

Minutes
Wilton Democratic Town Committee
April 1, 2008, 6:00pm, Town Hall Annex

PRESENT: John Kalamarides (Chair), Sharon Grace, Deborah McFadden, Richard Creeth, Kathleen Warner, Toni Lee, Tom Burgess, Fred Herot, David Borglum, Ernie Ricco, Charles Lewis, Barbara Massy Bear, Ted Hoffstatter

GUESTS: Genia Meinhold, Jim Meinhold, Martha Aasen (Westport), Kimberly Orton, Hermon Telyan, Louise Herot, Paula Byrdy, Brian Shea (Wilton Bulletin), Frank MacEhern (Wilton Villager), Alice Ayers,

Meeting is called to order at 6:07pm

Unanimous approval of the March minutes.

John Kalamarides announces the volunteer of the Month is Toni Lee for her excellent work on Communications on the Reeves campaign.

Officer Elections

Motion and 2d to appoint John Kalamarides Chair of the DTC, Eric Fanwick Treasurer of the DTC, Deb McFadden Vice Chair, Sharon Grace as Secretary.

Ted Hoffstatter gives the Selectmen's Report

1. The budget increase will be at 4.7%. Ted will vote for the budget.
2. Charter update. The BOS voted Bob Russell as chair of the Commission. 3-1-1 vote with Ted voting against and Richard abstaining. Commissions should appoint their own chair and this is an unfortunate precedent. Bob Russell is a good person. Toni points out that the Ethics board had chosen its own chair.
3. The Dog Park. It is on hold, but they are still looking.
4. FAA. Please sign the petition on the town website at www.wiltonct.org.
5. FERC approved Broadwater and Richard Blumenthal has fought it. We must fight this despite the hard battle ahead so it is clear in the future that there will be resistance.
6. Robert Kennedy, Jr. presented at a land use forum on smart growth and working with developers to find responsible/environmental ways to develop. Diffusion of innovation and conflict resolution. A lot of what happens to the land is fought on the local level. Pat Sesto and Sally Poundstone and David Hatke were at this forum.

Richard gives the Selectmen's Report

1. Richard doesn't think the FAA petition is opposed to every change in airspace design, it is opposed to this particular airspace design.
2. We are waiting to hear whether the tax credits for Wilton Commons will come through.

3. Energy Commission is moving forward.

Treasurer's Report

\$799 on hand (minus \$35 for notices), and \$930.80 is due soon for insurance. Please give dues of \$35 if you can.

Guest Speaker: Martha Aasen, State Committeewoman

John introduces her. She has marvelous experience.

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“What is the state central committee”?

The State Central Committee is like the state's town committee. There is no county system in CT, so each town has a Democratic and Republican Town committee. The committees try to find good candidates, support and elect them and town and state committees try to tell the story of our party. The offices are in Hartford with an executive director and paid staff. Justin Kronholm is the paid director now. Nancy DiNardo is our State Chair. The vice chair is Steve Fontana, a State Legislator. He makes a report about the legislature's activities at the State Central Committee meeting, which is informative. There are 72 people on committee – 36 men and 36 women and one of each comes from each 36 State Senate Districts. The Committeemembers work hard to support candidates.

This year they've determined they don't want any empty spaces on the ballot. It is great that Peggy is running. Steve Fontana and Kim Fossett (who reps. Part of Westport that had never had a Democrat) are helping other Democrats learn about running for office.

State Committeepople are charged with finding good candidates. This is tough in the 26th District – all Westport, Wilton, Redding and Ridgefield, more than half of New Canaan, a little bit of Weston and a small part of Bethel. All of these towns are in the 4th CD, except Bethel. When we were redistricted they made the 26th even more Republican than it was. All of the 3 people who ran for state senate in the past 12 years won Westport, but lost elsewhere in the 26th.

We will win with John Hartwell, candidate for State Senate this year, who will have the advantage of the campaign finance laws and started very early and is very organized. Stuart Smith was the 26th District Committeeman years ago. We will work hard to elect to Jim Himes.

Most of the money for State Central is raised at the Jefferson-Jackson Bailey dinner. Justin Kronholm's grandfather was John Bailey – April 28 with Joe Biden. Martha is putting together a couple of tables if anyone is interested in coming.

She has not endorsed anyone for the State Central Committee and is not a delegate for the state convention.

Kathleen states that Martha has shepherded wonderful people and is a force and an inspiration. Richard and Sharon talk about how great it was to work with Martha.

Martha says how getting involved allows her to meet such nice people. In CT we live in towns and are organized by towns so how else would we meet. It has been one of the real joys.

CANDIDATES FOR STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEEMAN

Ted Hoffstatter

Wilton Selectman and Candidate for 26th District State Central Committeeman

Ted first went to meetings of the State Central Committee with Mark Marcus and Martha Aasen. Ted believes in bringing people together and when he became Wilton DTC campaign chair in 2006, he created an event around Fat Cat Pie Company in Norwalk to bring people from all around the Congressional District and the 26th District together. People came from all over. It didn't cost a lot of money and other towns pitched in. And the papers and News 12 and the constitutional officers came.

His goal on State Central is to give towns committees not used to winning the chance to win legislative seats (like Jason Bartlett) and local seats. This year we have a real chance to win with John Hartwell and Peggy Reeves.

Ted is a former DTC Chair, Campaign Chair and now is on Wilton's Board of Selectmen. Ted believes that Wilton is not like an island – there are many issues (FAA, Broadwater, land use) which affect our town, but are not just town issues. As selectman he hasn't just focused on the town or on national politics, he has worked hard on regional issues.

State Central could always do more, but Martha has done a good job bringing new people in and speak out on issues. Ted would like to be a part of State Central and asks for your support.

Ted gives a nod to Jason Bartlett and is very happy about the fact that a challenge means that our Democracy is healthy. We need challenges and competitive candidates.

Kathleen asks what Ted has done to get more people to DTC meetings and events and to get more people to vote. Ted replies that he worked hard to have many events when he was DTC chair and campaign chair to bring in people. In his 2007 election campaign, Ted stood out at the polls and greeted voters even though it was an uncontested election. People said to him that they were only here to vote for him even though it was an uncontested race and that made him feel that reaching out like this was rewarding. Ted states that he has always tried to reach out to unaffiliateds. Kathleen asks about an email Ted sent from Ned Lamont regarding endorsement. Ted explains that he spoke to Ned Lamont, Jim Himes and Maura Keany and all of them indicated that they understood and that there was no problem – Ned hadn't known another person was running when he sent the email and Ned is neutral in this race.

Ted states, after Sharon Grace's question about how he will reach out to DTCs as State Committeeman, that he would take a proactive role in the local DTCs, help with events. Cohesiveness will grow as we interact.

Richard Creeth asks about the hours that went into being board of selectmen and will there be a time conflict between being a member of state central and a selectmen.

Ted responds that State Central meets every other month. Ted will put time into it beyond meetings. He feels that being a Selectman, a DTC member and on State Central blends well and will make him a more effective selectmen. Most 26th District DTC meetings occur on different days. Jason also has a busy schedule but these things can be worked in effectively.

Herman states that due to the subprime crisis we need to make sure both are selectmen are concentrating on our concerns. Ted assures him that he is concentrating on Wilton's concerns and has been outspoken, as recent events with the Board of Selectmen have shown.

Jason Bartlett

State Representative for the 2d District and Candidate for 26th District State Central Committeeman

The second district includes Bethel Redding and Part of Danbury for 1 ½ years and he is running for state committeeman. The State Central Committee is important because we have a lot at stake and as a state representative Jason would like to have more Democrats become state senators and state reps so we can have even more qualified people to be governor. The Democratic Caucus is frustrated about Property Tax Reform because we don't have the numbers in the legislature and we don't have a Democratic governor. That is why it is important that Peggy and Guy Masters (Ridgefield) win and that we grow Democrats in Fairfield County. Jason has been a campaign manager raising money and developing strategy for other candidates such as Jim Maloney, Denise Nappier, and many on the local level. District 2 was newly created in 2000 because Fairfield County's population had grown, but the 2d district was designed for Republicans. Jason ran 3 times – he lost 345 votes the first time, then he lost by 80 votes, but finally won by 600 votes in 2006.

Jason wants to help local candidates.

In the past he tried to help state Senate candidate (Arlo) – gave him all my campaign IDs, talked about messaging, Bethel is different from other areas of the district and Jason learned to talk about issues differently in different areas. He grew up in Redding and understands what is important to his district.

As state rep he brings different things to table – he has understanding of policy in the legislature. He has invited Peggy Reeves to come to Hartford and talk about issues and help her with messaging and meet the leadership.

Jason supported Ned Lamont who used Jason's office for a staging ground in that area. He is not in the 4th Congressional District, but hasn't just helped Chris Murphy, but also Stephanie Sanchez and Diane Farrell. Jason has ideas about Jim Himes and has ideas about how to get the minority community in the 4th CD comfortable with Jim.

The national DNC is a town committee for the country and it has reform work to do on the state primary system. It is ridiculous that Texas has a primary and then a caucus. These things matter. The rules matter and how we operate matters.

Jason respects Ted, but believes he has more experience and is ready for the position. He is CoChair of the Clinton campaign and would like to help more Democrats to get elected.

When asked by Toni Lee how he will make time for State Central? Jason says that his responsibilities are much more during the day and there is some overlap because he is a state representative.

The DTC meeting is recessed at 7:02pm for the Caucus.

8:25pm – the DTC meeting resumes

Jim Himes is unanimously endorsed for Congress.

John Hartwell is unanimously endorsed for State Senate.

Peggy Reeves is unanimously endorsed for State Representative for the 143rd District.

John states that 4 Democrats have been appointed to the Charter Commission, which will meet beginning in May: Alice Ayers, Toni Lee, Paul Burnham, Louise Herot.

The Charter will be voted on in its entirety.

Nominating

Toni Lee states Amy Harris was appointed to SWRPA by the Planning & Zoning Commission last week. She sailed through and will be at the next SWRPA meeting. Jon Baronowski's seat is the one Amy has filled.

Campaign

On April 5 Chris Shays will be in Wilton and people can ask questions so all are encouraged to attend. It will be from 10-11:30am at the library.

Please hold coffees, fundraisers for our candidates

Amy Harris has coffee for Peggy on Monday..

No Reports from:

Website Committee

Platform

Membership

Bylaws

Finance

Barbara Massy Bear presents the report. Our breakfast fundraiser is May 3rd at Trackside and tickets for sale will be delivered along with information and instructions to the DTC members.

\$30/ticket, \$5 student rate

There is consensus that the fundraiser should begin at 9am, rather than 9:30am, this year.

Kathleen states we need to make sure our speakers know.

Marianne Wilson will cater. She will serve the original menu.

Sharon and Barbara will be ticket checkers

Deb moves to authorize Barbara to do all that is included in her report. Second.

Carries unanimously.

Peggy Reeves speaks to the DTC

Peggy thanks everyone for their support.

She needs our help to win in this tough race. She is excited about the race. We need a choice in this town.

Sharon Reports on the Reeves campaign

She asks for volunteers and contributions.

Adjournment at 9:00pm

9pm – adjournment

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Grace

Secretary

APPROVED by the Wilton DTC on May 13, 2008