

Sonoma Valley Democrats Virtual General Meeting July 24, 2023

MINUTES

Meeting convened by BETH HADLEY, PRESIDENT, at 6:35 PM.

BETH introduced Mayor Sandra Lowe, only currently elected officials present; Pat Sabo – County Democratic Central Committee also introduced.

Board members present were acknowledged (Sabina and Joanne)

Announced: Our County Fair Day will be Saturday, Aug. 5th. Come by and say “Hi.” Contact hqvolunteer@sonomademocrats.org to volunteer on another day

Announced: Sonoma County Democratic Party annual BBQ event featuring live music, a silent auction, and a special presentation by Betty Yee, on

Sunday, August 13, 3pm – 6pm at Sally Tomatoes in Rohnert Park. Tickets at: <https://sonomademocrats.org/annual-barbecue/> Beth will try to get a table where Dems can join her - let her know if you will attend

Announced: Save the Date: Summer Social and Fundraiser on Sunday, Aug. 27, 5pm at Westerbeke Ranch. Volunteers to help out – contact Beth.

2. Financial report, in absence of Treasurer, Beth reported balances as of July 10, 2023: \$2324 in cash and \$ 240 savings. Upcoming payment due is liability insurance (\$550) Fundraising is obviously important and new or renewing members can join at the Westerbeke event (\$20.00)

3. Vote to confirm Representatives to Pre-Endorsement Conferences (Beth: With 110 members, it is assumed that we will have three delegates for District 4 and one or two for AD 12) October 20-21, 2023 virtually- purpose is to get direct input on issues and concerns from the public to the candidates.

AD – 12: Johanna Patri Representative, Amy Pearl Alternate approved unanimously

AD – 4: Joanne Brown, Beth Hadley, Sabina Ceasar approved unanimously

4. Candidates for State Senate District 3

Three announced candidates appeared virtually and were allotted three minutes to introduce themselves and their background and their priorities followed by Q&A.

Candidates spoke in alphabetical order

Christopher Cabaldon, Former Mayor of West Sacramento City, Sac. State Professor

Cabaldon described his extensive background in local and state government, including leadership in the growth of West Sacramento, which moved from an underfunded, poorly

structured town to a well-funded progressive community. Strong civil rights agenda. Priorities are universal preschool, affordable housing, mental health services, climate change initiatives.

Jackie Elward, Rohnert Park City Council Member

Elward described her philosophy as being the “Champion for fair wage and benefits for the people” Priorities are improving mental health services, affordable housing, strong public schools, climate initiatives, unions, and promoting access to the “American dream”. She would be a “bold voice”.

Rozzana Verder-Aliga, Vallejo Vice Mayor.

Her background is as a public official, balancing budgets for Vallejo, leadership in the general plan, elected to the School Board for 12 years, and on the Vallejo City Council since 2014. She is a MH professional and has a Dr. in Education, strong union member. Priorities are health, mental health, public education, and housing. She believes in problem solving, bringing people together, working with facts, is a “principled pragmatist”, and listening to people.

Questions and Answers followed with Beth taking questions from the CHAT

(1) “Mattson” type buyers impact on the housing market and quality of life- Verder-Aliga and Elward were not familiar with the issue. Cabaldon stressed that Sonoma, Solano and Yolo Counties had been leaders in land use planning over past decades and could have a joint voice now and stressed the very negative impact on small businesses of “Mattson” type purchasing practices, which left properties vacant or unused.

(2) All candidates supported alternative housing, including mobile and fabricated homes and their owners. Cabaldon and Verder-Aliga stressed the important role of local governments in fixing the power imbalance between owners and tenants, despite state preemption in some areas and recommended that local government have the authority to regulate this type of housing.

(3) Cabladon and Verder-Aliga agreed that the most important issue for the District in the next 12 months is affordable housing. Elward stressed the importance of mental health services as it relates to housing.

(4) All candidates agreed that some form of universal health care was essential and was a universal right and supported AB 1690

(5) AB 770? Cabaldon explained that this bill eliminates some of the financing issues that have undermined efforts toward health care for all. The other candidates were not familiar with the bill and Elward asked for “better wording”.

(6) All agreed that the threshold for passing housing bonds and related public financing proposals should be by majority vote rather than the current 'super majority'. Elward wanted alternatives to taxes to pay for services because many people cannot afford the extra tax.

(7) Fire safety v. housing: All agreed it was a complex issue.

(8) SB 525? All agreed that the state minimum wage should be increased to at least \$ 25/hour. Cabaldon stressed that the goal for minimum wage should be a "livable wage" which is likely much higher. Elward advocated \$ 40/hour.

Each candidate gave a three-minute closing statement, in reverse alphabetical order. Each reinforced their answers given during the Q and A and asked for members' support. References were given in the CHAT to candidates' campaign websites.

5. Announcements: Sonoma Mayor Sandra Lowe invited members to attend a reception in the City Council chambers for the artists whose work for PRIDE month is currently on display in the City Council chambers: 4- 5:30 PM July 28.

6. Next meetings announced–

a. Virtual SVD Board meeting – Monday, Aug. 7, 9:30 AM

b. No August General Meeting – Come to Westerbeke Aug. 27th

7. Meeting adjourned: 8 PM