

Minutes

April 20, 2021 Birmingham Bloomfield Democratic Club

Call to Order / Roll Call of Officers

Debbie Rosenman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

She introduced officers of the club and greeted new participants. Officers present: Evan Brook (Vice Chair); Gail Whitty (Treasurer); Charles Gaba (Corresponding Secretary); Corinne Shoop (Trustee); and Nicole Bedi (Trustee). Tom Russell (Recording Secretary) was not able to be present.

Nicole Bedi moves to approve the agenda and Charles Gaba seconds the motion. The motion passes. Corinne Shoop moves to approve the minutes and Nicole Bedi seconds. The motion passes.

Report of the Chair:

Debbie Rosenman provided her Chair's Report for BBDems meeting on April 20, 2021:

Welcome all! This is the time of the month when like-minded folks in our club area get together to share information and learn more about the issues we are facing here in Michigan. We are so glad you are here!

Of course, the main issue facing us all relates to COVID and our response to this ongoing pandemic. The state and the governor are doing what they can to try to drive down the case rates and we can do our part by following their advice. If anyone needs help in knowing how to get a vaccination appointment, put your name and contact in the chat and we will reach out to help you. Our hospitals are really feeling the pressure these days and the more we do to stop the spread, the better.

Another issue on all our minds centers around protecting our right to vote. The 39 bills that the Michigan Republicans have introduced in the Senate are an attack on that right. They are not in response to what the city and township clerks have asked for as changes to improve voting in Michigan. Nearly all of them are in response to the fallacy that we need to address voter fraud that over 250 audits proved DID NOT exist in the last election. The time to stop this attack is now. Voters Not Politicians is leading that effort. Evan is putting a link in the chat for a form that lists the 20 senators, with their phone numbers, that need our calls and a response form to report those calls.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfZmxGyfwixcKFP0EQuOSbgvbhGs7pla3KXrAi6LIUptkJNvQ/viewform?gxids=7628>)

Let's make our voices heard now before the Republicans put this out as a ballot initiative that tries to circumvent the governor's veto, because that is their plan now.

We welcome everyone who joins our club as a member. See the link on our website at bbdems.org to become a paying member. The larger we are, the stronger we are in our community.

We also welcome all of your participation in our committees.

<http://bbdems.org/committee-signup>

Evan will put the sign-up in the chat, or you can also find it on our website. We have a new committee just starting that will be doing Letter and Postcard writing on behalf of different elected officials and organizations. Thanks to our precinct delegate, Emery Pence, who has agreed to lead this committee. We are now writing postcards to constituents in Congresswoman Haley Stevens' district and to other voters in the area about the success of the American Rescue Plan. Another campaign is to write postcards to swing voters in PA to engage them further. So, if you are willing to join this or one of the other four committees, fill out the form at that link and let us know. We appreciate your participation.

Come back next month to hear our two state Representatives. We are happy to host both Rep. Mari Manoogian and Rep. Kyra Bolden, who are doing great work for us in the MI House. We will also have a speaker from the Citizens Climate Lobby talking about reducing carbon emissions. Mark your calendars for May 18th at 7:00 p.m. and see you then!

Treasurer's Report

Gail Whitty reported that there is \$X in the club's account. There are 136 paid members as of January 1, 2021.

Precinct Delegate Committee Report

Allen Wolf: The Precinct Delegate Committee is meeting monthly, next meeting is coming this week on Thursday, April 22nd.

Membership

Evan Brook: We have added 72 names to our contact list for a total of 1,253. Evan will be sending out some texts inviting people to our next meeting and asking them to join the club.

Oakland County Democratic Party (OCDP)

Kelly Dillaha: Report on the last OCDP meeting with AG Dana Nessel. The OCDP will be hosting fundraising events, the next event is a Trivia night on April 22. The OCDP also is starting new committees that are looking for new members, including the new DEI Committee.

Old Business: none

New Business

First Guest Speaker – Mark Brewer MDP Data

Topic: redistricting commission. History, and the current commission. Then Q/A.

This is not the first redistricting commission in Michigan, the previous commission members were appointed by Democratic and Republican state parties. The committee was so deadlocked that the supreme court had to step in and draw districts. In 1982, the Supreme Court threw out the commission entirely and invented its own redistricting criteria based on land instead of “one person, one vote.”

Now we have a new commission based on vastly different criteria than past commissions. There are four Democrats, four Republicans, and five independents. They are selected randomly by self-identified political party, not by the party’s selection. This group has been meeting regularly over the last several months. As the committee is essentially starting from scratch, there is a lot of work to be done even before any set of districts could be considered. This commission has a supermajority requirement to ultimately approve districts. If the committee is deadlocked because of the supermajority requirement and cannot approve a set of districts, then it goes to a ranked choice vote between different districting plans. If even that fails, the secretary of state chooses a plan randomly from the proposed plans.

The new criterion for creating districts is vastly different from past criterion. The most important change, and the highest priority criteria is that the districts must preserve non-political “communities of interest.”

Second Guest Speaker – Michigan Liberation (statewide 501C4, nonprofit grassroots)

Earl Burton (Relational Organizer), Julia Galliker (Oakland County Director), Neal Hems (Bail Fund Administrator), Angela Davenport (Digital Media Manager), and Ronnie Waters (Organizer in Training).

Founded in 2018 to end the criminalization of black families in communities of color in Michigan. In 2020, Michigan Liberation led many issue campaigns like their statewide coalition of organizations providing rapid response to protect incarcerated persons from COVID, partnering with the ACLU and Advancement Project to file two successful lawsuits enforcing humane COVID safety standards in Wayne and Oakland County jail, and leading street protests for racial equality (among many more issue campaigns).



National Black Mama's Day Bail Out Campaign

<https://www.facebook.com/MichiganBlackMamasBailOut/>

Michigan Liberation's major focus currently is cash bail for black mothers because of the way that cash bail disrupts care taking. In 2020, the program split to focus both on black mothers/women and covid rapid response to bail out medically vulnerable people.

In 2021, Michigan Liberation will be having a soft launch in April and will be officially launching May 1st.

To get involved with Michigan Liberation, please visit their website to volunteer and donate:

<https://miliberation.org>

Good and Welfare

Mona DeQuis: Thank you to everyone who made phone calls. The new MDP initiative is calling likely Dems who have GOP Senators, asking them to call their Senator in opposition to new voter suppression bills. Senator Runestad's constituents:

https://www.openvpb.com/vpb_bycode/OEA8D40-780454

Nessa Feller: Fems for Democracy is running a donation drive to help migrant children that are in Michigan. The link for the event is here: <https://www.facebook.com/femsfordemocracy>

Charles Gaba: Please donate to reelect our leading Michigan Dems. Governor, AG and Secretary of State, in addition to the MDP itself!

Next Meeting: We will meet again on Tuesday, May 18 (Third Tuesday) at 7 PM.

Speakers: Reps Mari Manoogian/Kyra Bolden and the Citizens Climate Lobby

Adjourn

Debbie Rosenman made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

List of Those Present, in addition to the officers:

Allen Wolf, Martin Brook, Ronnie Waters, Fredrick Simms, Anil Kumar, Brady Johnson-Hill, Kelly Dillaha, Chris Chanko, Emery Pence, Howard Baron, Judith Goodman, Linda Zlotoff, Lisa Efros, Mark Brewer, Nessa Feller, Prashanth Balusu, Renita James, Sandy Hansell, Gabriel Efros, Liz Dawe, Dana Fortier.

Duly submitted

Evan Brook, Vice Chair