Attendees:
Joanne Richards (president)
Diane Owens (treasurer)
Dan Eckam (secretary)
Char Dison (board member)
Saundra Ragona (board member)
Naiman Rigby (board member)
Mike Ignatowski (board member)

Discussion items:

1. Introductions.

   - Meeting attendance has improved -- because of the 2016 election, better publicity.
   - Our ongoing collaborations:
     - Integrity Texas -- focused on ethics legislation.
     - Texas Fair Courts Network -- trying to get interim study done. Judges receiving political donations are a conflict of interest -- last studied 1995. Led by CG4TX & TPJ.
     - Fair Maps Project -- LWV and ACLU are in the lead; focused on redistricting. Meeting on Dec. 11 -- Joanne will be gone; hopefully another board member will be able to go.
     - NPVIC coalition -- led by CG4TX. We tried to get Texas to join the compact, but no luck. May reactivate the effort at the next lege in 2019.
   - Working on our perceived weaknesses:
     - Lack of diversity. Ideas to improve: host event at Huston-Tillotson or ACC? focus on youth? work with H-T on 2020 census discussion? post meeting info to Reddit?
     - How to use volunteers? Ideas: help with posting to Facebook; outreach to other groups; tabling at events.
   - Have our strengths or weaknesses changed? Some feel that the board has gotten stronger.

3. Discussion of meeting structure.
We discussed possibly letting panelists know that “meet & greet” time is from 4-4:30. We also considered possible alternative formats for meetings:
   - interview with a single guest (Evan Smith style)
   - "soapbox" -- 5 minute volunteer speeches ("open mic" style)

4. Considering revisions to our published goals and strategies.
We decided to amend three of the “strategies” listed on our website:
5. Discussion of new and continuing efforts.
- We considered developing our “platform” and whether to put additional focus on certain issue areas (such as money in politics or voter suppression). We decided against a unifying theme for the year, relying instead on our goals & strategies.
- We decided to consider it a goal to host “across the political spectrum” conversations (multi-party panels) once in the spring and once in the fall.

6. Meeting topic ideas.
We discussed a few ideas for general meetings -- decisions shown in bold:
- Combining politics & religion -- repeal of the Johnson amendment? Possible speakers: Jim Rigby, Neil Blumoff, Unitarian minister and pastor from a black church. JANUARY.
  - Joanne will contact Jim Rigby through Gaye and Ed Kopas
  - Joanne will contact Neil Blumoff through members of his congregation
  - Mike will contact a Unitarian minister
  - Saundra will contact a black pastor
- Civil discourse -- our successful meeting in January 2017, “Restoring Civil Discourse”, seems just as relevant now (Naiman). Contrast with tribalism? (Diane). Identity politics? (Dan). Groups that work on ways to bridge the divide: No Labels, NCDD (deliberative dialogue) (Mike).
  - Diane Miller is with NCDD
- Sexual harassment? (Saundra)
- Voting machines: update (by Dana DeBeauvoir?) on the new systems being considered for Travis County (idea based on audience feedback).
- Criminal justice changes - can we find common ground? Multi-partisan panel? (Note: it might be great to do this at ACC or Huston-Tillotson.) FEBRUARY.
  - in-school vs out of school suspensions
  - should a 17-year-old be considered an adult or a juvenile?
- Alternative energy sources -- with mayors of Austin, Bastrop, Georgetown in conjunction with LWV-AA.
- Redistricting -- review the latest from Fair Maps Project, the Wisconsin case heard by SCOTUS, etc. MARCH.
- What are the concerns of our youth - invite JOLT.
  - Char will contact
- Host a candidate forum, possibly in conjunction with LWV-AA, in Sept. or Oct.

7. Officer elections.
- Diane has resigned from the board, effective on the date of the meeting. She will transmit knowledge about the treasurer’s duties to the new treasurer.
- The following officers were nominated and approved by the board (with Saundra absent):
  - Joanne Richards -- president -- vote 5-0.
8. Miscellaneous discussion items.

- Scheduling board meetings: we have to have at least 6 per year. Will continue to use Doodle.
- Dec. 11 meeting of Fair Maps Project -- Joanne will be gone. She’ll send details to other board members in hopes that one or more will be able to attend.
- Feb. 3-4: “geometry of redistricting” forum (Tufts University mathematician on tour to talk about ideas). Joanne will be at the “Unrig the System” conference in New Orleans. She’ll send details to other board members in hopes that one or more will be able to attend.