

Wilton Democratic Town Committee
November 10, 2009
Minutes
Town Hall, Meeting Room B

PRESENT: John Kalamarides, Sharon Grace, Art Shulman, Tom Burgess, Hermon Telyan, Ernie Loser, Mitchell Hirsch, Alice Ayers, Ted Hoffstatter, John Gardiner, Charlie Lewis, Barbara Massy-Bear

GUESTS: Kelly Franklin, Ron Kashden, Peggy Reeves, Carole Young-Kleinfeld, Amy Harris, First Selectman Rudy Marconi of Ridgefield, Dave Goldenberg, Mark Robinson

John Kalamarides called the meeting to order at 7:33pm.

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Volunteer of the Month

The volunteer of the month is the campaign committee lead by Deb McFadden. John was told by Lou Reens and Louise Herot that it was an excellent municipal campaign.

New Member

Kelly Franklin is nominated to join the Wilton DTC. Second. She is unanimously elected. Kelly is in charge of the website. Ernie Loser says he has never seen the election numbers posted so quickly on our website.

GUEST SPEAKER

Rudy Marconi, First Selectman of Ridgefield is running for Governor.

He brings with him Mark Robinson, campaign manager, and Dave Goldenberg, communications director.

Rudy Marconi addresses the DTC.

Though he is a Democrat in a Republican town, and though he lost the race for First Selectman in 1997, he was elected in 1999 and re-elected 5 times, often in landslide victories. Rudy was born in Ridgefield.

Rudy wants to protect communities and reconnect Hartford with cities and towns.. We've seen Hartford lose the relationship with the cities and towns. Instead of being there to help us, it often seems like the state government is there to see what they can gain from us in taxes.

A common issue for towns and cities is frustration with Hartford, especially during the budget cycle where towns and cities want to be able to depend on funding from Hartford,

but the towns vote on their budgets in May and the state often hasn't finished in June. This leaves our communities in the lurch and unsure of funding. Cities and Towns need to be able to go to Hartford for help. Hartford needs to focus on cities and towns.

Public Transportation.

Branchville line has been a problem. There have been studies of studies, but no plan of action.

Lyme disease.

Our state was putting money into the west Nile virus, where there were few cases, but many more cases of Lyme disease and it should get more attention.

Return Hartford back to the people.

We need leadership from our governor, which has been missing these past 24 years. Not just a governor who won't sign or veto a budget, but just lets it slip into law. We need to have someone concerned and willing to roll up his sleeves for the people of Connecticut.

What makes Rudy stand apart from others running for governor?

He has:

1. 10 years of experience of running a municipality and over 20 years in Ridgefield town government
2. Been reelected in a Republican town, landslides
3. Invested town funds on schools, roads
4. Brought people together (otherwise couldn't win)
5. Delivered a 0% increase in budget; has been fiscally responsible.
6. a fresh face in state government.

While Ridgefield was doing this, the state has \$948 million deficit. It is frustrating to run municipality and be responsible for consequences and have state not uphold its end.

Rudy says he now wants to get the state in shape the same way he has in Ridgefield, with fiscal responsibility and looking for opportunities

Public Finance makes his candidacy possible because he does not have personal wealth. It levels the playing field. People need to understand that they too can get involved.

ISSUES

1. **Drugs:** We need more police and more enforcement to get drugs off our streets; do this and we will improve education.
2. **Transportation.** The Department of Transportation is important, but has not taken on making the Branchville line work. Super 7 has not been built in 61 years so why do we think it will happen in the next 20 years? It is time to focus on public transportation.
3. **Economic Development.** The CT Dept. of Economic and Community Development must stop focusing only on companies that are leaving; focus on encouraging businesses to come to Connecticut. Rudy suggested the DECD look

at NY State companies that might save tax money by moving to CT, but they were too busy focusing only on companies that were thinking of leaving the state.

4. **Spending**-is huge problem 50% is area of social services. We need to look at programs and make them better and if don't have proper qualifications, or give no return, then the programs must be cancelled. One upcoming issue is the 50,000 people in this state with mental challenges in the baby boomer age group and we have no services planned for them whatsoever.

Mitchell asks who will be the Republican opponent? Rudy does not think all the contenders have announced yet.

Art asks if Rudy would be seen as too oriented toward Fairfield County and not have the state-wide name recognition. Rudy replies that he has been an asset to Fairfield County, and does have connections here, which is important as much of the state revenue comes from here. Though he is from this wealthy area, he can relate to regular people because he came from a blue-collar background: his father was a laborer in construction and his mother cleaned houses. He worked hard to go to college.

As for name recognition Rudy points to 2 milestones in May 1. Public finance will allow him to raise \$250,000 in denominations of \$100 and receive \$1,250,000 for a primary and \$3 million for the election and he will use that money to become well-known.

Rudy believes he can do the job in Hartford and make things better here in Connecticut. He has fought the casinos and led the FAA fight.

Rudy pledges that he will work to elect the Democratic candidates after the primary – there no time to fight after the primary.

Ernie asks about plans to bring business to CT and deal with unemployment. Rudy says that we haven't seen the end of the rise of unemployment. Based on information from the CBIA, economists agreed growth should come back in stock market 2-3% for next 4 quarters, but unemployment won't go down. We need GDP growth of at least 5% for us to employ everyone again. Corporations are realizing they can increase profitability without bringing people back. This is tough for 40 and 50 year olds. Connecticut's leaders need to focus on a plan of action:

1. invest in infrastructure and transportation,
2. develop the rail line up to New Milford to make this area more attractive to business. Corporations want to go where employees can find a place they want to live.
3. Create labor resources, by improving education in places like the cities. Education okay, except in cities. Need to create labor resources.

Mitchell mentions the CT Development Bank proposed by Rosa DeLauro and Rudy says he is glad the CT House delegation is fighting for CT in Washington

Hermon says the future of this country is based on research and that we have a lot of quality universities – what role can CT play?

Rudy says we have to work with business, which is what he did to have a local business expand in Ridgefield, rather than move that part of the business elsewhere. Rudy believes in putting a team together that looks to bring more research to Connecticut.

Rudy also points out that Connecticut can be a place researchers want to live and where businesses want to set up their facilities.

His website is RudyMarconi.com

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes as amended moved and seconded. Unanimously carries. The amendment deleted the reference to doctorate of website design.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Wrap up of Fall Campaign: With Chris Stroup’s reimbursement for his part of the campaign, we ended up within budget: \$8300 spent, but \$2150 or so reimbursed by Chris so we will end up with approximately \$750-1000 to the good. The budgeted amount had been \$7100.

Comparing the DTC and RTC, we had small contributions from more people, they had many fewer contributions, but the contributions were larger. This does not include what Chris Stroup spent on his campaign.

Had a great campaign, we can do more, but must continue to raise money because of the way we used our dollars: the quality of our ads made us come off as professional and caring and knowing what is going on.

Kelly mentions using ACT BLUE to take internet donations: the DTC can take donations and it will only cost 4 or 5%.

WEBSITE

Kelly rearranged the DTC website to focus on local government rather than the campaign. We had a lot of hits after election day. It would be great to get reports from Democratic Elected officials. We can publish items on the website, and email the highlights to Democrats once a month.

She also wants to include letters to the editor on an ongoing basis. Quick hit facts separated from my opinion.

We should remind people that BOF is going on 79 on the 17th. 7:30pm.

FINANCE

John is thinking of having a fundraiser in January/February.

SELECTMEN'S REPORT

Ted gives the Selectmen's report:

1. Budget – asked town departments for proposed budgets under different scenarios: no increase and 5% decrease.
2. Brian Perry of the Chamber of Commerce and others seem to be on board with eliminating plastic bags.

STATE CENTRAL REPORT

Ted presents the State Central report.

The focus now is on 2010 and he looks forward to a vigorous debate as we choose our next governor. Anyone who would like to go to a State Central meeting should let Ted know.

BUDGET

John is urging senior elected officials that they must forecast to the electorate what they are faced with this budget year, how we are ending up this year and what we must do next year. You can't put a budget in front of electorate 2 weeks before that has mil rate increase of 6 or 7 percent.

CAMPAIGN

The Campaign Committee will meet to discuss what worked and what didn't. Campaign Committee members should make note of their thoughts on the subject.

We had 2 terrific candidates; and a strong campaign. Everyone helped in some way. I am so grateful for what you have done. We are going to have fun electing Democrats this year.

RESOLUTION REGARDING SEN. LIEBERMAN

Several people are upset with Joe Lieberman. Mitchell has written a resolution to say it is time to support public option.

Mitch reads the resolution. One amendment is made to use the word "urge".

Motion to adopt is made. Second. Unanimously carries.

Here is the text of the resolution as adopted:

Resolution Urging Senator Joseph Lieberman to Drop Filibuster Threat
and Support U.S. Senate Vote on Health Care Reform with Public Insurance Plan Option

WHEREAS Senator Joseph Lieberman has threatened to filibuster health reform legislation in the United States Senate, and to block a vote on a bill including a public insurance plan option

AND WHEREAS Senator Lieberman states his opposition to a public insurance plan option is based on the wrong and misleading labeling of such a plan as a “new government entitlement program,” which it is not

AND WHEREAS numerous CBO estimates have shown that a public insurance plan would help lower government costs and reduce the federal deficit

AND WHEREAS Senator Chris Dodd has successfully passed health care reform with a public insurance option through the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, and has succeeded in having similar legislation agreed to by the Senate Democratic leadership

AND WHEREAS all five Connecticut delegation Members of the U.S. House of Representatives recently voted in favor of the House health care reform bill when it passed in the House

AND WHEREAS polls have shown that two-thirds of Connecticut voters support health care reform with a public insurance plan option

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Wilton Democratic Town Committee, urge Senator Joseph Lieberman to not join Republicans to block Senate health reform votes, that Senator Lieberman allow upcoming debate to proceed and support cloture on a Senate bill including a public insurance plan option at all stages of the legislative process, even if he chooses to vote ‘No’ on the bill itself.

AND FURTHERMORE we urge Senator Chris Dodd to work with the Senate Democratic leadership to prepare legislation and procedures to allow health care reform with a public insurance plan option to be approved by a majority in the Senate, if necessary through the budget reconciliation process.

Approved and Adopted unanimously
November 10, 2009

It will be sent to Sen. Lieberman and Sen. Chris Dodd and the newspapers.

To contact Sen. Lieberman to let him know you want him to support cloture, call 800-549-8563 – you will get a recording so leave your message.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Peggy goes to Hartford once a week, at least, this Fall, even though the session is only supposed to be in the late Winter and Spring (when she goes up there daily). Peggy is working to fix the campaign finance laws so that they will meet the requirements set forth by the district court. The law prevents lobbyists and high rollers from having too much influence and makes it possible for regular people to run for office (not just the wealthy or those who are in towns dominated by one party).

SWRPA REPORT

Amy Harris reports from SWRPA and mentions a land use series of luncheons that people might want to attend. In particular, she would like emails for anyone involved in land use in town so she can send the information to them. The December lecture in the South Western Regional Planning Agency's lunch time speaker series will feature Curt Johnson discussing "Protecting River and Stream Beds – a Statewide Approach" and is on Wednesday December 2, at 12:30 at the SWRPA conference room. Bring a lunch and RSVP to davis@swrpa.org.

SPEAK OUT WILTON

On January 23, Speak Out Wilton will be held at Trackside from 9-11. It is sponsored by the League of Women Voters, Kiwanis, and the Library. This is an opportunity for people to meet the town officials.

9:12 –Motion to adjourn made, seconded and carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Grace
Secretary