

# Groton Democratic Town Committee

## Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

7:00 p.m. at Thrive 55+, 102 Newtown Road, Groton, CT 06340

**Meeting Called to Order:** 7:05 p.m. by Chair Natalie Billing

**Members Present:** Roscoe Merritt, Meredith Key, Juliette Parker, Betsy Moukawsher, Doris Pulaski, Jackie Massett, Edward Jacome, Jill Rusk, Autumn Hanscom, Chris Conley, Richard Dixon, Anne-Marie Foster, Gary Welles, Juan Melendez, Melinda Cassiere, Anne Welles, Natalie Billing, Peter Roper, Rachel Franco, Katrina Fitzgerald, Al Fritzsche, Bruce Jones, Mary von Dorster, John Wirzbicki, Bob Frink, Clarence Casper, Nancy Codeanne, Alex Koumanelis, Jenna Lowenstein, Emily Norman

**Guests Present:** Chelsea Meade, Lisa Thomasco, Matthew Brennan

**Welcoming Remarks:** N. Billing welcomed Matthew Brennan (District 1) and welcomed Jackie Massett back

**Approval of Minutes:** N. Billing called for a motion to approve the minutes of 25-Jan-2023

**Motion:** Richard Dixon                      **Second:** Jill Rusk

**Vote:** 29/0/1 J. Massett abstained

**Treasurer's Report** John Wirzbicki presented January 25, 2023 beginning balance: \$5,211.34. Contribution total \$450.00, Expenses total \$36.84 (Anedot fees and printing) Currently have \$5,624.50 on hand. Natalie thanked all the members who donated/paid dues since Jan. Early donations help the most. Donation forms were available, as well as QR code to donate online. Need \$10,000 to \$20,000 for campaign.

Natalie repeated that Roberts Rules says this report does not require approval. No vote/no motion needed.

**Chair's Report:** N. Billing

- ❖ Did a news release in the The Day for this meeting and recruiting candidates for the fall
- ❖ She & Dan Gaiewski attended State Party phone call with other DTC chairs. Met with Nancy DiNardo, State Party Chair, Executive Director Sarah Locke, and other State Party Officials.
  - Learned of Party Caucus chairs - may invite them to speak - Black & Puerto Rican Caucus, Womens Caucus, and/or LGBTQ+ caucus--- at future DTC meetings
- ❖ Working with Nominations Committee for new recruits and to identify which incumbents would like to run again, and determine how many people to add to NOM COMM. Natalie emphasized: We are all part of the Nominating team

**Nominations Committee Report** presented by N. Billing

- ❖ First meeting was last Sunday to organize and set up
- ❖ Reminder to sign up for current positions if interested in running again
- ❖ Help recruit - need people for RTM Districts 4, 6 and 7
- ❖ List of ABC vacancies on the table
  - 20 open Democratic positions for Boards and Commissions

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- John Wirzbicki extended a plea for members for Water Pollution Control Authority. (WPCA). They have bare minimum for quorum. 2 vacancies. 1 can be DEM. (will check to see if City residents can be on)
- ❖ Recommended the following to be GDTC members:
  - Chelsea Meade - District 4
  - Lisa Thomasco - District 6
  - Kathy Busse - District 6
  - Matthew Brennan - District 1
  - Motion moved by Mary von Dorster, seconded by Eddie Jacome - all in favor
- ❖ Announced: Town Council vacancy . Aundre Bumgardner resigned effective February 15, 2023. Town Council has 45 days to name replacement. Any interested volunteer: reach out to the Council

### Fundraising Committee Report presented by Mary von Dorster

- ❖ Flyers on the tables for the May 13, 2023 Appreciation Dinner for Joe de la Cruz and Rita Schmidt
  - Event to be held at Betsy Moukawsher's home 5-7 pm. \$25.
  - Try to get businesses to sponsor an ad in ad book
  - Consider doing a personal ad from you to Joe or Rita
  - Form for ads is on the website and was handed out

### Legislative Reports

- ❖ Chris Conley
  - Public Hearings: Early voting and absentee ballots
  - Governor's budget going to the Appropriations and Finance Committees
  - Next month to the end of late April will be in meetings. Budget has to be finalized by June 7, 2023 by 12 a.m.
  - If you have any questions or concerns, contact her
  - Reval pilot - when property values go down, less pilot money
  - ECS funding currently at no losses, Governor did not fund it using the new ECS funding
  - Was thanked for getting free school meals for students
  - Question regarding the mold bill.
  - Discussed the bill to cap fees to non residents at town beaches. (This does not affect Groton City or New London) Some towns charge non residents very high fees.
- ❖ Mayor's Report - Juan Melendez
  - Last meeting voted on the RTM redistricting; will add 2 additional seats -41 to 43.
  - Groton Long Point Bridge - will be using Federal (80 %) and State (20%) funds
  - ARPA distribution finalized. Going to the RTM Finance Committee
  - Mystic Parking Study video is on GMTV channel as well as Claude Chester plan - also on Town website. Members should weigh in using these.
  - If interested in vacant seat on Council, email [council@groton-ct.gov](mailto:council@groton-ct.gov)
  - Budget sessions will be starting soon
- ❖ BOE – Beverly is out of town and Matthew is at the BOE meeting to adopt budget. No report

**Presentation** Bob Frink, Chair, Groton Housing Authority, Nancy Codeanne, Board member. Both GDTC members.

- ❖ Housing for low to moderate income households (seniors over 62 and/or those who are on disability)
- ❖ Under the State's Authority. Land was donated by Town. State paid to build the units, 50 years ago.
- ❖ Has five commissioners ( 1 is a resident of GHA)
- ❖ 2 Properties: Grasso Gardens and Pequot Village - 164 units, studios,, one bedrooms only. Tiny!
- ❖ Base rents are \$350-550 month Units are in need or renovations! Funding for that is limited.

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- ❖ GHA has built some new units, with solar, geothermal, all the modern conveniences. 2 bedrooms.
- ❖ Have a Two and a half year waiting list
- ❖ Available to give tours. website: grotonhousingauthority.org
- ❖ Small staff. Volunteer opportunities.
- ❖ Meetings are open to the public. Come, listen and learn.
- ❖ GHA has projects going forward to add additional units of affordable housing in Groton. Would like to pursue “Pocket Communities” on sites like some of the closed school properties.

### Announcement/Questions

- ❖ Saint Patrick’s Day parade: need volunteers to walk for the Groton Dems!!! Have a banner. Chris Conley will walk. Some Town Councilors will walk. But, need GDTC members!
- ❖ Richard Dixon would like GDTC to discuss Freedom of Information ( FOI) .
- ❖ Peter Roper -invited others to join them every Saturday at the John Kelley statue in Mystic from 1 - 2 p.m. to stand for Ukraine Offered some political pins as donation incentives.
- ❖ Next meeting is March 22, 2023

**Motion to Adjourn:** N. Billing asked for a motion to adjourn

**Motion:** Richard Dixon

**Second:** Mary von Dorster

**Vote:** All in favor

**Adjourned at:** 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Juliette Parker  
GDTC Secretary