



Second Annual BOD Retreat Minutes
November 22, 2014; 12:00-5:00
BOD President's house

Attendees:

Joanne, Stewart, Vik, Dan, Diane, Teresa.

Retreat Objectives:

- Consider why each of us organized CG4Tx
- Watch Pay 2 Play to determine if we want to organize a screening on or about Jan. 21, 2015.
- Celebrate what we accomplished in 2014 and enjoy some time together.
- Agree on our main goals for CG4Tx for 2015 and steps to reach those goals.

Proceedings:

- Lunch
- Informal brainstorming on ideas for the group:
How best to frame the issue of corruption? Note: Sanford Levinson, who holds the W. St. John Garwood and W. St. John Garwood, Jr. Centennial Chair in Law, agreed to be our panel expert for the January 10 discussion.
Replicate "Common Ground" group in other states such as Michigan, Wisconsin (where some of our board members will be living)?
Should we focus on fracking as an issue that is more concrete than money in politics?
How to make judicial selection seem more interesting?
- Viewing of "Pay 2 Play" -- 1.5 hours -- directed by John Wellington Ennis
Movie notes:
 - Ralph Anspach legal battle w. Parker Bros. over Monopoly and his game Anti-Monopoly
 - Monopoly originated as the Landlord's Game, invented by Lizzie Magie, who sold the patent to Parker Bros. in the 1930s.
 - Graffiti art: Alec Monopoly & others; filmmaker arrested for vandalism
 - Interviews with many people including Lawrence Lessig, Noam Chomsky.
 - Campaign in Ohio of Surya Yalamanchili vs. Jean Schmidt; the power of money and the time it takes to do fundraising.
 - Ennis's prescription for reform:
 1. public financing
 2. disclosure
 3. end gerrymandering
 4. free air time for candidates
 5. compulsory voting
 6. amend the Constitution: money is not free speech, corporations are not people with First Amendment rights (i.e. the Move To Amend agenda).
- Discussion of the movie:
Vik pointed out that the film has a liberal slant and would not be easy for Republicans to relate to. (Example: at one point the filmmaker suggests that to ban public-sector unions from

making political contributions is anti-democratic.) Most of us liked the film, though, and we all agreed it should be seen by the public.

We decided to join a coalition of groups to get it shown at the Village movie theater on Jan. 21, 2015. We'd rather not be the only or main group promoting it. We think that Wolf-PAC, MoveOn and others will join in the project.

- 2014 year in review:

- We collaborated with the Texas Fair Courts Network, TUTA, and ThinkVoting.
- Our perceived weaknesses: lack of diversity, lack of volunteers, and poor volunteer follow-through. We increased diversity by adding a Republican (Vik) to the board. We still need to work on attracting more members from which we can draw volunteers. We need to follow through with a thank you for joining us to new people (on our sign-in sheet). To increase attendance at our meetings, we need to develop more appealing events, and do a better job publicizing them. Our strengths and weaknesses are essentially unchanged from last year.
- Other goals & how we did:
 - We wanted to create a rack card for CG4Tx, and this was done.
 - We wanted to refocus on civility in across-the-political-spectrum conversations, and we succeeded in this, with help from moderator (& former board member) Mike Ignatowski. We held 3 such conversations in 2014:
 - 2/2/14: "Is there too much money in politics?" -- held in Lago Vista
 - 5/3/14: Discussion of Supreme Court decisions on money in politics, including McCutcheon.
 - 9/6/14: Redistricting conversation: Is Austin a model?
 - We wanted to develop a platform of electoral reforms by publishing a series of white papers:
 - On redistricting: Stewart had the lead; paper yet to be written.
 - On disclosure of big-money contributions: Joanne had the lead; partially completed
 - On instant-runoff voting (IRV) and other voting systems: Dan published white paper.

- CG4Tx issue focus:

Our issues continue to be the following:

- Money in politics
- Civil conversations across the political spectrum
- Electoral reform
- Engagement in the political process
- Transparency
- Judicial selection reform

We did not quite achieve consensus on how these should be represented in list form. Judicial selection was originally considered part of "electoral reform", but this seems problematic in the sense that we don't want it to be done electorally. Transparency should probably be placed under "money in politics", which arguably belongs under "electoral reform". But hierarchical organization of the list is not a priority.

- Goals for 2015:

Top 3 goals:

- Continue to develop platform. Dan plans to follow up on voting systems white paper by considering Electoral College reform, either in a blog post or a new paper.

We also want to elaborate on the issue of money in politics, making it more tangible for our

- members, by considering how it connects to other issues such as the tax code, private prisons, fracking and other issues.
- Continue to promote civility and inclusiveness of diverse political viewpoints.
 - Build our membership. Suggestion was offered to ask the Chairs of Travis County Rs, Ds and Texas Libertarians if they would be willing to share our event announcements through their email lists. Jan Soifer, Travis County Democratic Chair, has agreed to distribute our event announcements.

Other goals & ideas:

- It would be good to have a meeting to consider voter/election fraud or voter ID vs. apathy in the electorate, or voter suppression (different ways of framing one topic). We might call the conversation “Effect of Voter ID on Travis County Elections” and invite Dana DeBeauvoir to speak, and perhaps Joseph Fishkin, Professor at UT School of Law. This would probably attract a sizable audience.
 - Another meeting topic could be Electoral College reform. Some board members expressed uncertainty about what shape reform should take. Dan’s writing on the issue could serve as a backgrounder for this discussion.
 - Present TUTA resolution to Travis County Commissioners Court for approval.
 - Invite Austin lege delegation to talk about bills they have submitted. Celia Israel has submitted several bills on election reform including an online voter registration bill.
 - Recruit new board members. Names put forth to cultivate - Pat Dixon, Arthur DiBianca, Nick Tanner or his wife (sp?) Adela Turner.
- Board membership actions:
 - Stewart is moving to Michigan. He resigned from the board but will remain a board advisor and attend our meetings as much as possible.
 - Mary Patrick applied to join the board. Her application was approved.
 - We’ll have officer elections at the next board meeting.
 - Joanne intends to finish developing an orientation handout for new board members.
 - Treasurer’s report:
Our balance is \$357.57.