



**Minutes of the Board of Directors
Annual Retreat
Dec. 3, 2016, 2:00-5:30 PM
at Joanne's house**

Attendees:

Joanne Richards (president)
Diane Owens (treasurer)
Dan Eckam (secretary)
Char Dison (board member)
Saundra Ragona (board member)
Naiman Rigby (board member)
Dave Rawlins (friend of the board)

Discussion items:

1. Board introductions. We each said a few words about who we are and why we're here:

- experienced board members - Dan, Diane, Joanne
- friends of the board - Dave
- new members - Char, Saundra, Naiman

2. Treasurer's report. No change since last time; current balance: \$1031.43.

3. Minutes approved. We unanimously approved the minutes of our last meeting on Nov. 13, subject to an amendment to the treasurer's report [note: done].

4. Reviewing our 2016 activity.

- attendance at our general meetings was much improved except in Oct. & Nov.
- perceived weaknesses:
 - lack of diversity at our meetings
 - it may help to make connections with a new group of immigration attorneys -- Texas Here to Stay -- doing clinics for undocumented folks
 - Char and Dave will investigate what they're up to
- our collaborations/coalition partners:
 - Integrity Texas -- website under development. (This used to be called the Texas Anti-Corruption Campaign.)
 - Democracy Awakening -- April 2016 rally
 - Texas Fair Courts Network -- not sure where it's going
 - All Y'all -- "values" coalition -- helped w. Democracy Awakening
 - Texas United to Amend (TUTA) -- mostly inactive

5. Project update: NPVIC. We reminded the board of the reasons for our decision to advocate for the Texas legislature to join the NPVIC. We currently have backing by TPJ, MoveOn, Clean Elections Texas, LWV, and hope to get more. We have created a pair of flyers to distribute. We're in the process of contacting legislators to set up meetings (Joanne, Dan).

6. Project update: instant-runoff voting (a.k.a. ranked choice voting).

Joanne is leading our effort to get local offices elected by ranked choice voting. The first problem to solve is the secretary of state's 2001 opinion about how majorities under instant-runoff do not conform to their interpretation of Texas law. Joanne says Fred Lewis is willing to help with this.

- we need to change the opinion of the secretary of state to change the understanding of 'majority'
- we can focus on saving money, since it would be cheaper than a separate runoff election
- Joanne will talk to Fred Lewis & Craig McDonald about how to move forward

7. Discussion of our blog/website and social media efforts.

We discussed various strategies of online engagement: Facebook, our website, etc.

- we're hoping to have more blog posts
- need to check: are blog posts automatically posted to FB?
- Dan will write a blog about NPVIC; and send a 'mid-month' email
- we'll add Naiman to FB admins [note: done]

8. Planning our general meetings in early 2017.

We discussed ideas for our next few meetings

- January: how to restore civil discourse; possible title: Restoring Civil Discourse; how do they distinguish opinions from facts; does the quality of information affect civil discourse?; possibly invite a journalist [Ross Ramsey with the Texas Tribune]? psychologist [Richard Cherwitz? the emotional aspect of language]?, Jim Henson [Texas Politics Project]
- February: a panel about "safe cities" -- Sally Hernandez?, someone from Casa Marianella?, someone from Texas Here to Stay?
- March: CCL & No Labels -- how to influence govt. officials

9. Officer elections.

We decided to keep all officers in the same position. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. Our officers for the next year are:

- Joanne Richards, president
- Diane Owens, treasurer
- Dan Eckam, secretary