

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF THE TOMPKINS COUNTY PROGRESSIVES
December 7, 2017**

In Attendance:	Emily Adams	Bernie Fetterer
	Jason Cortell	Jen Karius
	Cait Darfler	Poppy Singer
	Deborah Dawson	Victor Tiffany
	Ronny Hardaway	
	Mario Hernandez	
	Kris Hodges	
	Kim Knight	
	Martha Laux	
	Ted Laux	
	Katy Nicholson	

Co-chair **Kim Knight** called the meeting to order at 6:92 pm.

Members in attendance were invited to participate in a public comment period.

Victor Tiffany said that his group, Revolt against Plutocracy, was considering sponsoring a day-long Movement School for Revolution presented by two members of the Liberty Tree Foundation, and asked that TCP consider being a co-sponsor of the event. The presenters will be in Western New England in late March or early April, and so we might be able to arrange a Movement School event here in Ithaca during that time frame. Our co-sponsorship would not require a financial commitment on our part; but simply assistance with publicity and logistics. It was the consensus of the Board members that TCP would be interested. Tiffany will get dates and specifics and get back in touch with us so that we can have further discussion and make a decision at our January meeting.

Jen Karius invited TCP members to attend the Post-Election Reflection event, scheduled for 5:15 pm, December 13, in the Borg Warner (West) Room of the Tompkins County Public Library. Karius' event will be a forum presented by third-party candidates who ran in last month's County and local elections, sharing their experiences and insights on the difficulties of running an independent campaign in an area dominated by a single party. Karius stressed that she and other candidates in her situation experienced significant challenges posed by media, the Board of Elections, and the Tompkins County Democratic Committee. Her event will invite consideration of how our community and political institutions can be more supportive of independent candidates. Karius hopes that TCP will host a follow-up event on these issues in 2018.

Bernie Fetterer reminded the Board that all eight of the Democratic candidates vying for the privilege of opposing Tom Reed next year support single-payer health insurance. He believes that single-payer will be even more important as the for-profit health care industry becomes more integrated and monopolistic – a trend reflected in CVS Health’s recent acquisition of Aetna.

Deborah Dawson indicated that, with the exception of the Environmental Justice Committee’s report, appended hereto, there were no written Committee reports this month.

Kim Knight reported on the Social Justice Committee’s involvement in SURJ and MRC talking circle events over the past several months. Knight and **Katy Nicholson** attended a talking circle weekend last summer. Knight reported on concepts that are central to understanding racism as a set of policies and practices that create different outcomes for different racial groups. These may be found in organizations and institutions, but they are also systemic. Accordingly, cisgender white Americans must understand that they enjoy privilege in a racist system. The question is, how can we use our privilege to change the system. Knight discussed the “margins to center” concept, which requires that we center our efforts on the voices and real needs of the people we’re trying to help. This means working with, and being accountable to, people and organizations of color. Knight emphasized that racism has been and is used to enable and perpetuate economic inequality, and so we cannot address and redress economic inequality without addressing structural and systemic racism as well. She also warned that we must keep the “margins to center” concept firmly in mind when we create TCP’s platform. Finally, she urged us to think about how to develop and maintain relationships with persons and organizations of color. In that connection, Emily Adams reported that Black Lives Matter of Greater New York is now a NYPAN affiliate.

Emily Adams reported on NYPAN’s statewide activities and initiatives. These include:

- A calling campaign targeting consistent primary voters in districts that elect IDC State Senators. The WFP hired a coordinator for this project, which is staffed largely by volunteers from NYPAN and a couple of other grassroots organizations. So far, the project has reached over 1,000 key voters in IDC districts.
- An initiative to recruit a viable progressive opponent for Andrew Cuomo in next year’s gubernatorial primary. Possible candidates include Syracuse Mayor Stephanie Miner, and State Senator Terry Gipson.
- A project to develop a progressive alternative to the existing VAN voter database in NYS. NYPAN has FOILED the petitions that New York voters signed for Obama in 2008, and, more recently, for Bernie Sanders and Zephyr Teachout. NYPAN wants to use that data to create a progressive voter database, but needs significant funding for software development. Adams says it looks like Bill Samuels (EffectiveNY) can provide the necessary funding. She believes that the resulting database platform would be owned by NYPAN and/or EffectiveNY.

- NYPAN will soon be launching a new website.
- NYPAN is in the process of becoming a “child” affiliate of Our Revolution. The affiliate relationship will create an issue with respect to endorsements of Congressional candidates, *i.e.*, all of the NYPAN affiliates in a congressional district must endorse the same candidate in order for that candidate to get Our Revolution’s endorsement. This will prove challenging in the NY 23rd, with eight Democratic primary challengers for Tom Reed’s seat. Tioga County is looking to endorse this month, but, unless every other NYPAN chapter in the district endorses the same candidate, there won’t be an Our Revolution endorsement in the primary. The Board agreed that it would like to see the NYPAN chapters do a straw poll of all of their members instead of early endorsements; we could then use the results to encourage the less successful candidates to drop out. Adams agreed to take this idea to NYPAN and the other NY 23rd chapters.

The Board began planning for 2018. This was a wide-ranging discussion that covered the following topics, in no particularly logical order:

- TCP will serve as local hosts for NYPAN’s quarterly meeting in September. Emily will determine which weekend(s) in September do not conflict with Homecoming and Parents’ Weekends at Cornell and IC, and advise the NYPAN Board accordingly.
- There will be a couple of important local elections to watch in 2018. Dawson reported that Ken Lansing may run for Tompkins County Sheriff again, and that he may have primary challengers from Dryden and Lansing. Knight and **Cait Darfler** reported that the Mayor and two Board seats will be up for grabs in the Village of Trumansburg, where the election results will be driven by fierce disagreement over the proposed Hamilton Square development. There is a Planning Board meeting about the project scheduled for December 28, and there will be a Democratic Caucus at the end of January. Knight and Darfler will keep TCP members informed of developments.
- Of course TCP wants to be involved in next year’s Congressional election in the NY 23rd (see above). Dawson reported that some local Democrats are organizing to support Anthony Brindisi’s efforts to unseat Claudia Tenney in the neighboring 22nd District, apparently because they think that Tenney is far more vulnerable than Tom Reed.
- **Mario Hernandez** will be available to work on TCP/NYPAN initiatives over the next few weeks, and expresses a willingness to make phone calls. Adams will get him plugged in to NYPAN’s anti-IDC calling campaign, and whatever other calling initiatives may arise.
- Dawson is interested in presenting a public information program on the Republicans’ tax “reform” legislation early next year, as soon as the Conference Committee completes its work and we know what the final bill will look like.
- Dawson stated that she has had difficulty rounding up the members of the Economic Justice and Labor Committee for meetings, and that she is unlikely to have time to organize meetings next year due to her legislative duties (especially with Joe Lawrence’s

departure from the Executive Board and the committee). She asked if anyone else would be willing to step in and lead this committee. This led to a discussion about the viability of the current committee structure. Board members agreed that they were all stretched too thin to organize committee meetings and activities, and that we didn't have enough actively participating members to make our committees viable as committees. For the moment, it was agreed that the Committee chairs would act primarily, if not solely, as point persons to inform TCP members of issues and actions relating to subjects that fall under their "Committees" purview. This organizational issue will probably be revisited at future Board meetings.

- **Jason Cortell** reminded the Board that 2018 dues payments will be due in January. The Board debated whether TCP should impose participation requirements or expectations on general members. No agreement was reached. Cortell asked that we consider having periodic social meetings to encourage more active participation. These issues will likely be discussed at future meetings.
- At least two of the Executive Board members will be attending the Post-Election Reflection event on December 13. At the January Executive Board meeting, we will consider whether to sponsor a follow-up event to explore the possibilities for restructuring Tompkins County's essentially one-party political structure to encourage more, and more diverse, participation.
- A **Platform Committee** was created. Jason Cortell will chair the Committee, which will include **Ronny Hardaway, Mario Hernandez, Jen Karius, and Kim Knight**. Adams will obtain EffectiveNY's policy statements for the Committee to review. If any member is interested in participating, please contact Cortell.

By unanimous vote, **Mario Hernandez** was elected as a member of the Executive Board.

The public meeting was adjourned at 8:25, to go into Executive Session.

No official actions were taken in Executive Session.

The next meeting of the Executive Board will be on January 4.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Environmental Justice Committee

Author: Cait Darfler

Committee Update for November 2017

- **Town of Romulus Planning Board** met Monday to discuss the Circular EnerG's proposal to build a municipal waste burning facility at the Seneca Army Depot - It didn't sound like anything was decided.
- **Dryden Solar Article 78** - Heard by the judge in November. Opinion might take a while.
- **Crestwood/Seneca Lake** - close to making a decision about LPG. Looks like decision by early January.
- **Dryden RailTrail** - Village of Dryden, through Freeville to Varna. Property Easements are hard. Got an easement from the DEC for a big chunk of land (Game Farm Road).
- If anyone is interested in joining an advisory board, the **Tompkins County Environmental Management Council** (EMC) has membership openings. Learn more at <http://tompkinscountyny.gov/emc>
- **Electronic vehicle charging stations** newly available in Caroline at Brooktondale market and one at Ulysses Town Hall
- **25th Anniversary of NYS recycling** was this fall - It was considered impossible at the time. Something to remember when we face these monumental environmental challenges