

Sonoma Valley Democrats Virtual General Meeting Minutes
6:30pm, Jan 23, 2023

Present: Board members Hadley, Baeyan, Martin; 30 attendees on Zoom

- 1. Beth Hadley** – Welcomed all and introduced Elected Officials & Board members
 - a. Thanks to all who donated to our “Happiness is Warm Underwear Drive.” We collected about \$4000 worth of items to benefit S.O.S. and H.A.S. Thanks to Sabina, Mary, and Madeline for all their work!
 - b. The Sonoma County Democratic Party’s 35th Annual Crab Feed is returning in person on Friday, February 24, 5:30pm, Veterans Memorial Hall, Santa Rosa. Tickets at: sonomademocrats.org. Pat Sabo noted that the keynote speaker would be Congressman Adam Schiff.
 - c. Next virtual SV Dems General Meeting will be on Monday, Feb. 27, 6:30pm. Special Speaker will be Veronica Napoles of Wakeup Sonoma (wakeupsonoma.com)
 - d. Need more board members. Contact Beth at bethh@sonic.net for more info. Next virtual Board Meeting: Mon., Feb. 6, 9:30AM
 - e. Please pay dues for 2023, svdems.org, \$20 for the calendar year, pays for our insurance, special events, etc.

2. Marty Bennett – update on the UNITE HERE organizing campaign at the Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn. We are all invited to a vigil at the Fairmont, Feb. 6 at 5:30pm. Also, Marty was very pleased that Community Benefits language was included in the SDC specific plan.

3. State Senator Mike McGuire spoke for about 10 min. and then took questions. Sen. McGuire is deeply saddened by the gun violence in CA even though we have the strongest gun laws in the US. Compared to other developed countries, U.S. gun laws are the worst.

There has been a downturn in revenue for the State. He noted recent accomplishments and priorities:

K-12 schools – all students now receive free/reduced lunches. There are 10,000 new school counselors.

SRJC – 15 million was invested in student housing.

Wildfire Mitigation - 2.7 billion was allocated (97% of last year’s funding)

Homeless Services - 3.4 billion for housing. Also looking at conservatorship laws and “Care Courts” that have been implemented in other states.

MediCal – has been expanded. Funding will be kept at status quo. 13 million Californians are enrolled.

Calare – Sen. McGuire supports single-payer healthcare for CA. The Commission has concluded that over the first ten years, we can save 500 Billion dollars and save 40,000 lives. He stated we would see a bill moving this year.

PG&E – require getting lines underground

Hwy 37 – funding for the Marin portion has been allocated, working on final EIR, major project announcement this year.

Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) – three items:

1. Eldridge Cemetery - \$700,000 to advance a memorial
2. Vast majority of the property will be protected forever. CA is will transfer the 700 acres of open space to State Parks and has allocated \$3M to manage for 1 year giving time to figure out final disposition. He thanked Sup. Gorin for all her hard work on SDC.
3. The County has advanced a Specific Plan that is now in litigation.

Summary of Q&A with Sen. McGuire:

Sherry Smith - Senator McGuire, what have you done to ensure the surviving Sonoma State Hospital victims will receive the reparations they are entitled to? He will do more research into this and get back to her.

Teri Shore – thanked him for protecting Open Space. The Senator recognized Teri for her environmental advocacy.

Tom Martin – asked about the next steps with the Dept. of General Service (DGS) regarding SDC. Sen. McGuire said the county has recommended 620 units with a possible bonus raising it to 750. Beth noted that the SV Dems voted to support public ownership such as the “100 Year Plan.”

Tom Conlon: asked if the Senator supports unionization of the Sonoma Mission Inn. He does and also pointed to the union’s success in Graton. He thanked Marty Bennett for great work supporting working families.

Georgia Kelly – asked about holding PG&E accountable and changing PG&E to a public utility. Sen. McGuire stated that the undergrounding plan would reduce bills to consumers. He agrees that the legislature should hold them accountable and they will be looking at public utility reform. Deferred maintenance is a barrier to the taxpayers taking it on now.

Nancy Kirwan - asked if the riparian corridor at SDC is being managed by the state as part of the Open Space wildlife corridor or managed by the developer as part of the development? He responded that he would look into it.

Tom Conlon – concerned that proposed bio-energy facilities are dangerous for the bio-diversity of forests. Sen. McGuire says this is not being currently pursued, he has not seen a business plan for it.

Beth Hadley – are there plans for alternative energy development such as wave turbines in Humboldt Bay? Wind Turbines are being planned and there will be a partnership with San Diego to be a West Coast hub for parts. State legislators are working with Humboldt State and have allocated \$380 million for the transition of Humboldt State College into a Polytechnic University. The nursing program there will be expanded as well as others.

Thank you to Senator McGuire for his time and for being a strong advocate for our concerns! His staff member, Rebecca Wachsberg can be reached at 916.651.4002 or Rebecca.Wachsberg@sen.ca.gov.

4. Next meetings –
 - a. SVD Board meeting – Mon., Feb. 6, 9:30AM
 - b. General Meeting – Monday, Feb. 27th, 6:30pm, Veronica Naples – Wake Up Sonoma

Adjourn: 7:40pm

Respectfully submitted by Beth Hadley, Pres., Sonoma Valley Democrats

