



**Third Annual BOD Retreat Minutes
December 5, 2015; 12:00-4:00
BOD President's house**

Attendees:

Joanne Richards, Dan Eckam, Diane Owens, Mary Patrick, Kurt Hildebrand, Teresa Taylor.

Retreat Objectives:

- Consider why each of us accepted a leadership role in CG4Tx
- Celebrate what we accomplished in 2015 and enjoy some time together.
- Agree on our main goals for CG4Tx for 2016 and steps to reach those goals.

Proceedings:

- Lunch -- including introductions/personal backgrounds and why we serve on the board.
- 2015 year in review:
 - Accomplishments:
 - Generally we think that our panel discussion meetings have been the most successful. A good example was our discussion of the electoral college, which elicited good turnout and good audience participation.
 - Our other main format is listening to experts present their ideas, such as in our "connecting the dots" meeting where we heard about private prisons and workers' rights.
 - Collaborations:
 - Texas Fair Courts Network: The Texas Senate State Affairs Committee interim charge on judicial matters includes to: "Examine the effect of eliminating straight-party voting for candidates for judicial office and make recommendations to ensure candidates are given individual consideration by voters." We are still hoping for a broader consideration of judicial reform.
 - Texas Anti-Corruption Campaign (TACC): we participated a lot. The group is now morphing into some sort of "values network" and we'll continue to be involved.
 - League of Women Voters efforts on money in politics -- Joanne is chair of their study at the local level.
 - Texans United to Amend (TUTA) -- somewhat dormant right now.
 - Progress on our perceived weaknesses in 2015:
 - Diversity: Vik (a Republican) served on the board part of the year, but then resigned. We now have a Libertarian (Kurt) on the board. Still need more.
 - Lack of volunteers: still needs work.
 - Lessons learned:
 - Need more planning ahead of meetings and to promote them in the Austin Chronicle and elsewhere -- including Facebook and local party calendars.
 - We'll consider recording our meetings and posting the videos online to help generate more buzz.
- CG4Tx goals/issues focus:

Our main goals continue to be the following:

 - Reduce the influence of money in politics

- Civil conversations across the political spectrum
- Election reforms that open the democratic process

We reviewed and discussed our strategies for these. How we've been doing:

- Dan Eckam published a paper on electoral college reform.
- Joanne Richards started on a paper about redistricting.
- Hoping to develop a paper on disclosure of political money donations. Need a lead for this.

- Austin Fair Campaign Contract

Dan Buda spent a few minutes with us, sharing what he learned from a careful analysis of the current ordinance. It is full of loopholes and doesn't work fairly. We hope to work with him and others to propose revisions in the next year.

- Planning 2016 meetings

- January: Sara Smith can update us on campaign finance successes in Seattle and Tallahassee. Compare these methods with Austin's Fair Campaign Contract.
- February: We'll have a candidate forum for democratic primary candidates running for Travis County sheriff.
- March: We plan to discuss questions about social justice and political correctness. Joanne will look for someone (perhaps from a sociology dept.) to speak.

- Board membership actions:

- All officers were re-elected: Joanne as President, Diane as Treasurer, and Dan as Secretary.
- We voted to eliminate term restrictions for Directors and Officers. Joanne will make the necessary edits and circulate them by email.

- New collaborations

- Clean Elections Texas -- developing a list of questions for candidates, concerning money in politics. Liz Wally is the leader of this effort; Joanne is our liaison.
- GOTV (get out the vote) effort by the League of Women Voters of Texas and Children's Defense Fund of Texas. Mary is involved through Women for Good Govt. and will report to us on their activities. Joanne will be meeting with them on 12/10/15. Two outreach efforts are planned, one for the 2016 primaries and another for the general election.

- Treasurer's report:

Our current balance is \$1166.83.