Solidarity Lowell Meeting Notes for March 28, 2021

What is Solidarity Lowell?

Solidarity Lowell is a volunteer-based group of community members of Greater Lowell working toward social justice by defending the human rights, dignity, and equality of all persons against all forms of hate and discrimination. We are a chapter of Progressive Massachusetts.

The attendees introduced themselves.

Celebrating Victories

Lowell City Council passed resolution "Affirming The Values Of Inclusion, Respect And Justice For All Its Community Members; Notably Including Its Asian-American Community Members."

Lowell City Council requested report on hate crimes in the city on Asian-Americans. Councilors expanded that to ALL types of hate crimes, after compelling testimony.

Lowell School Committee passed a motion to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day

UML Labor Education Program reinstated as of March 22.

Governor Baker signed the climate bill into law.

Emergency Paid Sick Leave bill passed and awaiting Governor's signature.

Elections Subcommittee

Time to start the conversation on the City Council elections. We are committed to having a more diverse council.

Candidates are allowed to announce (2 minutes) but will still be subject to our endorsement process. Once endorsed, they can announce once a week and we will announce volunteer opportunities.

Working on a scorecard of all City Councilors in terms of how their votes fit with our agenda.

If interested in getting involved, please contact:

Lisa Arnold: Lisa@solidaritylowell.com

Dee Halzack: Dee@solidaritylowell.com

Merrimack Valley Interfaith Sanctuary Network - Marissa Dupont:

Marius, the asylum seeking gentleman we have been helping, told us about his recent experience being unexpectedly detained by ICE. He wants to take a class to become a translator to help with immigration issues. Donate here: http://www.merrimackvalleyproject.org/donate-1/ **(please write "asylum" in the "special notes" part of the donation form).**

Group Updates

Jon Grossman, 350ma: Climate bill passed. Good job everyone. There will be more actions coming to help make the work move forward. National Grid is appealing denial of permit and is likely to win. Does anyone know an environmental lawyer who might be willing to help pro bono?

Paul Gaudet: Lisa Arnold is now a board member of Merrimack Valley Project

Chris Offerman: GLILA spring event. Will be posted on Solidarity Lowell web page

Candidate Announcements

Susie Chhuon
Will not be running this time, in support of Tooch Van. Probably will run in the future.

April Danielson
Running for Select Board in Chelmsford. Newcomer. Will take any help she can get. Has 3 kids and is running for her kids' future. "We need to put in the work today for a better tomorrow." Selectboard initially balked at signing a declaration that racism is a public health crisis.

Corey Robinson
First-time candidate. Worked for Lowell for 15 years in DPW. Labor leader. Moved to Tyngsboro.

Jon Grossman: What should your town do to address the climate crisis? April: has attended a lot of meetings and is willing to learn more. Chelmsford has a climate change group that is educating people. Issue being on town warrant is step in right direction. Corey: #1 thing is city needs to listen to experts, those who have understanding of issues, what has worked elsewhere, think outside the box. Listen and provide support.

Speaker: Coordinating Committee Election

Solidarity Lowell Coordinating Committee election will be held in April. We are seeking candidates to join the committee.

Marissa reviewed what the committee does and what the responsibilities of members are.

Current members introduced themselves.
Lisa Arnold: member since beginning, with brief hiatus for her election campaign; Liaison with Merrimack Valley Project; does Rapid Response City Council agenda report; helps with RRT update.
Amy Baranoski: member since first year; has done a lot of tabling; on Rapid Response team; enjoys doing database projects for various campaigns; still doing Rapid Response emails
Joseph Boyle: on committee since 2018; liaison with CNRP; hopes to revive Affordable Housing Committee
Marissa Dupont: graphics as needed, lots of organizing, Progressive Mass leaders call/zoom; Elections Subcommittee; working on City Council Scorecard.
Dee Halzack: Not sure when joined. Does Rapid Response report. Special interest in defending democracy. Elections Subcommittee, working on City Council Scorecard.
Chris Offerman: joined in 2017. Involved with immigration. Groups: RISE Coalition, GLILA, LLAMA. Elections of interest. Also interested in affordable housing.
Steve: On CC for a year. Had been cautious about joining lest it prove to be too demanding, but it proved not to be and proved to be beneficial for his climate crisis work. Encourages people interested to not be afraid to try it.
Caroline Snow: Has been on CC for a year. Has enjoyed the experience. Great way to connect with people. Better understanding of city government as a result. Very cooperative model. A bright spot in the pandemic.

No one person leads. Very much committee-led. A lot of space in the committee for more voices. If something quick happens, we use on-line tools for quick decision-making/action. Hope

to start up Demonstrate, Dine & Discuss again. (Marissa explained the event.) Tabling.

You can nominate yourself or someone else today or by contacting the group. Be prepared to speak about your candidacy at next meeting for two minutes. Will send out virtual ballot. To be eligible to vote you must have attended at least 3 meetings in past 12 months.

Paul Gaudet asked if we are happy with current number of CC members or want more. Marissa answered that if more folks are interested it would be great, up to our maximum.

Corey Robinson asked if we would be doing voter education. We will see how we can help Lowell Votes do that, as they do it so well.

Paul Gaudet mentioned that CBA often does candidating. Marissa said those are excellent events.

Levenia wanted to know if she'd been stripped of membership because she had been out of touch. Still a member, but need to check record for how many meetings she has attended in past 12 months to determine whether she's a voting member.

Joe encouraged folks to join for rapid action.

Dee provided examples of rapid actions taken by the Coordinating Committee.

April wanted to connect with Levenia re community fridge in Chelmsford. Looking to spread through Merrimack Valley.

Next meeting: April 25, 2021, 5:30, Zoom

Discussing SLCC elections, Q&A with current SLCC, details about what it entails, expectations, etc.

Who will help with reminders for next month's meeting? Kale.

Join us online!

Visit our **website**: http://solidaritylowell.com/

Join us on our **Facebook page**: https://www.facebook.com/solidaritylowell/
On the page, you'll see public events, photos, and more, but will miss out on discussions and members-only events.

Join us on the **Facebook group**: https://www.facebook.com/groups/SolidarityLowell/

On the group, you can participate in discussion, and have access to ALL of our events, including those for members only.

Visit us on **Slack**: http://solidaritylowell.slack.com

Follow us on **Instagram** @solidaritylowell

Follow us on **Twitter** @solidaritylowell

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING! SEE YOU SOON!