

## Oak Park-Huntington Woods- Royal Oak Township Democratic Club Meeting Notes, March 17, 2022, 7 pm – 9 pm

I. **Welcome:** **Mary Ann Fontana** convened our meeting at 7 pm and welcomed those present, especially any new participants or new members.

II. **Treasurer's Report:** **Andrew Cissell** was first congratulated for the birth of his new baby, and then he gave us his report.

Soft money checking account: \$613.14; Hard money checking account: \$2623.14

Soft money savings account: \$0; Hard money savings account: \$982.15

III. **State Senator Mallory McMorrow** will be running for the new 8<sup>th</sup> State Senate District seat, which will include our three cities. She referred to it as the Woodward Corridor District. McMorrow currently represents the 13<sup>th</sup> State Senate District. She talked to us about her accomplishments so far, her plans for the next term and why she's running in this new district. She began with a history of her original interest in running for office. She is not a native Michigander but fell in love with MI and thus moved here a while back. She was heartbroken after the 2016 election, but she engaged in protests and became ever more activist, which gave her more hope. She was encouraged to run in 2018 and beat Marty Knollenberg, ousting an incumbent in a purple district. She remains a proud Democrat, fighting for critical issues, like voting rights. She has created and helped create 40 bills, none of which have been passed because of the Republican majority. She "stands" on three pillars: 1. PROTECT people, water rights, infrastructure, reproductive rights, and more; 2. DREAM of improved economic development, increased access to community colleges, a more robust auto industry, etc.; 3. BUILD our future in all areas of importance to the district. McMorrow is working hard to win votes and is very enthusiastic about continuing to serve. Contact her at [info@mcmorrowformichigan.com](mailto:info@mcmorrowformichigan.com) Her website is [www.mcmorrowformichigan.com](http://www.mcmorrowformichigan.com)

IV. **MDP Voter Protection Director Erica Peresman** spoke about what the MDP is doing to ensure that we have fair and safe elections this year, and how they are protecting everyone's right to vote. Her team needs many volunteers. She explained the various volunteer roles that are available. Also check out the OPHWROT Take-Action page on the website, where we have posted the many volunteer opportunities with the Voter Protection Team.

Erica said that we are at a very scary point in our history regarding 2020 and the BIG LIE. We need to counter the threats, especially regarding voter protection and voting rights. The stakes are very high. We are fortunate that our Governor has vetoed voter suppression laws every time they reach her desk. Looking ahead, we need someone in 2024 to manage the election who doesn't believe in the BIG LIE. Republicans have become more sophisticated; 2020 was a dress rehearsal for them. VPP needs thousands of volunteers, and there are many opportunities to volunteer. One can be a

poll observer or a challenger; one can do outreach by phone to help voters cure their absentee ballots if something is awry, and one can recruit volunteers. One can observe the County Board of Canvassers after the primary (August 2) and the general election (November 8). One can also be on the voter assistance hotline. There are Zoom training sessions for all volunteer opportunities. Again: go to <https://ophwdems.org/take-action>

## V. Committee Reports

**Laurie Lisi** and **Glenda Stainback** reported on **PDs** and **community service**, respectively. We need new PDs, and welcome to the new PDs! MDP is canvassing in Oakland County, and PDs can canvas in their own precincts. There will also be a phone bank on April 3, 1-4 pm, in precincts. Don Jones is leading the community service effort. Forgotten Harvest Food Drive is happening, and our Club will be represented engaging in this effort on March 23. More ideas are needed for community serviced events, especially for May and June, since we have efforts going on in March and April.

**Rachel Karp** is leading the effort for the American Red Cross Blood Drive on May 9, 1-7 pm. Sign up at <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets>

## VI. Elected Officials and Others' Reports

**Representative Regina Weiss** provided updates on her work with the labor caucus (workers' rights, collective bargaining, etc.), school aid (2023 budget), March as reading month/book drive for schools (BookBeat is contributing books purchased in March to schools in the area), ballot initiatives (many are deceptive so beware of signing ones you don't fully understand). Regina is running for re-election in the newly drawn 6<sup>th</sup> district.

**Amanda Shelton** is running for Oakland County Circuit Court judge. She is a progressive, lifelong Democrat, endorsed by Dana Nessel and Charlie Cavell. For more information, go to [www.shelton2022.com](http://www.shelton2022.com)

**Oak Park Mayor Marion McClellan** was not in attendance but provided a report (included separately on the website).

**County Commissioner Charlie Cavell** is involved with a program focused on quality of life: live your best life in Oakland County. He is working on senior services, child care services, criminal justice, housing, and other such issues. Contact Charlie at [cavellc@oakgov.com](mailto:cavellc@oakgov.com)

**Judge Jaimie Horowitz** is championing zoom access to the court system for individuals and businesses to enable more access for those who are not able to attend in person.

**Oak Park City Councilman Shaun Whitehead** is developing a pamphlet related to the Black Businesses Matter initiative with listings of businesses secured to date. He is also involved with improvements being made to the library: new furniture, including outdoor furniture for those who want to gather outdoors; new computers). He is also planning the June 19 Juneteenth event, which will be family-friendly and outdoors in a park.

**Marilyn Kelly** is seeking another 8-year term on the WSU Board of Governors and looks forward to the Club's endorsement for the April 9 election. She has a huge personal investment in her position, bringing excellent professional credentials to the position. Her goals for her next term are: a higher student graduation rate, improvement in technology at WSU, increased social mobility for grads, increased diversity of students and faculty, and more interdisciplinary studies programs.

**Howard Baron** has withdrawn as a candidate for the Michigan Board of Education, and he is supporting the two who are running: Dr. Pamela Pugh and Dr. Mitchell Robinson. He said that in 2024, he may decide to run again. He has served on the Bloomfield Hills School Board for a decade,

**Oak Park School Board Trustee Al Elvin** is involved with the search for a Superintendent of the Oak Park School System, which may take 3 ½ to 4 months.

## VII. **Good and Welfare**

**Mary Ann** mentioned the following:

The Earth Day March will take place April 23. Time TBA.

The June 16, 4-8 pm, Club Picnic will take place in Shepherd Park. The August 10, 4-8 pm, Club Picnic will also take place in Shepherd Park.

**Sharon Baseman** mentioned the April 3, 2:30-4:30 pm, Fems for Dems Speed-dating Forum with Andy Levin and Haley Stevens. Check out <https://www.femsfordems.org> [Note: The time has been changed to 3:00-5:00.]

VIII. **Mary Ann** ended the meeting at 9 pm with thanks to all who attended.