
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

♦ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ♦ President: Pat Almonrode♦

December General Meeting: Getting There from Here – *Meeting Transportation Challenges in Our Ever-Growing City*

- Can bikes, pedestrians and vehicles safely share the road?
- Can we have "vision zero" without gridlock?
- Can mass transit expand without throwing riders “under the bus”?

Panelists: **Ann Marie Doherty**, NYC Dept. of Transportation’s Vision Zero program; **Andrew Albert**, MTA, and co-chair of the Transportation Committee of Community Board 7; and **Danny Pearlstein**, Policy and Communications Director, Riders’ Alliance.

Thursday, December 14

7:45 p.m. Sign-in

Meeting starts at 8:00 p.m. sharp!

Bank Street College

610 W. 112th Street (between Broadway and Riverside Drive)

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District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

Elections Past, Present – and Future

Last month's elections were pretty ho-hum here and in most of the city, though nationwide Democrats scored great victories in Virginia, New Jersey and around the country. Turnout here was down slightly from 2013, and was a bit less than half of last year's high Presidential vote. In the Mayoral race, there was locally a very slight Republican and "others" trend compared to the other 2017 and 2016 races, as shown in the following table:

Office	2017		
	Dem.%	Rep.%	Others %
Mayor	84	9	7
Pub. Adv.	88	7	5
Comptr.	89	6	5
Boro Pres.	91	5	4
Council-7 th	95	X	5

Office	2016		
	Dem.%	Rep.%	Others %
President	91	5	4
Assembly	93	7	0

Only the District Attorney race was different. Dissatisfaction with Cy Vance took both active and passive forms, as seen in the low percentage of those who voted *for* him and the large percentage who did *not* vote at all, compared to other races:

Vance 68% Write-Ins 9% No Vote 23%

2018 will be different, here in the primaries, in most places in November. Our voters are angry and despairing, but purposeful and engaged: How do we stop Trump and the Republicans from destroying our economy, polluting our environment, savaging our people, and just maybe blowing up the world? Last year, we lost two winnable elections: for President and, in our back yard, for State Senator in the 31st District. There are a couple of lessons to be learned from these catastrophes that may help us in 2018 and beyond:

First, the quality of a candidate matters more than his or her ideology or political faction. It breaks my heart to say this, but Hillary Clinton was a bad candidate. Whether fair (because of all her

baggage) or unfair (given of her outstanding resume and the sexist nature of many of the attacks on her), it is true, and we should have realized it at the time. (I also think she ran a lousy technical campaign, despite the outstanding convention she staged, but this wasn't clear until it was too late.) Even if one loves Hillary, and I was pretty damn fond of her, we couldn't afford the luxury of nominating her. We should have gotten behind someone else. Would Biden have won? I think yes. Would Bernie have won? I'm not sure. But we marched lock step into the sea with Hillary, which turned out to be a tragedy for the world.

To a lesser extent, Zephyr Teachout's candidacy was also a tragedy. A brilliant woman whom I happily supported for Governor in 2014, she was correctly portrayed as a carpetbagger and got clobbered in the Hudson Valley district she had just moved into, running well behind Hillary there. Will Yandick, a farmer with deep roots in the district, would have been a much better choice. And right here in liberal Manhattan, Marisol Alcantara, fueled by IDC money (read Charter School and real estate money), snuck in with 33%, with Micah Lasher and Robert Jackson almost exactly splitting the true Democratic vote (32% and 31%, respectively). The Upper West Siders and environmentalists who mostly supported Lasher and the Hudson Heights residents and public education advocates who mostly supported Jackson never got together (although, at least, the race was civil), and once again we all marched to the sea and drowned. Encouragingly, Micah Lasher isn't running next year, and has endorsed Jackson. But we needed such clear-eyed realism *last* year.

Second, within progressive and Democratic circles there must be more civility, team play and sense of common purpose than we saw last year. Here, a significant number of Bernie Sanders's supporters were overwhelmingly the greater offenders. I never criticized Bernie and his supporters for strongly supporting Single Payer and other progressive positions; they were right. I never got angry when they said he would be a stronger candidate in November; they may well have been right. But the nomination was not "rigged" for Hillary: she won because she got more votes, including many, many more votes among the

black, brown and female voters who are the mainstays of the Democratic Party. If anything, the party rules *overstated* Bernie's support, because he over-performed in the caucus states that disproportionately favored his younger, whiter, more affluent voters who had the time to sit through the caucuses, which often took hours.

Throughout the primary season, the media and the Internet were full of anti-Hillary conspiracy theories that could have come straight from the Trump playbook (and sometimes wound up there). But the disgraceful purge of voters in Brooklyn was not done to rig the election for Hillary; it was a Republican poll worker trying to suppress Democratic votes in an 85% Democratic borough that voted 60% for Hillary over Bernie. And the Nevada delegate selection process was not rigged for Hillary, who won that state's caucuses; it was nothing more than normal political maneuvering, with the Bernie supporters legally attempting to get more delegates at the next level than they had won with the actual caucus voters, while the Hillary supporters legally tried to prevent this. When it looked like Hillary's supporters might succeed, Bernie's supporters threw a public tantrum, booing liberal lions like Barbara Boxer, who was merely delivering a nominating speech. But on both sides, this was politics. On neither side was it "rigging."

As Barack Obama famously said in the sometimes bare-knuckled 2008 debates, "we're not here to sing Kumbaya." We need and expect real primary contests, to test our candidates and make sure the best ones move forward as our nominees. But after that, we *do* need more Kumbaya-singing – with each other – once the primary season is over.

Whoever we Democrats support, be it for State Senator or President, we must respect their primary opponents, not attack them in ways that quickly become Trump tweets or Republican campaign ads, and then *get behind the winner*. Will you make this pledge? I will.



Transportation, Infrastructure, & Parking on the West Side

Dan Zweig

We usually have choices in getting from here to there. Often, the best and easiest choice is to walk – we live in a great walking city. When that's impractical, we have the subway and/or the buses – complaints notwithstanding, our mass transit is among the best in the country. Mass transit (plus an occasional hired or rented car or a bicycle) can

handle the transportation needs of the majority of New York residents.

For many others – and it's a sizable minority – the only reasonable option is a private automobile. For many of us, a car is the only choice to get to work, to schlep our stuff, to see family outside the city, or just enjoy some time somewhere outside the city.

Infrastructure

Each mode of transportation requires infrastructure: walking requires sidewalks, adequate lighting, crosswalks and signage; buses require bus stop shelters and bus terminals; the subway requires tunnels, tracks, and stations. And for any mode of transportation to be useful, its infrastructure must be both reliable and convenient. For a subway traveler, a station near home is essential, and we all understand that closing a station would severely impact all those who use it.

In the same way, we should want to maintain the infrastructure critical to other means of transportation. We need our bus stops; we need well-maintained roads; we need safe places for bicyclists to travel; we need crosswalks and traffic lights to make it safe for pedestrians to walk and to manage vehicle flow.

And those who use and/or own automobiles need places to park. Parking is necessary infrastructure, as crucial to the ability to travel by automobile as the subway station is to the ability to ride the subway. We as a city cannot do without either one.

Parking on the West Side and the West 108th Street Garages

As many of us know, it is very difficult and expensive to own a vehicle on the West Side. Off-street parking is quite expensive, and parking on the street requires planning, timing, and commitment, to find a parking space in the first place and then to keep up with street-cleaning schedules. There is little if any excess supply of on-street parking on the West Side, and garages in the area are generally filled to capacity. Drivers cruise the streets at all hours of the day and night, looking for those elusive spaces.

The garages on West 108th Street between Amsterdam and Columbus provide parking for more than 700 vehicles during the day. With virtually no excess supply available, these garages are critical infrastructure supporting all those who need to use private automobiles.

And now the city is planning to allow the *removal* of all three garages and their 700 parking spaces, with no plan to replace them. This will impact drivers in

the same way that removing a subway station would impact subway riders. Indeed, the impact on drivers will be more profound, since a reasonable alternative may not be close or may not even exist.

We should all ask our elected officials to find a way to preserve our parking infrastructure – or replace the parking they are planning to remove.



The Hubris of the Progressive

Richard A. Siegel

The recent proposal to knock down garages on West 108th Street has shed some light on how and why progressives are losing the battle to win over the American public. Full disclosure – I have parked my car in one of these garages since 1986. I am also the director of social work at a NYC public hospital (where people desperately need housing) and an adjunct professor of social work at one of the NYC social work schools (where I teach social policy). In our case, my family is fortunate enough to be able to afford another garage – closer to our home – if this project goes through.

The argument playing out in our community is whether to knock down these garages to build affordable housing. While all agree that affordable housing is desperately needed, we do not agree that 108th Street is the right place at this time.

My progressive friends and our some of our progressive elected officials quite cavalierly state, “Housing is a human right, a car is a luxury.” This is usually said in a condescending tone that is meant to dismiss and embarrass anyone who questions the plan.

In social policy class, we teach that the conservative ideology has – throughout history – tried to divide people into the “deserving poor” (usually widows and orphans) and the “undeserving poor” (usually minorities, people with substance abuse problems, etc.). I am surprised to hear my progressive friends now make an essentially similar argument: those who use their cars for work are “deserving” car owners, while those who use their cars for other purposes are “undeserving.” Some of my progressive friends go so far as to say no one should own a car in NYC. But how is it progressive to pit neighbor against neighbor, or to tell others how they should live their lives?

Many progressives also argue that the need for housing is more important than the needs of those in the community who have used the garages for

years. Yes, there is an urgent need for affordable housing, and we all should support appropriate efforts to meet that need. However, somehow our elected officials seemed to forget that need when a building went up further down the West Side, nor did they insist on affordable units in the building on the property of the Cathedral. These are not working-class or even middle-class structures. These are not integrated (by SES) buildings.

Progressive ideas are important. However, when we implement those ideas in ways that appear to be at the expense of the working class or middle class, we lose the high ground. Progressivism embodies the concept of social justice, and social justice is not served when we help the less fortunate by taking from those *a little more* fortunate. Social justice in this case would suggest a solution that does not impact the working families of our community, but instead holds accountable the very well-to-do developers and landlords who are now discovering our community. What is happening now is a major reason the 2016 election ended as it did. It is a reason that too many progressive politicians do not have enough credibility to flip seats.

Let’s stop pointing fingers at each other and work together to find a solution that both builds housing *and* preserves a needed community resource.



Speaking of Transportation ...

Susan Crawford

Slow buses, crowded trains, zipping e-bikes, congested streets: how can We the People have more input in the City’s efforts to address these problems? We’ll explore that question at our General Meeting on Thursday, December 14, at Bank Street College, in a forum titled **Getting There from Here – Meeting Transportation Challenges in Our Ever-Growing City**.

Our presenters for this forum include **Ann Marie Doherty**, NYC Department of Transportation’s Vision Zero program; **Andrew Albert**, MTA, and co-chair of the Transportation Committee of Community Board 7; and **Danny Pearlstein**, Policy and Communications Director, Riders’ Alliance.

Here are two resources to check out ahead of the forum. The first is a two-part forum that was presented at the Murphy Institute in October.

Part One:

<http://murphyinstituteblog.org/2017/10/13/video-getting-back-on-track-the-new-york-transit-crisis/>

Part Two:

<http://murphyinstituteblog.org/2017/10/19/video-getting-back-on-track-the-new-york-transit-crisis-part-2/>

The second is the recent New York Times feature on the clash of politics and policy in the MTA:

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/18/nyregion/new-york-subway-system-failure-delays.html?_r=0

Using these resources as points of departure, our forum will explore issues such as:

- Why is bus service so slow? Can we have “Vision Zero” without Vision Gridlock? Should the City focus on dedicated bus lanes at least as much as on dedicated bike lanes?
- Why are the trains so crowded? Is the MTA running fewer trains at rush hour?

- When the MTA raises money through bonds, are they ever paid off, or do they just become a permanent part of our fares?
- What is the delay in implementing “fair fares,” which would provide half-price fares for low-income residents?
- How can the City ensure that its contributions to the MTA actually go towards improving service?

Take a bus, take the subway, take a taxi, take an Uber, or *just walk* – but please join us for an interesting, important, and timely discussion.

Getting There from Here – Meeting Transportation Challenges in Our Ever-Growing City. Thursday evening, December 14, at Bank Street College, 610 W. 112th Street. Sign-in starts at 7:45pm; meeting starts at 8:00pm sharp!

All viewpoints expressed herein are those of the individual authors and are not intended to represent the Broadway Democrats’ Steering Committee or of the club as a whole. We welcome responses. Please email palmonrode@gmail.com.



Happy Holidays!

Please join us for the annual
Broadway Democrats’
Winter Holiday Party

Sunday, December 10, 2017
2-5 p.m.

The Martins’ Home
390 Riverside Drive, Apt. 12D
(entrance on 111th Street)

Upcoming - Officer and Steering Committee Elections

The Broadway Democrats will elect officers and twelve members of the Steering Committee at our General Meeting in January. Please consider running for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, or a seat on the Steering Committee. You may nominate yourself, or have someone else nominate you. For more information, speak to a current member of the Steering Committee or email Pat Almonrode at palmonrode@gmail.com.

The Broadway Democrats Newsletter – December 2017

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