



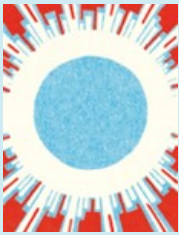
Manatee County
Democratic Party

Manatee Matters

January 2, 2023 Newsletter

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Manatee Dems Advocate for Sunshine Law Workshop



One of the newly elected members of the Manatee County School Board, Richard Tatem, [publicly announced in December](#) that he is “going to try to mount an effort to potentially challenge [the state’s Government-in-the-Sunshine Law] in court.” George McDermott, appearing on behalf of the Manatee County Democratic Party (MCDP) at the Board’s December 12 meeting, said a work session on the Sunshine Law would do more good.

McDermott, a member of the MCDP Legislative Action Committee, emphasized the Sunshine Law’s importance for good governance practices as well as board and individual ethics.

“The cornerstone of democracy is not just voting; it is informed voting,” McDermott said. “Florida’s Sunshine law protects the right of parents and other community members to know what School Board members are advocating and proposing. MCDP unconditionally supports Florida’s Sunshine law and opposes any steps that can make it harder for community members to know what Board members are planning until it’s too late to exercise our rights as citizens and voters.”

The complete statement and a video can be accessed on the Manatee County Democratic Party website, manateecountydemocrats.com/issues later this week.

STREAM Schedules Research Kickoff

STREAM (Stronger Together Reaching Equality Across Manatee) invites residents interested in affordable housing, homelessness and adult pre-arrest diversion (formerly called criminal justice reform) issues to its Research Kickoff on Jan. 23.

S. T. R. E. A. M.
Stronger Together Reaching Equality Across Manatee

Registration for the Research Kickoff and information on STREAM’s work can be accessed here: www.streammanatee.org. Or email STREAM for specific information: info@streammanatee.org.

STREAM is a nonpartisan, grassroots organizing group uniting faith communities to seek social justice by solving critical community problems in Manatee County.

To this end, the STREAM Affordable Housing Team is participating as a stakeholder in the Florida Housing Coalition’s homelessness study for Manatee County and attends County Commissioner and Affordable Housing Advisory Board meetings to stay current with developments in affordable housing.

The group was successful in getting the county to adjust its Livable Manatee Program to meet STREAM’s

targets and supports the county's research into zoning, density, codes and developing a community land trust.

STREAM is also partnering with the Direction Action and Research Training Institute (DART) to teach community organizing skills to local residents. Those interested in developing community organizing skills are invited to participate in Advanced Leader Training offered by the Direct Action and Research Training Institute (DART). Classes are scheduled in Tampa on Jan. 13 and 20. Cost is \$50, and registration information can be accessed at streammanatee.org or by writing info@streammanatee.org.

Turning Points Seeks Census Volunteers



Turning Points, a non-profit social services organization in Manatee County, is looking for volunteers to assist in the 2023 Point-In-Time count, Jan. 23 to 28.

The Point-In-Time census provides critical information to help Turning Points develop funding, services and strategies for those who are in homeless situations or at risk of becoming homeless.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that social services organizations conduct an annual count of people experiencing homelessness. The count is planned, coordinated and carried out locally.

One of the community issues identified by the Manatee Democrats' **Legislative Action Committee** is how to address the shortage of affordable and attainable housing in Manatee County. Helping with the Point-In-Time count is a step toward recognizing the issue and understanding the needs of those who experience homelessness.

"The census is an opportunity to learn about the issues from those with direct experience," said Tina Juillerat, Turning Points Volunteer Special Project Coordinator. She emphasized that the census provides information for responding to needs and gaps in services; developing local strategies to meet the goal of ending homelessness; and bringing in federal, state and local dollars to better serve homeless individuals and families.

Volunteers conduct surveys at service providers (such as Turning Points) and street locations. Volunteers work as part of a team with experienced volunteers or service provider staff. Day, evening and weekend shifts are available. Bilingual skills are especially appreciated. A required one-hour training session (in person or Zoom) is provided for volunteers.

Registration for both training and volunteer slots after Jan. 4 [here](#).

For further information contact, tjuillerat@tpmanatee.org; 704-996-4236 or 941-747-1509, Ext. 334. The Turning Points website address is <https://tpmanatee.org/>.

Manatee Democratic Club to Host Lunch Discussion

The **Manatee Democratic Club** will host a roundtable discussion during its monthly luncheon, Thursday, Jan. 5, 11:30 a.m., at Peridia Golf & Country Club, [4950 Peridia Boulevard East, Bradenton](#).

Luncheon attendees will raise questions and express viewpoints on a variety of topics including: what should be the priorities of the Manatee Democratic Party; what should be the priorities of the Florida Democratic Party; should President Biden seek a second term? If not, who would you like to see as candidate; and, issues and questions from the floor.



In addition, Vicki Waters will be reporting on the voting statistics of newly registered young Democrats. The cost of the luncheon is \$15 payable at the door with a check to MDC. To register for the luncheon, contact Paul Dain, pauldain73@gmail.com.

Candidate Support Group Seeks Volunteers



The **Manatee Democrats' Candidate Support Committee** invites residents interested in helping identify potential candidates for the next election cycle to participate in the committee's work. Contact Karen Curlin, karencurlin@gmail.com, for more information.

Running for Office Workshop Scheduled



Anyone interested in running for local political office is invited to attend a free virtual workshop hosted by the non-partisan **League of Women Voters of Manatee County**

The half-day program, "How to Run for Office," will be offered via Zoom on Saturday, Jan. 21, from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Registration can be accessed [here](#).

Speakers include seasoned, local candidates who will discuss how to run a campaign, from completing the necessary paperwork to working with their political party, the press and social media.

Scott Farrington, Assistant Supervisor of Elections of Manatee County, and Andre Torkelson, Political Consultant, Keen Campaigning, Inc., are the featured speakers.

A panel of successful campaigners will further discuss how to prepare for a local campaign. Panelists include: retired county commissioner Betsy Benac, Mayor of Palmetto Shirley Bryant, Bradenton City Council member Marianne Barneby, and retired School Board member Charlie Kennedy.

Robinson Preserve Expansion Project Discussed

The **Manatee Democratic Environmental Caucus** will learn about the Robinson Preserve Expansion Project at its monthly meeting, Thursday, Jan. 12, 7 p.m.

The featured speaker will be Damon Moore, a habitat restoration practitioner with 20 years of experience developing and implementing habitat restoration projects. He is currently with Environmental Science Associates where he designs and implements ecological restoration projects throughout the region.



Contact Ruth Lawler, ruthlawler@att.net, or Cyndy Rosso, cynthiarosso032@gmail.com, for further information.

Environmental Caucus Tours Perico Preserve



The **Manatee Democratic Environmental Caucus** led a group of 15 in an exploration of Bradenton's Perico Preserve, Saturday, Dec. 17.

Florida Master Naturalist Alice Newlon explained how the native plants in the preserve benefit wildlife and how many can be used in home landscaping.

Caucus member Tim Eiseler, a retired landscape architect, shared which native plants work well in home and development landscape plans. The tour also included information on the variety of ecosystems and how the preserve was transformed from farm land into what it is today.

"We were pleased to have so many participants on the walk, some who are visiting from the north, Environmental Caucus members and other nature enthusiasts," said Environmental Caucus co-chair Ruth Lawler. "(Co-chair) Cynthia Rosso and I look forward to sharing more events and knowledgeable speakers in the upcoming months."

The Manatee Democratic Environmental Caucus meets at 7 p.m., the second Thursday of the month. Meetings are in person at Manatee Democratic Headquarters, [435 Cortez Road West, Bradenton](#), by Zoom or a hybrid. Contact eco.manateedems@gmail.com for more information about the caucus. Or visit the caucus Facebook page, facebook.com/ManateeDemocraticEnvironmental.

Photo: Florida Master Naturalist Alice Newlon explains the role of Spanish Moss.

Threats to Public Education Explored



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF MANATEE COUNTY

Explore current issues threatening public education with author and philosopher, Dr. Sarah Stitzlein, Wednesday, Jan. 18, 4 to 5 p.m., during a Zoom event hosted by the

League of Women Voters of Manatee County.

The discussion will offer ways to support public schools and protect democracy. [Register here](#). For more information contact, info@lwvmanatee.org.

Dr. Stitzlein is the author of *American Public Education and the Responsibility of Its Citizens: Supporting Democracy in the Age of Accountability*. She has a Ph.D. in Philosophy of Education from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and is Professor of Education, Affiliate Faculty in Philosophy, University of Cincinnati.

Manatee Dems Reopen Headquarters Office

The **Manatee County Democratic Party** headquarters will be open for business starting Jan. 9, on Tuesdays and Fridays from noon to 4 p.m. Manatee Dems' HQ is at [435 Cortez Road West, Bradenton.](#)



The office is available for club and caucus meetings and the staff is actively seeking volunteers to help during office hours. If interested in volunteering or to schedule a meeting, contact Tina Shope at 239-940-5119 or anntinashope@gmail.com.



Get involved! Check out the many area Democratic Clubs and Caucuses. Meet like-minded people at fun events!

[Click for Events List](#)



*The Manatee County Democratic Party is a 100% **volunteer organization**. All contributions of any size are appreciated.*

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Manatee County Democratic Party
435 Cortez Road West
Bradenton, Florida 34207
(941) 301-4336



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