

# Rhinebeck Democrats Club

March 12, 2022

## Minutes

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March 29, 2022

### **Attendees**

Jeff Romano	Susan Ragusa	Julie Zito
David Weiner	Eleanor Pupko	Linda Kagan
John Rossi	Diane Britton	Roger Quon
Joann Gelb	Victor Britton	Erin Sanchez

### **Time and Location**

The meeting started at approximately 9:00 a.m. and conducted virtually. Betty Leigh was unavailable.

### **Meeting Packet**

Prior to the meeting attendees were provided a copy of the agenda (Attachment I).

### **Discussion - Introduction**

John discussed conversations with Jeff and Dave after the club's February 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting in which it became evident greater discussion was required specific to the endorsement section, Article X, of the draft by-laws.

John asked David to offer his thoughts and concerns. David did not agree with changes to by-law language which would permit the endorsement of non-Democratic candidates. John encouraged comments, *"we want to hear from everyone"* and attendees did offer their perspective.

Some members agreed with David finding the changed language too untenable and preferred the original language restricting endorsements to Democratic candidates. Members felt it would be problematic and even toxic for a club, characterizing itself as Democrats, to endorse a candidate outside of the party.

Others expressed preference for keeping the changes allowing the club to consider non-Democrats. Members recalled a Rhinebeck where local politics were non-tribal and sought the "best candidate for the job". Others reasoned the club's willingness to consider non-Democrats would be viewed as more inclusive and draw more members.

A civil discussion continued unabated for nearly an hour as members strived for a path forward. The question was postured *"are the by-laws fluid enough to allow future members to amend"*. John stated the by-laws could be changed by a 2/3rds majority, thereby making it feasible future membership could reverse existing by-laws.

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Ultimately, the group agreed to modify the language in Article X resolving to prioritize Democrat candidates seeking club endorsement and only consider alternative, non-Dem candidates after vetting all Democrat candidates. John asked David to amend the by-laws once more and David agreed.

The members approved the minutes of the February meeting.

Members also advanced discussions specific to an upcoming Town board meeting on March 14, 2022 and the upcoming Village elections on March 15, 2022.

Regarding the meeting on the 14th Linda asked members to attend the Town Board meeting and encourage other residents to do likewise. Linda summarized key concerns, specific to the Rock Ledge development, and offered to work with John in circulating bullet points addressing the most critical concerns and issues.

Joann shared a recent encounter with Village Trustee candidate Vanessa Bertozzi and Gary Bassett in which Joann asked why candidate Brant Neuneker's name was omitted from local political signage supporting Vanessa. Joann was informed Brant desired to campaign on his own. Members were skeptical of this explanation.

John thanked all the attendees and adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:15 a.m.

#### **Next Meeting**

To be determined.

Minutes respectively submitted by.

John Rossi

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**Attachment I**

AGENDA  
RHINEBECK DEMOCRATS CLUB  
3/12/2022  
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM  
(Zoom link below)

- Discussion – Draft Bylaws
  - o Article X, Paragraph 1 (bottom of page 6)
  - o Article X, Paragraph 2 (top of page 7)
- Review of remaining changes to Draft Bylaws from prior meeting (David)
- Review of 2/23/22 Minutes
- Adjournment

John will facilitate the meeting. May Rossi will record minutes.