

State Meeting

Bailey's Community Center Falls Church, Virginia May 30, 2009

Participants:

Audrey Clement, Mark Antell, John Reeder, Josh Ruebner (afternoon only), Tom Yager and Tamar Yager (Arlington)
Charlie Jordan (Blue Ridge)
James Blythe, Chris Fink (morning only) (Fredericksburg)
Chris Simmons (Loudoun)
Jim Lowenstern, Andrew Moore (NoVA)
GPUS Political Director Brent McMillan conducted two afternoon workshops.

A quorum consisting of at least half of the six locals participating in the two most recent business meetings having been established, the meeting was called to order.

Agenda

The previously published meeting agenda was amended and adopted by consensus as follows:

- Introduction
- Select facilitator, vibeswatcher, timekeeper, note taker
- Co-chairs report
- Treasurer and Finance Committee reports
- GPUS representatives report
- Candidate Exploration Committee report
- Local Organizing Committee report
- Lunch
- Proposal to endorse Pickens Plan
- Workshops on fundraising and organizing locals
- Candidate nominations and endorsements
- Workshops on running campaigns and recruiting candidates
- Proposal to Direct Activism Committee to request that all sheriffs in Virginia provide information about policies and practices regarding the eviction from foreclosed buildings of tenants in good standing
- Reconsideration of recent Interim Committee decision to sign on to After Downing Street letter calling for appointment of special prosecutor to investigate George Bush and Richard Cheney for condoning torture
- Adjournment

Chris Fink agreed to serve as facilitator, Chris Simmons as timekeeper, John Reeder as vibes watcher and Audrey Clement as note taker.

Co-Chairs Report.

Audrey Clement reported that she had completed drafting both a letter to USDOJ Civil Rights Division protesting enactment of HB 1890 by the Virginia General Assembly, as well as, a pro se complaint against USDOT, VDOT and FHWA to stop the widening of I-66 inside the Beltway. She plans to mail the letter to DOJ on behalf of GPVA on or after July 1, the effective date of HB 1890. She plans to file the I-66 complaint on her own behalf as an Arlington County resident in U.S. Federal Court for the Eastern District of Virginia after the project receives final approval from FHWA.

Treasurer and Finance Committee Reports.

Kirit Mookerjee, who was unable to attend the meeting, provided the treasurer's report via cell phone as follows:

- Operating Fund Balance: \$1849.00
- Recent Expenses: \$48.00 (renewal of PO box for 6 months)
- Recent Donations: \$35.00 (brings Click2Mail donations to 5 responses/235.00)
- Total expense for Click2Mail: \$361.00 (reimbursed to Chris Fink)
- Total Paypal balance to date: \$34.66

Finance Committee Co-chair James Blythe reported on the results of the following five step fundraising plan proposed at a meeting of the Finance Committee in October, 2008:

- Launch a fundraising appeal (with a \$25.00 minimum contribution) to the general membership (2000 names) by e-mail initially, with a follow up mailing by letter to those without valid e-mail addresses.
- Offer \$25 annual membership cards to the general membership list beginning in January 09.
- Obtain a credit card processor for the GPVA website. This will increase response rates on e-mail solicitations and allow the sale of merchandise.
- Obtain merchandise and begin selling it on the GPVA website.
- Begin to sell donated member items on E-Bay

The combined email and ClickToMail fundraiser was a wash, although four new members were recruited.

A credit card processor was installed, but no merchandise has been sold.

Monthly dues were not assessed.

Arrangements to sell merchandise on EBay have not been made, although Chris Fink has offered the use of his EBay account for the purpose.

A motion to reimburse Tom and Tamar Yager for \$900 of their approximate outlay of \$4,500 to pay petitioners for the 2008 GPVA presidential petition drive was approved by consensus.

James Blythe agreed to contact Empower Telefundraising to arrange a trial fundraising effort on behalf of GPVA and to negotiate a contract with Empower for GPVA approval should the trial prove successful.

GPUS Representatives Report.

Chris Fink itemized the GPUS proposals recently considered by the GPUS National Committee (NC), as well proposals pending for NC consideration.

Tom Yager was designated by consensus as acting alternate to the GPUS Annual National Meeting to be held at North Carolina Central University in Durham, North Carolina July 23-26, 2009.

Tamar Yager urged those interested in attending to register soon as early bird registration at \$130 ends soon.

Candidate Exploration Committee Report.

Tom Yager reported that John Reeder is running for Arlington County Board and Josh Ruebner is running for state delegate, District #47 in Arlington County. Mark Antell and Joel Brown have withdrawn as state delegate candidates in Districts #48 and #35, respectively.

Audrey Clement reported that despite considerable effort to recruit candidates to run for Wise County Board of Supervisors to oppose the Wise County Power Plant and mountain top removal, none of a number of promising candidates agreed to run.

Local Organizing Committee Report.

John Reeder and others reported on the poor quality of the GPVA mailing list. He reported that he has a much better list. He also reported that he's been exhorting progressives that the Democrats are never going to change, saying "If you're going to change things, you have to think outside the box."

Chris Fink left the meeting at the lunch break, and Tom Yager volunteered to facilitate the meeting.

Proposal to Endorse Pickens Plan

Audrey proposed that GPVA adopt the Pickens Plan for Energy Independence, which she outlined as follows:

- Replace at least 20% percent of fossil fuel based electricity with wind, solar and other renewable sources of energy;
- Build a national smart grid to deliver renewable energy to population centers from remote locations;
- Implement a national energy conservation program;
- Replace diesel for trucks with natural gas as a bridge fuel.

Some reservations having been expressed about the potential for abuse of the national grid by oil and coal companies and considerable reservations having been expressed about the use of natural gas as a bridge fuel, Audrey Clement moved to amend the motion provisionally adopted at the previous meeting, which read:

GPVA endorses the Pickens Plan for Energy Independence with reservations concerning the siting of the national smart grid and the technology and siting of future natural gas drilling operations in the United States.

to read:

The Green Party of Virginia endorses planks 1 through 3 of the Pickens Plan for Energy Independence, withholding support for the natural gas plank pending further research.

The resolution was adopted on a vote of 7-3.

Workshops on Fundraising and Organizing Locals.

GPUS Political Director Brent McMillan gave a workshop on fundraising and local organizing. McMillan reported that he's been active in Green Party politics since 1991. His first organizing effort was a campaign at Ball State University in Delaware County, Indiana to stop construction of a facility to house herbicides and pesticides near growing crops. Later McMillan moved to Seattle, where he was a co-founder of the Seattle Green Party, helped form the Washington Campaign for Democracy and the Pacific Crest Biodiversity Project, which opposed the clear cutting of the Cedar River watershed. In 1996 McMillan organized to put Nader on the ballot in the state of Washington. In 2000 he was in charge of security at Nader's 2000 super rally in Seattle. McMillan reported that third party politics got tough in Seattle after 2000. Nevertheless Sally Soriano won a seat on the Seattle School Board in 2003, and McMillan made a strong showing in the race for Monorail Board.

McMillan believes greens should organize around a sustainable economy, which means:

- Clean air

- Affordable housing
- Clean water
- Healthy food
- Education and health care for all

He reported that the DC Statehood Party organized the Anacostia Farmers Market ten years ago. He recommends recruiting musicians to draw supporters to fundraising events, saying "there are lots of ways to raise money with no money up front" and "when you get creative, you don't need a lot of money. Social capital in the form of relationships is more important than the stuff printed on green paper. "

McMillan is a co-founder of the PCC Land Trust, and reports he's been making money on agricultural investments even as the stock market has foundered. He advocates building a green economy and is cynical of Democratic Party efforts to curtail global warming. McMillan said: "Nothing is going to come out of the Waxman-Markey bill. It's all pageant." He also expressed concern that coal is big in Washington, DC right now.

Candidate nominations and endorsements.

Josh Ruebner, who is running for state delegate, said he want to go to Richmond to:

- Promote the environment
- Advocate human rights and civil liberties for all
- Articulate the needs of the vulnerable

On the environmental front, Ruebner wants a moratorium on coal fired plants, mountain top removal mining, and nuclear power plant expansion. On civil liberties he advocates for repeal of the constitutional amendment to outlaw gay marriage and the restoration of voting rights to convicts who have served their sentences. Reporting that Virginia is the most business friendly state in the union, he wants to increase the corporate tax from its current rate of 6 percent. He also wants to reform Virginia's campaign finance law which allows unlimited corporate and individual donations.

Josh Ruebner was nominated by consensus as the Green Party of Virginia candidate for State Delegate, District #47 in Arlington County.

John Reeder, who is running for Arlington County Board, reported in his 2008 campaign that he raised \$8,000 to Barbara Favola's \$48,000. Reeder said he wants to:

- Expand recycling in Arlington
- End gentrification of neighborhoods and concomitant displacement of long time residents
- Challenge white elephant projects promoted by the all Democratic County Board
- Advocate for a housing authority

John Reeder was nominated by consensus as the Green Party of Virginia candidate for Arlington County Board.

Tamar Yager moved that GPVA endorse the Arlington Greens campaign to place a Housing Authority referendum on the ballot for adoption by the voters. The motion was adopted by consensus.

Workshops on Running Campaigns and Recruiting Candidates.

Brent McMillan mentioned that the campaign to subvert Green Party candidacies got seriously underway after Green Party organization of the Ohio recount effort in 2004. He cited a number of Green Party campaigns that have been subverted by entrapment, surveillance and black bag ops in recent years, saying "It's all coming back." He said Exxon Mobil is one of the biggest funders of this type of work. Former Secret Service agents and state police officers, who have been employees of firms like Beckett Brown International, provide the expertise. He also reported that he knows about the surveillance business, because his father, who was an electrical engineer, developed surveillance equipment for the FBI and CIA. McMillan said he is investigating the "Green Scare" campaign with political writer James Ridgway.

McMillan said a good campaign starts two years ahead, and the candidate who is passionate about the issues is more likely to win. Candidates have to be bold. They have to take the issues and turn them against the incumbents. McMillan said that given that a person's political identity is formed by age 28, it's important for the Green Party to recruit youth. The problem is that the average voter is 55 years of age.

Some of McMillan's recommended reading:

- Si Kahn, "Organizing: A Guide for Grassroots Leaders"
- Midwest Academy, "Organizing For Social Change"
- David Blume, "Alcohol Can Be a Gas!: Fueling an Ethanol Revolution for the 21st Century"
- Dmitry Orlov, "Reinventing Collapse: The Soviet Example and American Prospects"
- Brian Glick, "War at Home: Covert action against U.S. activists and what we can do about it"

Old Business.

A motion to direct the Activism Committee to request that all sheriffs in Virginia provide information about policies and practices regarding the eviction from foreclosed buildings of tenants in good standing was adopted by consensus.

A motion to reconsider a recent Interim Committee decision to sign on to an After Downing Street letter calling for appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate George Bush and Richard Cheney for condoning torture and to amend

the proposal by removing their former titles from the language of the sign-on letter was rejected on a vote of 9-1.

Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 5 p.m. with no date set for the next quarterly business meeting.

Submitted by Audrey Clement, Note-Taker
Green Party of Virginia

<Latest Update: June 22, 2010