

Minutes, GDTC Meeting, March 22, 2023

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 by Chair, Natalie Billing. Natalie asked Doris Pulaski to introduce a guest, Janice Kimball. Doris mentioned that Janice was a volunteer during the election, who helped to staff headquarters, and she would like to get more involved. The group welcomed Janice.

Present were:

Roscoe Merritt, Matthew Shulman, Meredith Key, Beverly Washington, Doris Pulaski, Aundre Bumgardner, Jackie Massett, Edward Jacome, Autumn Hanscome, Portia Bordelon, Ian Thomas, Chris Conley, Richard Dixon, Ann Marie Foster, Gary Welles, Ann Welles, Natalie Billing, Peter Roper, Al Fritzsche, Bruce Jones, Mary von Dorster, John Wirzbicki, Don Levenson, Alex Koumanelis, Jenna Lowenstein, Emily Norman, MaryEllen Furlong

Excused were: Conrad Heede, Liz and Paul Duarte, Chelsea Meade, Betsy Moukawsher, Dana and Richard Semeraro, Dan Gaiewski and Juliette Parker

Guests: Gen Cerf, Janice Kimball

A motion was made to approve the minutes of February 22, 2023 by Peter Roper, seconded by Jackie Massett. Natalie stated that, though not required by GDTC rules or State Party rules, she plans to, as much as possible, post the minutes and agendas on the GDTC's website (www.grotondems.org) for anyone who wants to look at them in advance. There was a glitch this time due to a major life crisis in Nat's life re: the health of her daughter in law and she asked for everyone's understanding. A non member raised her hand to comment. The Chair acknowledged her but explained that only members have speaking privileges at GDTC meetings, and that she had already corrected the mis-spelling in the online agenda for the agenda distributed this evening. Natalie explained that when members receive the email reminder of the meeting, they can go to the website to look for the agenda /minutes. If they're not there, check back in a few days. The reminder often goes out 10 days before the meeting. The agenda may not be posted on the website until 5 days or so before the meeting. The minutes will go up as soon as they are ready after the meeting. So you can look for those after a week or two.

Motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

John Wirzbicki presented the treasurers report. Last month we had \$5,624.15, and this month, with donations and expenses, we had a balance of \$6,120.90. Natalie asked if there were any comments or questions and said that no motion is needed to approve the treasurer's report. There being no discussion, she thanked all who have donated/paid their dues early to bring our treasury up to about half of what we will need for an effective fall campaign. Early donations are especially helpful.

Chair's Report.

Natalie indicated that the Nominating Committee met. Membership has changed. Conrad has stepped down. Natalie appointed Betsy Moukawsher, Anne-Marie Foster and Jenna Lowenstein, to the Committee along with Dan Gaiewski, Beverly Washington, Carole McCarthy, Cutter Oliver and Natalie as ex-officio. A Democratic vacancy on the RTM, district 3, was filled by Christy McElroy. Sarah Kadden is interested in filling the vacancy in RTM, District 7, due to the resignation of Emily Ray (family issues). For now, all Democratic seats on the RTM are filled or have a person to fill the seat, which is excellent!

Nominating Committee Report

Roscoe Merritt has applied to be appointed to the NRZ (Neighborhood Revitalization Zone). His application was considered by the Nominating Committee who unanimously support it. Natalie moved to recommend his application to the Town Council's Personnel and Appointments Committee, seconded by Bev Washington. Ian asked how many vacancies there are. Natalie said 4. Portia suggested we reach out to Sheila Perry. Natalie said she'd be happy to. And if there's anyone else someone knows who might be interested, feel free to reach out or suggest them as well. After discussion the motion passed unanimously.

There are still over 20 openings on Town Boards and Commissions. Volunteers are needed for the Conservation Commission, the Ethics Commission, the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Water Pollution Control Authority, and the Economic Development Commission....among others. If you know someone who might like to volunteer, please talk to them. The simple application form is available on the Town's website.

Fundraising.

Mary von Dorster spoke about the Appreciation Dinner to honor Rita Schmidt and Joe delaCruz on SAT May 13. The location has changed. Please help spread the word. It will **not** be at the Moukawsher's home as previously announced.. The new location was unknown at the meeting but Par Four has since been selected. Emphasis now is on selling ads for the ad book. Anyone who is a friend or admirer of Rita or Joe, is urged to place an "ad"---a message of appreciation for all they've done for Groton. Let's make this booklet a treasured memento for them! The cost for ads, and the pdf form to place an ad is on our website: www.grotondems.org. If you need help to design or place an ad, just reach out to Bruce Jones, Mary, Natalie or Dan. Anyone who knows a business owner in town, or elsewhere, that has a connection to Joe or Rita, please talk to the owner, or suggest the business to the fundraising committee, who will talk to the businessowner. The Deadline for ads in April 30. Tickets to the event are \$25 and can be purchased in advance, or at the door. If you make a donation on line, with the intention that it's for a "ticket" for the event (rather than for dues, or just a donation) please let John Wirzbicki know that's your intention. He needs to keep track of ticket sales separately. The \$25 ticket price is a suggested minimum. Anyone who can donate more, please do. There is no RSVP required, or actual ticket to purchase. People may pay at the door.

State Representative's Report

Aundre Bumgardner and Chris Conley spoke about the many issues facing the legislature right now—most of them in process. They highlighted bills that have already passed through committees and public hearings, and ones still in development and stated if a bill has gone through committee/public hearing you can still reach out to individual representatives to weigh in with your opinion.

Town Council Update

The mayor, Juan Melendez was not present to speak Natalie recognized Portia, Bruce and Eddie. She congratulated Edward (Eddie) Jacome on his election to the Council. Portia mentioned several issues (town property re-use, Branford Manor,) and she and Bruce mentioned the budget process is starting and urged people to provide input.

Board of Education Update

Beverly Washington and Matt Shulman spoke about issues before the Board, and welcomed people to provide input on issues like the re-starting of a mentoring program. They are particularly in need of minority mentors. The Board adopted a budget with an increase of just under 3%. They are looking for ways to spread the word about the opportunity for new people to run for the Board in the November election. They are working to improve their communications and seek suggestions.

Guest Speaker. Jason Hine, from the Stonington DTC. Jason spoke about Earth Day festivities on April 29 at the Groton Library and invited people to participate. There was a brief lively "trivia contest", with "prizes" , to stimulate interest in the Stonington DTC's Trivia Night on April 14 at 7 pm which will be on ZOOM and open to all. Stonington hopes Groton DTC members will support this fun fundraiser, and suggests we might want to do one ourselves. An idea for the fundraising committee.

Announcements/future agenda items

Juliette Parker asks members to consider attending the NAACP Dinner on June 27, 6 PM at Ocean Beach featuring Congressman Bennie Thompson as the guest speaker. Must reserve by June 15. contact: secretary@newlondonnaacp.org or 860-439-1423.

Portia mentioned the Roaring 20s Gala for the Noank Community Support Services on Friday May 19 at Branford Manor and urged people to consider attending to support this great cause.

Natalie highlighted the future GDTC meeting dates and again reminded everyone that the July meeting to endorse candidates for the municipal election will be a THURSDAY night in July . THURS JULY 20th (NOT A WED!!!). Next meetings WEDS April 26, May 24th, June 28th..

Peter Roper made a Motion to Adjourn at 8:09, seconded by Jackie Massett. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, acting secretary for tonight,
Mary von Dorster