

**DOWNTOWN INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS  
MEETING MINUTES**

March 26, 2015 6:00 pm  
Von's 3 Bleecker St., NY, NY

Meeting was called to order by DID president Jeanne Wilcke.

**1. ZEPHYR TEACHOUT, Former Democratic Candidate for New York Governor**

We were honored to have Zephyr Teachout as a guest. Zephyr talked of her advocacy on a broad range of issues, local to national.

Vigorous discussion was had on campaign financing & ethics, climate change, renewable energy, education funding, and future elections.

We thank Zephyr Teachout for her insight and encouragement to the grassroots community represented at our meeting.

**2. STATE SENATOR BRAD HOYLMAN**

Due to the tragic building explosion on East 7th St. & 2nd Ave., State Senator Brad Hoylman was unable to attend. He was gracious to call in later at the meeting to give an update on relief efforts. This information was conveyed to everyone present. We are deeply saddened by this tragedy and our thoughts are with all those affected.

*It was reiterated - if you smell gas - call 911 immediately!*

**3. CITIZEN'S CLIMATE LOBBY**

Phillip Kahn, representing the NYC Chapter of Citizen's Climate Lobby, spoke about national carbon fee and dividend legislation. His in-depth talk included many questions from attendees on how the policy works, alternatives and the possibility of states doing their own legislation.

A resolution was proposed supporting the premise of national carbon fee and dividend legislation.

In summary, a carbon fee is collected at the point fossil fuels are taken from the ground. The fee would be gradual starting low and increasing over years. This fee is paid directly back to the people through a dividend. This makes the policy revenue-neutral policy (for example funds collected from taking oil from the ground are redistributed directly to citizens).

The dividend compensates people for any higher costs from the original carbon fee, promotes alternative energy sources, reduces carbon emissions, and increases jobs.

**VOTE: Unanimous FOR support of a national Carbon Fee & Dividend policy. See attached resolution.**

**4. CITY REZONING PROPOSAL**

Serious discussion was had on the City's fast tracking of a citywide REZONING PROPOSAL to lift height restrictions up to 20-30% in contextual zoning areas. Citizens and community boards have not been given time to review and actual language is not available. In fact, this proposal seems squarely aimed at downtown Manhattan.

Hard hit would be many historic and contextual neighborhoods downtown, from the Village, to the East Village, to Tribeca. Where givebacks were given to build high in one area in exchange for getting contextual zoning nearby, these givebacks designated decades ago to recently would be rendered meaningless.

Thank you to DID member Terri Cude for relaying information on the rezoning.

We encourage people to visit the website of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation for more information: [gvshp.org](http://gvshp.org)

Jeanne Wilcke proposed that DID write to City Planning and officials expressing DID's serious concern about fast tracking this Rezoning Proposal.

**VOTE: Unanimous to send a letter to City Planning and officials expressing DID's serious concern about fast tracking the citywide REZONING PROPOSAL, the consequences to our downtown historic and contextual districts, and that this proposal appears squarely aimed at downtown Manhattan.**

## **5. CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP ESTABLISHED IN ALBANY**

**VOTE: Unanimous FOR sending a thank-you letter to NY State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie for establishing a Climate Change Working Group in Albany.**

## **6. CORPORATE CORRUPTION OF OUR DEMOCRACY - April 2nd Rally**

A perfect segue to Zephyr Teachout's discussion on ethics and reform in our campaign finance system, DID member Penny Mintz informed us of an important event. On April 2nd a rally will be held at Federal Plaza demanding a requirement that federal contracts disclose campaign contributions and activities. This is being requested of the President and can be done by Executive Order.

### **Rally on CORPORATE CORRUPTION OF OUR DEMOCRACY**

**APRIL 2 at 6 pm**

**FEDERAL PLAZA between Duane & Worth Streets**

## **7. SOUTH STREET SEAPORT**

Michael Kramer of DID and Save Our Seaport updated us on the Howard Hughes Corporation plan for the South St. Seaport.

Save our Seaport has proposed an alternative vision and plan. See: <https://saveourseaport.wordpress.com>

(FYI - Several months ago DID voted unanimously for a resolution demanding a transparent process and Master Plan for the South Street Seaport.)

## **8. SHIFT START**

Ben Yee, former president of Manhattan Young Democrats and current VP of Young Democrats of America, spoke of his new venture Shift Spark. It is a way for citizens to reach officials on the issues and do an end-run around large corporate lobbying funds.

People can contribute to an issue or a position of a candidate or elected. If the politician delivers on the issue the funds are given. If the citizen's goal is not achieved by the politician, the funds are returned.

Interesting new wave of thinking about contributions! See more at: [www.shiftspark.com](http://www.shiftspark.com)

## **9. NYU LAWSUIT**

The community's lawsuit against NYU's mega-expansion and alienation of park land.

The Court of Appeals agreed to an expedited schedule and will hear oral arguments June 2015.

## **10. CANDLES FOR CLEMENCY VIGIL**

*Postponed for at least 6 weeks to give Governor's office time to address the clemency process.*

## **11. NOMINATIONS FOR DID OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The following were nominated. Elections are at the next meeting in April.

President	Jeanne Wilcke	<u>Executive Committee</u>	
Vice President	Harold Donohue	Joyce Brody-Skodnek	Joseph Kelley
(2 positions)	Lisa Smith	Dennis Gault	Elliot Silber
Secretary	Pete Davies	Lora Tenenbaum	Pete Gleason
Treasurer	Sean Sweeney	Art Kriemelman	Jamie Kazi
		Dianna Campbell	Michael Kramer
		Susan Wittenberg	Leah Kozak
		Lora Tenenbaum	Williamson Henderson

Meeting adjourned.

## **RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A CARBON FEE**

The Downtown Independent Democrats support the premise of a fee /tax on carbon (fossil fuels) at point of first entry into the market. The fee is 100% reimbursed to households.

The fee is:

*Easy to understand.*

*Straight forward and transparent in both administration and revenue.*

*Revenue neutral.*

*Fees from point of extraction are directly reimbursed to households.*

*A policy that does not grow the government.*

*Stimulates job creation.*

*Those who produce emissions pay for them.*

*Encourages other countries to place similar carbon fees on carbon.*

*Phased in - starts low and increases gradually.*

*Allows time for the economy to adjust.*

*Protects manufacturers with border adjustments.*

*U.S. exporters will get a rebate, thus leveling the playing field.*

*Goods from countries that do not price carbon/fossil fuels similarly are subject to a levy.*

Major findings by REMI (Regional Economic Models Inc.) & Citizen's Climate Lobby if a carbon fee is enacted:

*CO2 emissions reduced 50% below 1990 levels in 20 years.*

*2.8 million jobs added to the American economy in 20 years.*

British Columbia successfully implemented a similar but slightly different carbon tax in 2008. They have seen job growth greater than forecast.

*In 2014 British Columbia confirmed it will continue the program due to its success.*

*The carbon tax is revenue neutral, meaning every dollar generated by the tax is returned to British Columbians through reductions in other taxes.*

*[http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/tbs/tp/climate/carbon\\_tax.htm](http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/tbs/tp/climate/carbon_tax.htm)*

The Downtown Independent Democrats support the premise of:

*A carbon fee where funds from extraction of fossil fuels are repaid to households.*

This legislation will:

**Encourage reduction in carbon emissions,  
stimulate job creation,  
and level the playing field for energy production.**

**Vote: Unanimous  
March 26, 2015**

