washington, unless the charges include a deadly weapon enhancement the law doesn't cover drugs.
  - **Comment:** Many feel that we don't need to have a 3 strikes law at all because we have a good sentencing structure in this state. The Seattle Times recently said we don't need it.
  - **Comment:** Judith Shattuck noted that she was contacted this summer by some people who want to put on a forum about prison reform. She needs help putting this together. If interested, please get in touch with Judith to help.

### Port of Seattle Report – Gael Tarleton

- Gael provided an update on what has been happening at the port. The recession is going to be really hard for many in our community and the focus

is on what can be done now to help families and keep jobs. The port is about being an economic engine in good times and cushion in other times.

- The focus is on green trade / green jobs. They are taking funds from variety of sources to plow into jobs that will help port to survive these times. There will be a real downturn in construction in the next two years. We need to turn away from fossil fuels and toward clean technology.
- During a crisis it is sometimes easier to get people to do things differently. They want to put together pilot projects with companies committed to cleaning up Puget Sound and clean technologies to demonstrate new technology and do internships with corporations around King County. This will help us be on the path for green jobs and trade when we start coming out of the recession.
- Gael discussed the different relationships between communities and ports, as well as the competing, legitimate interests around the county. Her goal is to work on these initiatives over the next couple of years and she wants to hear ideas people may have in this area. She has the capacity to bring the right groups together.
  - **Question:** How will green initiatives affect the overall level of business at the Port of Seattle? Will it draw in new business and help compete with other ports? **Answer:** The Port of Seattle helps with jobs by getting companies that need to work with specific industries the space to work with them. The Port will help them build the relationships they need if they agree to practice environmental policies when they build on port property. **Follow up question:** How does “green” draw new business? **Answer:** This is already happening. Shipping companies and airlines are using cleaner fuels. The port is helping companies build green fuel facilities at the port to give them access to these customers.
  - **Question:** Where do cruise and other ships dump waste? **Answer:** They all dump a portion of the waste in the open ocean. When in Puget Sound, they do a land dump. **Follow up question:** Do cruise lines pay for that service? **Answer:** Yes, they do. They also pay for the refitting of their ships to be on the grid when they are in port.
- Gael noted that today’s newspapers reported the end results of the performance audit did identify fraud at the port. She shared that she is both dismayed and disgusted this has taken place. It further renews her commitment to more reforms at the port to make sure this doesn’t happen again. She would rather it be out in the open and known so it can be addressed. They now know what has to happen to make sure it doesn’t happen again and six months from now she hopes to see a radical difference. Next Tuesday there will be presentation from the legal team who led the investigation.
  - **Question:** Why over last 2 years has there been one problem after another? **Answer:** In the past there was a regime within the Port of Seattle that created its own culture. With the top of the regime removed, the rest of the regime will keep coming to the surface for a while.

### **Legislative Action Committee – Melissa Waldie and Kathleen Reynolds**

- Melissa announced Kathleen Reynolds has moved into the Acting Chair position for the LAC (Legislative Action Committee).
- Kathleen Reynolds, Gerry Williams, Melissa Waldie, Ken Albinger, and Sheila Hoff are on committee.
- Kathleen reviewed what the LAC does, including tracking bills, informing members about the progress of bills, and sending action alerts when help needed to push further on a bill. The LAC wants to have more interaction with our legislators this year. She noted that updates will be sent out through our email announcement list and gave information on how to sign up for the list.
- Kathleen passed out a survey about how we perceive the priority of various issues.
- There will be a county-wide LAC meeting with Frank Chopp, Speaker of House, on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Information is on the back of agenda.
- Melissa is working on the LAC web page.
  - **Comment:** A request was made for further clarification on some of the items listed in the survey.
  - **Question:** What will be covered by the LAC as far as the budget?  
**Answer:** The LAC is not yet certain what specific legislation will be covered, but they feel it is an important topic and do plan to cover it.

### **Holiday Party – Paul Yarbrough**

- The theme is celebrating our accomplishments.
- Paul shared that he received a suggestion that we encourage people to bring non-perishable foods to the party that will be donated to a food bank. We will plan to do this. Paul requested that we spread the word. He will also send a message to the announcement list.
- An Evite email was sent out. The committee would appreciate people responding to the invitation so that they can get a better idea of the number planning to attend and what they will be bringing.
- Ham and turkey will be provided by district. Also water, tea, coffee and soft drinks will be provided. If you want wine or beer, bring your own.
- Judith Shattuck is leading the raffle and could use some help coming up with raffle items.
- We plan to keep the program informal and have an open microphone. Ken Albinger is coordinating awards and recognition and Martin has offered to provide certificates.

### **Bi-Annual Reorganization in January – Martin Chaney**

- Our bi-annual reorganization will take place at the January meeting. We will be electing officers for the next two years.
- Our Recruitment Committee is working to make sure we have at least one person running for each of the significant jobs. If you have thoughts about who should be running for a position, contact the Recruitment Committee

and they will follow up. Members: Terry Linkletter, Martin Chaney, Kathleen Reynolds, Priscilla O'Leary

- Martin recapped recent events regarding the status of PCOs elected in August. He will be sending out letters to people who have been affected by the clarifications provided by the state party.
- The King County reorganization is scheduled to take place on Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup>. Sign in begins at 8:00 a.m. and the meeting starts at 9:00 a.m.

### **Committee, Officer, and Representatives Reports**

- Chair – Martin Chaney
  - Martin reviewed select calendar events.
  - Martin thanked Kathleen Reynolds for putting together our new membership cards. He noted that t-shirts are available for those pay their 2009 dues now. He also reminded everyone of the need to be identified as member in order to vote in the future on items such as endorsements.
- Treasurer – Terry Linkletter
  - Terry thanked everyone who has already paid their 2009 dues and he briefly reviewed our current financial standing.
  - As chair or recruiting committee – if you completed survey of who you would like to see in positions, give to Terry
- Recruiting Committee – Terry Linkletter
  - Terry provided surveys asking people to submit names of the people they would like to see in the various board and committee positions.
- Endorsement Committee – Brad Larssen
  - Brad spoke about the importance of aggressively pushing the upcoming Director of Elections race. He expressed the view that making the position non-partisan cloaks the Republican push to take over the county council. There will not be much chance to campaign. If we want a fair election, volunteering will be very important and we will need to phone bank as soon as we make an endorsement.
- PCO Support Committee – Ken Albinger
  - Ken noted we have some important tasks ahead. Getting out endorsement sheets was very effective in the recent elections and we can do it again.
  - He also noted that we have elected good people and now we need to stay informed on the issues and push those people to do right thing on those issues. We will be doing that through the Legislative Action Committee with both the state legislature and local councils. Teams will be formed to work with the various city councils.

## The Legislative Process, How to Advocate Successfully And the 2009 Legislative Session – Representative Roger Goodman

- Roger joined us having just returned from Olympia where there is lots of activity, but no money! He's been attending a wide variety of meetings, including a presentation today about early learning and a proposed rating system for child care centers.
- Roger noted that the budget shortfall is now expected to be around \$6 billion dollars which will consume half of our discretionary funds. How we will fund any new legislation is unknown. These are unprecedented times.
- Over the next few days they will be gathering and identifying the top 10 priorities for the Democrats in the House.
  - **Question:** Do we know where will major cuts be? **Answer:** We have to pay debt service. K-12, even pre-K, is in danger. Corrections is not on the table.
- Roger shared that he wants to introduce a bill for sentencing reform.
  - **Question:** Can you talk about taxation revenues? **Answer:** Roger shared the three scenarios that he sees are possible and how they might play out.
- Roger noted that education remains a top priority and they will be looking at how we budget for K-12, to make it more transparent and more flexible at the local level. Caps at the local level need to be more equitable. There is also a very large deficit right now for transportation for schools. Schools are being forced to use money intended to reduce class size to fund transportation and special education shortfalls.
  - **Comment:** Shelley Kloba noted that reform has to happen even if money is not there at the moment. We should get structure in place so that when money is available we can put it into action.
  - **Question:** Where is all the money going? It has been said that a lot is going into lawsuits and administrative expenses. **Answer:** This is true to some extent. Also, every time we appropriate more money at the state level it puts more pressure on local districts to come up with their share.
  - **Question:** Every time the state has been sued regarding special education, the court has found that the state needs to pay more for special education. How is this being addressed? **Answer:** We have to come up with the money or we will just keep getting sued, which costs even more. It is a tough question and we don't know yet how we will be able to do it.
  - **Question:** Where did the budget deficit come from? **Answer:** Revenues are projected to determine the amount can spend. Most of our revenue was coming from real estate excise taxes (home sales). This brought in billions of dollars which were spent on very good investments. With the current times and housing sale slump, revenues are not coming in to pay for programs put in place with the projections. With the current credit freeze, real estate is also frozen and revenues are dramatically reduced.
  - **Comment:** Noemie Maxwell spoke about her work on criminal justice issues. She shared findings about those who are in isolation (long term

solitary) and how expensive this is. If more money was appropriated for treatments, they could get them out of this situation. More IMUs (individual management units – where prisoners are confined to their cells 23 hours a day) continue to be built and are very expensive to support. Roger noted also that research shows that the more you punish someone, the more likely they are to commit another crime.

- **Question:** When talking about tax reform, are you referring to a state income tax? **Answer:** No. Most likely it would be a referendum put to the voters asking to increase taxes. There are many options on what taxes and how they would be raised.
- Roger shared that it has been confirmed he will remain as Vice Chair for the Judicial Committee.
- Roger concluded by stating that he needs our help. He wants to be available to consult with us. He will be working to communicate to us and expects there will be times when communications will go out requesting rapid responses on a particular issue where our advocacy is needed.

### **Short Topics / Open Forum**

- Priscilla O'Leary noted that she will not be running for the secretary position at the reorganization meeting and encouraged people to nominate someone to fill the position.

### **Good of the Order**

- None offered.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Priscilla O'Leary, Secretary  
45<sup>th</sup> LD Democrats