

# **WW Democrats All-Member Vision Meeting**

## **Saturday, November 7, 2009**

### **Beach Middle School, Chelsea, MI**

**Purpose:** to review view our vision and mission and refocus our attention for the upcoming year; members share their ideas and concerns with the group; set priorities for 2010.

**Attendees:** Roy Schmidt, Jane Pacheco, Guerin Wilkinson, Thomas Knox, Bernadette Malinowski, Marty Gold, Bill Kaufmann, Adam Zemke, Stu Dowty, Fran Brennan.

**Minutes/Notes:** After attendees girded their loins with food and drink, and we set to work when Chairman Schmidt called the meeting to order at 10:20am.

Chairman Schmidt reviewed our Vision and Mission statements, highlighting the three top level goals we agreed upon in 2007. The three areas were covered in brief, and then in detail with member discussion about how well we have done with respect to those goals, and how we could change/revise our efforts going forward. To recap:

#### **WWD Vision Statement**

"To achieve a Democratic majority in all elected bodies in Western Washtenaw County"

#### **WWD Mission**

"To identify and support Western Washtenaw County Democratic candidates, to advance a progressive agenda, and to serve the community"

#### **Top Level Goals**

- Identify, support, and participate materially to **elect** Democratic candidates in every Western Washtenaw County race.
- Sponsor events that **involve** the community in important issues
- Assure the **longevity** of the Western Washtenaw Democrats Club and successfully manage all ongoing club responsibilities.

Chairman Schmidt then went over our three top level goals, the areas of effort within each one, and the specific tasks we set for ourselves at the last vision meeting. He offered an assessment of how we have done, and group discussion followed.

## Top Level Goal: Elect Democrats (three areas of effort)

### Identify

- Identify current WWC race candidates, contact them, and offer support.
- Identify and recruit new candidates for all WWC races.
- Identify and target all currently open races and seats.

*Results Summary: We have done well supporting candidates, but could do more on recruiting and actively targeting all open races and seats. General agreement.*

### Support

- Invite current WWC race candidates to WWD meetings.
- Raise money for current WWC race candidates and contribute to their campaigns.
- Provide education and demystification for WWC race candidates.
- Assist current WWC race candidates with publicity.
- Tap current WWC race candidates into our network.
- Strengthen our ability to support candidates by expanding our resources: time, money, people, access to networks, and physical space and equipment.
- Develop slate and team approaches to campaigns.
- Attend campaign training, and use and disseminate knowledge.

*Results Summary: We have done quite well in this area, especially in terms of expanding our access to resources. We have much to offer to candidates, both in terms of money and volunteer time. But we can do more. General agreement in the room.*

*Discussion: Primary support remains a matter of concern. The club (according to bylaws and principles) does not favor particular candidates in primary contests. But as ever, individuals (officers or otherwise) are free to endorse and support candidates, so long as they do not imply their support stems from the WW Dems.*

*Since some races will be decided in the primaries, there was discussion of amending our bylaws, but general sentiment was against it. Some behaviors (primary pirating, DINO shenanigans, stalking horses, etc.) might require the club to get involved in a primary, but those are special cases that do not require us to change our bylaws. They are simply matters of being good electoral citizens and Democratic supporters. Our rules do not prevent us from participating in a primary when candidates are clearly violating the spirit of fair play and acceptable behavior.*

## Top Level Goal: Elect Democrats (three areas of effort – continued...)

### Participate

- Provide leaders for campaign positions.
- Provide campaign workers.
- Provide Get Out The Vote workers.
- Increase the Democratic base by participating in voter registration drives and voter engagement efforts.

*Results Summary: In terms of campaign workers and GOTV activities, we have come through rather well. In terms of providing leaders for campaign positions, we could do better. General agreement in the room.*

## Top Level Goal: Involve Community (two areas of effort)

### Activities

- Choose events based on relevant issues to our community; develop a meaningful agenda for each event; tailored the content to a target audience.
- Execute a planned budget (costs and cash flow) for each event.
- Serve at community fairs and festivals.
- Host or participate in candidate forums and other public political events.

*Results summary: By choice, we did a good deal less educational programming in 2009, as our volunteers and members recovered from so much electoral engagement in 2008. Since 2010 will be a hot electoral year, we will be doing a candidate forum again. Programs on issues will only be successful if individual members or groups of members champion them. Not all of this activity can fall upon the officers.*

### Marketing

- Create, update, and maintain a new wwdems.org Website.
- Actively use the Website to market and promote the Western Washtenaw Democrats.
- Maintain positive relationships with the media.
- Promote WWD activities within our circle of friends, families, and acquaintances.

*Results Summary: We have done well with our web presence and engagement in social networking, and need to keep it up in coming years. Media relations have not gotten worse, but not improved either, and this is something to work on in 2010 and beyond.*

*Discussion: Media relations with whom? There are not many newspapers left, so we should definitely start building relationships with the ones that remain. The Observer and the Chronicle are also avenues we should pursue. Local news sites like annarbor.com and chelseaupdate.com should not be ignored either. It was suggested that the WW Dems try to divvy up blog-watching/commenting among ourselves. Both to report back to the membership, and also to participate via commenting and forwarding items of interest. We should get our voices out there, in whatever way seems likely to reach people*

## Top Level Goal: Longevity of Group (three areas of effort)

### Administer

- Plan and set and measure organizational goals at least twice a year.
- Expand the WWD membership yearly; actively identify, recruit, welcome, and nurture new members.
- Perform inreach: take care of our members and leaders.
- Perform outreach: increase public awareness and positive image of the WWD in the community.
- Archive the WWD processes for future members and leaders.
- Identify, recruit, and train new leaders.
- Advance the Democratic and Progressive movements in Western Washtenaw County.

*Results Summary: We are doing OK making sure people know we are here and are positive contributors to the community. Need to do better taking care of our leaders and identifying folks to take the reins and keep the organization vibrant.*

### Raise Funds

- Plan and set and measure fundraising goals at least twice a year.
- Actively raise funds to completely support our budget.
- Manage fundraising follow up.

*Results Summary: Yes – this has been a good two years!*

### Communicate

- Maintain an active, up-to-date, useful, relevant WWD Web site.
- Maintain and use an up-to-date member list and email list.
- Disseminate relevant information in a timely, accurate manner to all group members.
- Collect relevant information from all group members and respond to their concerns and requests.
- Make political training available to members, and disseminate the resulting knowledge.

*Results Summary: Generally doing well on all these fronts.*

*Discussion: Need to up our game on email templates and delivery of information that engages and prompts action/responses. Need to make our email process easier for officers to work with.*

*Dues were discussed, but no change seems necessary. The club will continue to be a non-chartered group, and will not require MDP membership. The good news is that any WW Dems who **are** MDP members are **also** members of the WCDP. Our relationship with the WCDP is a good one, and we are involved in their Executive Committee, etc. Our friend Frank Parkinson is also the WCDP Vice-Chair for Precinct Organization, and that will help us with our poll greeter program in 2010.*

## General Discussion

After the review of Mission, Vision, and Top Level Goals, the following items were announced and discussed:

### Miscellaneous

MDP training opportunities coming up for making your local Democratic club more successful. WW Dems officers planning to attend.

Camp Millie in Washtenaw coming in Jan/Feb 2010. WW Dems officers have attended before it was a very valuable experience. If members or possible candidates want to attend we should support them.

Donating/supporting local organizations and causes as part of our visibility efforts? We think it is still valuable, and that it is OK for the Executive Board to do this at their discretion, in a total amount not to exceed \$200/year.

### 2010 Calendar and Priorities:

We will need to be selective and focus our limited volunteers and time into elections in the coming year. Some things we agree are important:

- A/V print piece for Western Washtenaw. This is a big-ticket item, and it matters to everybody out here. We will certainly do this to help all our candidates in November, up to and including Mark Schauer in the MI-07 CD.
- Regular volunteer night/meeting to offer our time and effort to any/all candidates in Western Washtenaw. We'll set the schedule, notify the campaigns, and stand at the ready to stuff envelopes, do data entry, or whatever is necessary. Should be good for both our group and for them: consistency, ability to plan ahead, etc.
- Barn Bash. This is a commitment that people expect and that we must do. It's a big job, and a champion would be very welcome.
- Poll Greeter Program in Western Washtenaw for Election Day. We will not be able to staff every location (as we did in 2008), but we should focus on what we can do and make sure that Dems are present and visible on Election Day. Must coordinate with WCDP and OFA. No need to provide poll challengers. As ever, voter mobilization and GOTV activities are also key on that day. VAN will be an important resource for this. We need a poll greeter/election day champion!
- Generally speaking our member meetings will be at the IBEW Hall in 2010, since it is reasonably centrally located, has good parking, etc. Member meeting programs will focus on meeting candidates, providing volunteer support, and election issues/strategy. We will hold officer meetings just before member meetings, and try to respect everybody's time during a busy year for politically involved folks.

## **Next Steps**

The club officers will take this discussion into our annual retreat later this month, use your input to help craft a 2010 calendar that reflects your priorities, and report back at our all member meeting in January.

Thank you all for coming, and be sure to mark your calendars for our potluck member meeting in December.