

## **Boston Ward 5 Democrats - March 19, 2019 - 7 pm**

The regular and duly noticed March meeting of the Boston Ward 5 Democratic Committee was called to order by Chair Kenzie Bok (the Chair).

The Chair announced that we would adjust the usual meeting agenda order and hear from the elected officials who have come to speak to the Committee first, and then move on to Committee business and possible endorsements.

### **Legislative Updates**

We've been inviting the elected representatives from this Ward to come talk to us about their Legislative Initiatives. With the two on our agenda for tonight, Senator Joe Boncore and Rep. Jon Santiago, we will have heard from our whole delegation.

*State Sen. Joe Boncore* spoke to the Committee about the legislative agenda in the Senate. Senator Boncore is the new chair of the Senate Transportation Committee. Senator Boncore noted that Massachusetts ranks 42nd in the country in infrastructure, which means we're pretty much at the bottom and that his constituents were wrestling with significant transportation issues on a daily basis.

The MBTA needs a significant new funding sources ago a time when our Governor is committed to no new revenue. Traffic congestion is also a serious issue that needs innovative approaches. The funding scarcity also impacts what we can and can't do about housing. Massachusetts is 47th in the nation in housing affordability - again near the bottom.

Although Boston is building a good amount of new housing, many of the Boston surrounding cities are not. The legislature is considering taking action to alleviate zoning laws that those communities are using to squeeze housing stock. 5% of Massachusetts is providing 70% of the new housing stock. That obligation needs to be spread out more evenly and the legislature needs to provide incentives.

Sen Boncore is also interested in taking some next steps in criminal justice reform. Specifically, there are moves to raise the age to move out of the juvenile system from 18 to 21. He's also working to reverse some of the damage to unions and working families done by the Janus system. They're working to legislate the ability for unions to charge a service fee to free riders.

### **Q&A with the Committee**

*State Rep. Jon Santiago* is the Representative for the 9th Suffolk District, and is three months into his first term in office. Two of the Boston voting precincts from his district are in Ward 5, and he's looking forward to attending more of our meetings.

Rep. Santiago says that his legislative agenda stems from his experience as a physician working in what is now his district. Health care needs reform, It's expensive - MassHealth takes up approximately 40% of the state budget and drug prices keep rising steadily.

He's been attending his first hearings on these issues and he's finding it exciting to be part of the policy discussions. He's also interested in the approaches the opioid crisis. He talks in committee about what he sees on the ground.

He believes that we need to double down on what works: increasing Medication Assisted Treatment options; open more MAT centers in areas of the Commonwealth that are currently underserved. There are more beds for detox than there are for maintenance. There needs to be significantly more maintenance beds added to even things out.

The current legislative requirement for Houses of Correction to introduce Opioid Treatment Programs inside needs to be expanded. He's also attending the housing committee hearings and working to understand the housing availability issues in his district. He wants to work on options to preserve affordable housing.

Q&A with the Committee

### **Membership Matters**

The Chair explained to guests the process for membership on the Ward committee.

Eligible for associate membership: Jeremy Cushman; Natalie Heer and; Enid Pope. Alice Lin is eligible for nomination at this meeting and can be voted to associate membership at the next meeting she attends.

Diane Barry moved that we elevate Jeremy Cushman to associate membership, which motion was seconded by Jim Berkman. The motion passed.

Sharon Durkan moved that we elevate Natalie Heer to associate membership which motion was seconded by Kristen Mobilia, The motion passed.

Gretchen Bennett moved that we elevate Enid Pope to-associate membership, which motion was seconded by Diane Barry. The motion passed.

Helene Vincent nominated Alice Lin Eligible for associate membership, which motion was seconded by Jim Berkman.

### **Consideration for Endorsement: Ranked Choice Voting Legislation**

Koby Yank-Jacobs from Voter Choice Massachusetts (VCMA) spoke to the Committee about

VCMA's legislative agenda this year, and let us know that he was here to ask for the Committee's endorsement of the RCV bills currently introduced in both houses of the Massachusetts state legislature. He gave the Committee a brief overview of what Ranked Choice Voting is, and then moved to endorsement discussion.

VCMA has a multi prong strategy to support the state house and senate bills for RCV this year. Their first goal is to meet with 200 legislators, seeking both their support for the bills. They have 82 co-sponsors for the bills \*(17 Senate; 70 house) and now they need endorsers. The Boston Globe has also run four editorials in favor of RCV over the last year.

#### Q&A with the Committee

Jim Berkman moved to call the question, which motion was seconded by Sharon Durkan, and passed.

Diane Barry moved that we use a tally vote rather than a roll call vote for this endorsement, which motion was seconded by Helen Vincent, and passed

*The Vote:* For: 18 Against: 0 Abstain: Silent - 1

By a vote of 18 to 0 The Committee voted to endorse.

#### **Omnibus By-Law Amendment**

The proposed by-Law amendments were discussed at the last meeting. The main new item added was/added: a leave provision. The other proposed amendments were mostly cleaning up the by-laws to reflect current practices and some language adjustments in the state charter. tidying up to have the by laws reflect what we actually do and to align with the state charter.

Pat Amend moved that we consider the by-law amendment as presented, which motion was seconded by Diane Barry and passed.

Sharon Durkan moved to call the question, which motion was seconded by Sharon Durkan, and passed.

Diane Barry moved that the vote be a tally vote rather than roll call, which motion was seconded by Sharon Durkan and passed,

*The Vote:* For: 10 Against: 0 Abstain 0

By a vote of 10 to 0, the Committee adopts the by-law amendments as proposed

#### **Adjournment**

Kathy Judge moved that the March meeting of the Boston Democratic Ward 5 Committee be adjourned, which motion was seconded by Dan Lyon, and passed.

## **Attendance**

### Members

Pat Amend  
Diane Barry  
Gretchen Bennett  
Jim Berkman  
Bob Binney  
Alex Bok  
Kenzie Bok  
Olivia Cifrino  
Jeremy Cushman  
Sharon Durkan  
Jason Ewas  
Kate Gallivan  
Mike George  
Natalie Heer  
Sharon Hucul  
Kathy Judge  
Daniel Lyon  
Matt Maddalo  
Kristen Mobilia  
Rajan Nanda  
Enid Pope  
Dan Smith  
Helene Vincent  
Adrienne Zak

### Guests

Brady Baca  
Landon Lemoine  
Alice Lin  
Andrew Putnam  
Lucy Rivera  
Min Jean-Sicaro  
Sandra Singers  
John Sties