



**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2016, 2:00-4:00 PM
at Joanne's house**

Attendees

Board members present: Joanne, Diane, Mary, Dan, Teresa, Kurt.

Treasurer's report

We plan to move our account from Frost Bank, who are planning to start charging us a fee, to University Federal Credit Union, which will be free. This was formally proposed to the group and we voted 5-0 in favor (with Kurt not yet in attendance).

Changing our bylaws

We reviewed the changes that had recently been discussed over email. These mainly concerned the elimination of term limits, and streamlining the language concerning board-member terms. It was explained that a full term is one year long, and begins and ends on the date of our annual board meeting which is usually in early December. A partial term is served when a Director is elected before that meeting. Newly elected Directors shall serve two consecutive terms -- one of them might be a partial term, if he or she was not elected at the usual time. In other words, a newly elected Director does not have to be re-elected after serving his or her first term: election to the 2nd term is automatic.

We voted on these changes and they were approved 6-0. Joanne will make the updates to the bylaws.

Reviewing and modifying our goals and strategies

We reviewed our goal and strategy points from the website in order to update them for 2016 and to make sure the board is still behind them. We agreed to strike the old #7 strategy (to initiate local resolutions to overturn Citizens United) because it's been done in Austin and we don't see much more to do on the local level; and the #8 strategy, concerning the STAR voting system, because it is overly specific and fits into other goals/strategies. We spent a lot of time deciding on the right words and made a lot of progress, but didn't get 100% finished. Here are the new goals and strategies as we agreed on them (from Kurt's notes):

Goals:

1. Promote and advance civil discourse, facilitate collaboration among diverse communities, and seek common ground solutions toward a healthy democracy.
2. Advocate election reforms that empower the people and amplify their voice in the political process.

Strategies:

1. [placeholder] Our strategy of creating an environment for civil discourse through trans-partisan forums and discussions
2. Explore methods of drawing districts without gerrymandering
3. Explore alternatives to plurality voting that provide more choices for voters
4. Advocate expanded disclosure of political contributions and expenditures
5. Promote new ways of funding political campaigns
6. Advocate reform of judicial selection in Texas
7. Advocate for the reversal of the Citizens United Supreme Court decision
8. Promote increased voter participation
9. Explore reasonable solutions to address election fraud and voter suppression

Blog posting

Joanne suggested we try again to get into a weekly rhythm of posting to our blog. However, Dan thought this sounded unrealistic then Kurt volunteered to start a series of articles for the blog that would talk about the value of civil discourse generally, starting with a historical review of the classical liberal arts, and then in relation to the modern polarized political climate.

Dan did suggest a couple of topics he thought of, though:

1. something about the Virginia GOP's plan to make voters sign a loyalty pledge. This would lead into a consideration of the pros and cons of closed primaries and open primaries.
2. an interview with the newest board member -- Kurt.

These suggestions were met with general approval, so Dan will post these in the next couple of weeks. Joanne also offered to do an interview of Mary as a blog post.