Democratic Women of Mecklenburg County

General Membership Meeting

Little Rock AME Church, Cultural Center

401 N. McDowell Street

Charlotte, NC 28205

Wednesday, June 13, 2018

President Connie Green-Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Quorum was present and confirmed by Veronica Caldwell.

Elected officials were recognized.

Candidates were recognized.

Party officials were recognized.

New members were recognized, particularly Karen Moyer who has recently moved to Charlotte from Pennsylvania in order to be closer to her daughter, Kristen Moyer, who is the DWMC Internal Communications Chair.

1st Vice President Lisa Ellsworth introduced the program, which was designed to educate the membership on the issues impacting judicial elections in Mecklenburg County as well as the attack on the judiciary more generally in the state.

The panel was composed of:

Judge Ty Hands, who spoke about legislation passed and awaiting approval or veto from the governor and pending legislation impacting the impartial operation of the judiciary. Judge Hands noted that she and the other judges present were not there to offer personal opinions on legislation but instead to address the facts surrounding recent legislation.

Tomas Lopez, Executive Director of the non-partisan DemocracyNC, addressed head-on the attacks on the judiciary by the General Assembly and specific legislative attempts to tilt the balance of justice in the state in favor of the Republican Party. He encouraged everyone present to contact their representatives regardless of party affiliation and voice concern over the imposition of districts for Mecklenburg judicial offices. He noted that his group has seen widespread support in communities across the state for the protection of the impartiality of the judiciary.

Jane Whitley, Chair of the Mecklenburg County Democratic Party, addressed the party’s concerns in Mecklenburg specifically and the chilling effect of the legislature’s attempts to interfere with the work of the judicial system. She noted that the county party is already involved in litigation concerning proposed changes to the ballot and anticipates there may be more to come. The county party has also put together a committee, which includes the DWMC’s Lisa Ellsworth, to vet Democratic candidates for open judicial seats, while judges currently holding seats have already been endorsed by the county party.

The judges present representing the Mecklenburg County courts included District Court Judges Regan Miller, Tracy Hewett, Lou Trosch, Alicia Brooks, Aretha Blake, Donald Cureton, Jr., Rickye McKoy-Mitchell, and Superior Court Judge Donnie Hoover. Each spoke briefly noting that the judicial districts being proposed for Mecklenburg County are fixing a problem that does not exist. The districts themselves in no way impact the judge a citizen might come before in court. Two judges with children mentioned that the drawing of districts may make it necessary for them to move their families to another part of the county in order to continue to serve, while the districts themselves have no impact on the administration of justice.

At 7:45 the Business Meeting began. Approval of the May 9th meeting minutes were motioned for approval by Suzanne Elsberry and seconded by Laura DiFraia. The minutes were approved as distributed.

Elaine Bermudez gave the Treasurer’s report, noting that the DWMC is 97% of the way to achieving its full budget for the year. The Treasurer reported that roughly 35 members have not paid their 2018 dues and asked that they pay their dues as soon as possible.

Suzanne Elsberry, Chair of the Ways and Means Committee, gave an impassioned report encouraging participation in this year’s Paint the Town Blue Gala, which will take place on August 9th. She argued that the current administration needed to be challenged on its inhumane and unethical policies and the best way to do so is to support all Democratic men and women as they run to replace those who would give the administration a rubber stamp. The purpose of the Gala is to assist Democratic candidates as they run for election.

Laura DiFraia, Issues and Resolutions Chair, informed membership about her committee’s efforts to compile a database for women interested in running for office. To that end, her committee has composed a survey that will be emailed to the membership via MailChimp. Members should expect the survey within the next few days. She also reported that her committee is in the process of setting up interviews with DWMC members who have run for office, both successfully and unsuccessfully, to further assist women who might be interested in running. The database and videotaped interviews will be available to members only on the DWMC website through password-protected access.

Announcements were read by Shannon Lalor, serving as Secretary in the absence of Suzanne Zeitouni, Secretary.

Susan Marcus encouraged everyone to clean up after themselves.

Motion to adjourn by Vivian Spruill and 2nd by Elaine Bermudez and Susan Marcus simultaneously at 8:10PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Lalor

Chair, Public Relations Committee