

GPNJ Monthly meeting 1/14/17 - Atlantic County Library, Mays Landing, 1 pm

Mike Mangels, 1st Vice Chair, led the meeting in the Chair's absence.

The meeting began with everyone introducing themselves with name, preferred gender pronouns, county, and answers to two additional questions: is your county recognized, and are you interested in running for office or working on a Green campaign?

Members Present

Mike M., Linda, Tom C., Tom V., Kim M., Mark H., Chris M., Melissa T., Aaron H., Heather W., Justin W., Nate F., Mason B., Mico L., Barbara B., Sherry B., Denise B., Terry M., Jean S., Shoshona O., Susan C., Mike D., Roger S., Roger M., Catherine P., Brian R., Joshua R., Karen G., Jacob R., Seth K-D., Jay S., Kyle, Steve W., Joanne C.

Committee Reports

Membership (Heather Warburton for Brian Powers)

To date 14 counties are active, 8 counties have been officially recognized and earned the \$150 seed money. Email Brian about who/where to mail check if you haven't received it yet. Next New Organizer training will be 1/17 at 8 pm. All locals are reminded to enter their membership data in the Action Network database (if you don't know how, go to the New Organizer training). The next committee meeting will be 1/22 at 7 pm via Zoom (video call). Planning for GPNJ state convention is the next project the committee needs to do, as well as creation of committee bylaws.

Policy (Mike Mangels, Chair)

The committee is drafting the GPNJ platform now, based on the GPU platform. We've divided it into four sections (by pillars) and we will be meeting next week to discuss the first section, Democracy, now that we've had a couple weeks to review it. Mike will be sending out a Doodle poll to schedule the meeting. Committee members are also encouraged to contact Mike if they'd like to write a position paper on a specific subject that they are knowledgeable or passionate about.

Communications (Denise Brush for Jim Brash)

After putting out a number of press releases on current issues during the election season, the committee is now focusing on our social media presence, with the goal of posting relevant content to Facebook and Twitter every day. Jim is working on updating the GPNJ website, and recently added information about Seth Kaper-Dale to the Elections page.

Finance (Mike Mangels for Juan DeSilva)

The committee is currently discussing the Treasurer Manual that Steve Welzer (Treasurer for the Jill Stein 2016 campaign) sent out. This very helpful document provides information about financial and legal rules for political parties, such as when reports have to be filed with the state and federal election commissions and how to do so. The committee will review and approve this document in the near future. Also, Cynthia Lerner is the new Treasurer of GPNJ as of today, having been duly interviewed and voted on by the Green Council, which she joins. Someone

asked what the Green Council is, and Mike replied that the Green Council consists of the 5 officers (Chair, 1st & 2nd Vice Chairs, Treasurer, & Secretary); the Chairs of each of the 5 standing committees; and the Local Affiliate Coordinator for each recognized county.

Elections (Aaron Hyndman, Interim Chair)

Aaron provided a printed report to the Secretary. The primary activity of the committee in the past month was finalizing the document for the Candidate Vetting Process, which describes the guidelines for the party to approve candidates running on the Green Party ballot line. This document is currently being voted on by the Green Council.

Aaron gave a “pep talk” encouraging people to run for office in 2017 as Greens, noting that both he and the previous Elections Committee chair, Rich Harris, were Bernie Sanders campaign coordinators for the 2 counties in NJ that Bernie won, and now they are now both Greens. Aaron outlined the training program for Green candidates which will be carried out over the next 4 months: February - Introduction to NJ ELEC regulations and financial compliance protocol; March - Campaign Organizing 101; April - Media, Messaging, and Outreach; and May - Putting the FUN in fundraising. The state convention (in the spring, dates to be announced) will also include a Campaign School.

Aaron mentioned that there will soon be an Elections Committee Bylaws Working Group, for those that are interested, and that since he plans to be very involved in Seth Kaper-Dale’s campaign for governor, he is seeking someone to take over as Elections Chair eventually.

GPNJ Reps Needed (Mike Mangels)

Mike brought up three positions that are available currently - let him know if you are interested.

- 1) NC Alternate - this person is an Alternate for our two National Committee representatives from GPNJ, and would be an observer on the NC listserve.
- 2) GPUS Coordinated Campaign Committee - this person would serve on the GPUS committee that coordinates Green campaigns nationally.
- 3) Medicare for All - NJ - board member - the Green Council just approved our affiliation with this group, which allows us to designate someone to sit on their board in addition to GPNJ Chair Julie Saporito-Acuna.

Divestment Proposal for GPUS (Mason Bliss, Atlantic County Vice Chair)

The complete text of the proposal was on the reverse side of the agenda. Mason also gave everyone a handout about the banks which fund DAPL (Dakota Access Pipeline). Mason’s proposal was that the Green Party of the United States divest from and close corporate accounts with any financial institutions which are investors in DAPL, as part of a national Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction campaign. Mason also proposed a National Day of Action for February 10, 2017. This proposal needs to be approved by the GPNJ membership so that Mason can propose it to the GPUS, where Mason serves as National Committee Alternate.

The ensuing discussion included several related topics, such as where SHOULD we put our money: the answer being credit unions or local/community banks. Also someone suggested

creating a sign-on letter, for other organizations such as 15Now, Medicare for All, etc. Several people expressed concern about how soon February 10 is, to which Mason responded that this is an urgent situation, with the Trump Administration coming in next week. It was proposed that 2/10 be the kickoff for a year-long campaign. Another suggestion was making it the kickoff to a shorter campaign, ending 6 months after the government “halted” the pipeline (Dec. 4).

Mike Mangels made a friendly amendment to change the proposal so that the campaign begins 2/10 and ends 6/4, and Mason accepted the amendments. There were no objections among the membership present. Mason will update the proposal and give it to the Green Council on Monday night for a vote. Mason Bliss will be creating a Google discussion group for this topic, so contact Mason if you would like to participate.

Green Party 2017 Governor Candidate Rev. Seth Kaper-Dale - Introduction and Q&A Session

Seth grew up in Vermont. His Dad directed social services for the state and his Mom was a teacher. Seth attended college in Michigan, where he became interested in economic justice and liberation theology, and met his wife. After getting married Seth and his wife Stephanie spent a year in Ecuador working in a children’s orphanage; both went to Princeton Theological Seminary, and they became co-pastors of The Reformed Church of Highland Park (near New Brunswick). Over the past 15 years Seth and Stephanie have served there, they have had 3 children and the church has expanded significantly and become very involved in social justice.

Seth has taken on a number of social justice causes such as affordable housing, services for foster kids who age out, people coming out of prison, refugees, and immigrants. He has also learned about the process of writing legislative bills, having written one for Sen. Lautenberg. Some of his recent political stands include: keeping immigrant families together; letting convicted felons vote; and calling the Democrats out for not fully supporting a \$15 minimum wage. Seth said that his “the last shall be first” motto works for every issue, because we all have the experience of being ‘last’ in some situation. For example, he met with the BadAss Teachers this morning, who have been treated as “last” in New Jersey. He wants to continue to be informed by GPNJ members throughout the state during his campaign.

Questions from the audience-

Roger Merle - what are Seth’s views on the issues that voters care about - such as property taxes, transportation trust fund/infrastructure, pension “crisis”, health care? He does have answers for each of these, and can place them into the ‘last are first’ narrative. For example, the connection between public school funding and property taxes was an item of discussion at morning meeting with teachers.

Mark Heacock - some older folks have lost their homes because they can’t afford to pay their property taxes! Mark ran (in previous years) on the idea of reducing or eliminating property taxes for seniors, and hopes Seth will consider a similar stand.

Jake Ryan - how does Seth feel about a “Paris Agreement” for dealing with climate change among the states, since the US will probably not participate under Trump - he would be in favor.

Mason Bliss - the state is doing nothing to help crumbling economy of South Jersey (specifically the Atlantic City area) whose economy is based on tourism, and unemployment is very high compared to rest of state (also foreclosure is very high). What would Seth do? Seth suggested positive use of eminent domain to keep people in their homes.

Mico Lucido - another issue in South Jersey (which was well represented at this meeting) is our very poor transportation infrastructure; for example, we can't get to Trenton by train except by going through Philadelphia! Seth is aware of this issue.

Barbara Brown - reiterated that South Jersey (and not just Atlantic City) is always last in state funding. Lack of good transportation keeps people from getting to jobs (when there are any).

Melissa Tomlinson - the teachers want the next governor to repeal "Chapter 78" which forces teachers to pay for their own healthcare. Seth said he needs to research this further.

Steve Welzer - mentioned that 800 signatures are required to get Seth on the ballot. Steve said we can start now, and please take a ballot packet at the end of the meeting.

JoAnn Cousins - how does Seth feel about "tiny houses" for housing the homeless?

Mason Bliss - the deportation of 3 million immigrants has been promised by Trump. Towns such as Pleasantville have many undocumented immigrants, what would Seth do? Speak out against deportation; register as Muslim; participate in the emergency response team for ICE raids.

Roger Sedmont - encouraged Seth to support light rail in South Jersey.

Seth reminded everyone to take lawn signs and literature. A sign-up sheet for campaign volunteers went around the room.

Announcements -

Pinelands Pipeline status:

Heather reported on the Pinelands Preservation Alliance meeting she attended. The South Jersey Gas pipeline through the Pinelands is still being considered. SJG reapplied after the pipeline was rejected 3 years ago, and Gov. Christie stacked the Pinelands Commission with his own appointees. Sen. Steve Sweeney (boo hiss) refused to bring the issue to a vote.

There will be a public hearing on 1/24 at St. Ann's Church, 22 Trenton Rd. Browns Mill 08015. It begins at 9:30 am (or sooner to get a parking spot; it was moved because they expect a crowd). Our main talking point is that the pipeline is in violation of the Comprehensive Management Plan, which states any infrastructure must directly benefit residents of Pinelands, and this pipeline doesn't. SJG claims they are going to retrofit the Beesley's Point Plant for gas instead of coal, but it's more likely they will export the gas. It would be very dirty even as a gas plant.

For some reason drilling underneath the Pinelands supposedly has 'no impact' according to the rule, but the pipeline is likely to fail due to the sandy soil in the Pinelands. Heather will be bringing the petitions with 250+ signatures to the hearing.

Go to <http://www.pinelandsalliance.org/protection/takeaction/> to find out how you can help.

Next GPNJ statewide meeting will be somewhere in Morris County, we'll let you know soon.

Local meetings coming up:

Monmouth - Jan 28 @1 pm, 95 Poplar Ave West Long Branch NJ 07764

Camden - Jan. 18 @6:30 pm, Collingswood library

Atlantic - 2/7 @6:30, Pleasantville library, 33 MLK Ave

Cumberland - 2/11 @ 1pm, "The Spot" in Vineland

Gloucester - 2/1 @ 8 pm, Glassboro Barnes & Noble

Donations:

Mico Lucido mentioned that Green Party of Atlantic County, the hosts of today's meeting, were taking donations, and thanked everyone who had donated.

Green Party Registration:

Steve Welzer announced that GPNJ has 3,200 registered voters as of Jan. 1!

Adjournment:

Mike Mangels called for the meeting to be adjourned, and the motion was seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.

Minutes submitted by Denise Brush, Secretary, Green Party of New Jersey.