

Houston GLBT Political Caucus

General Membership Meeting Minutes: Wednesday July 1, 2020

Vice President Katharine Ligon opened the Zoom meeting at 7:00 p.m. Initially there were approx. 56 attendees but the attendance grew over the evening to approx. 70 individuals with a number of new members in attendance.

The Meeting Agenda was adopted via consent.

VP Ligon asked that each elected official or candidate introduce themselves and speak for 1 minute. Approx. 11 candidates addressed the Caucus.

President's Report:

In President Mike Webb's absence, VP Ligon delivered a report from herself and our Caucus leadership. President Webb has been unable to attend the required number of recent meetings. The Board formally asked for communication but received none so President Webb is deemed resigned. VP Ligon and a number of members spoke of the many initiatives which President Webb began and led. His service to the Caucus is immeasurable. As per our by-laws a special election will be held to elect a new President. Maria Gonzales nominated Katharine Ligon. Alexis Melvin seconded. Katharine accepted the nomination. Dane Cook nominated Jovon Tyler. Jovon accepted thereby seconding the motion. Sandra Moore nominated Brandon Mack who declined the nomination. Nominations were closed. The election will be held at our Aug 1st Endorsement meeting. Prior to the vote, nomination will be opened for any last minute nominations.

Kris Banks (Parliamentarian) attended this evening's meeting to ensure that we followed Caucus protocol in this leadership transition process.

VP Ligon informed the Caucus that the Financial Review Committee has been formed. It consists of Jim Taylor, Andrea Segovia, and Robert Icsezen. They will be meeting in the near future.

Finance Report:

May financial statements were posted to the meeting chat area. Several members had questions. Ultimately VP Ligon asked that members submit their questions to Info@TheCaucus.org where they can be consolidated and addressed.

Committee Reports:

Communications – Austin Ruiz. In addition to our normal push cards, the Caucus will run political ads on several social media platforms. All Caucus members were reminded that the best way to be current on Caucus affairs is to open the weekly FYI email delivered early each Friday.

Elections Committee – John Humphries. Run off push cards are out via USPS and an ad in Outsmart. An unstaffed table clearly marked with the Pride flag has been set up at W. Gray where our card is available. This is an amazing accomplishment given the uncharted waters that we are in. Appreciation was expressed to Michelle Palmer for her assistance.

Rules & Administration – Chris Busby & Kris Banks. Chris Busby reported that the committee would convene at 6:30 p.m. July 8 via Zoom to begin a comprehensive review of the Caucus by-laws.

Screening – Brandon Mack. Brandon reminded the Caucus that our card lacks endorsements for US Senate & Court 164 as we as a group made the decision that given the Covid situation, it was inadvisable to attempt a rescreening when our endorsed candidates did not prevail. He further discussed the current screening process of which many of the details are available on our website.

Fundraising – Jonah Baumgarten. Thanked our Virtual Drag Queen Extravaganza sponsors who made the event possible and we raised the revenue to mail out over 20,000 cards. Jonah continues to seek monthly Zoom meeting sponsors for a \$180 donation. He closed mentioning that our annual Equality Brunch held in Sept will need to move to a virtual format as our Covid situation has not improved.

General Operations – Judson Dunn. The Caucus has begun the transition for processing credit cards from PayPal to Stripe. The motivation for the move is that PayPal gives the donor (user) an easier, less intrusive experience. The move will be transparent to most users. Monthly sustaining donors are asked to cancel their PayPal monthly subscription (via their PayPal account) and rejoin the Caucus via our website (as a new member). Our August Endorsement meeting will be via Zoom. Members who want to attend will need to pre-register so that they can be credentialed in advance of the meeting. Overall this will be a simple process but it must be done in advance of the meeting (preferably a week or two in advance.)

VP Ligon thanked Jack Valinski for his recent special project database work which helped the Caucus to target runoff voters thus saving printing & postage thus wisely spending our limited resources.

Education & Advocacy – Kendrick Clack & Brandon Mack. Brandon is working with Councilmember Kamin on several advocacy projects.

Volunteer – Austin Stetler & Chris Busby. Since the Caucus is not staffing West Gray during this election, Austin encouraged all of our volunteers to phonebank for a Caucus endorsed candidate. VP Ligon added that a Zoom Volunteer Appreciation party is scheduled for July 11.

Expansion – Scott Barish. Nothing to report.

Accountability – Andrea Segovia. Nothing to report.

Caucus Coronavirus Task Force – Kendrick Clack. Accidentally omitted from the agenda as we skipped ahead in the program.

Community Corner:

The new interim Harris County Clerk Chris Hollins introduced himself and educated us on the new voting procedures that have been put into place to protect the voters and the poll workers. He has also been able to add additional polling locations.

Announcements:

Our next meeting is the Endorsement meeting. It will be on Saturday August 1 via Zoom at 10:00 a.m. Members wishing to attend & vote will need to be credentialed in advance as stated above.

VP Ligon was asked a question about the Caucus possibly seeking to remove anti GLBT Rev. Max Miller from the Mayor's Police Task Force. A lengthy, robust conversation ensued. Ultimately Austin Ruiz motioned (with Brandon Mack seconding) that several individuals (later agreed to be Brandon M & Alexis working with our Chairperson of the Faith Outreach Task Force Monica Roberts) draft communication to the Mayor requesting additional Trans representation on the Police Task Force. The draft to be presented to the Board within a week or so. Quick turnaround. The motion passed 25 yes / 1 no /16 abstain.

VP Ligon adjourned the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ken Council (volunteer for Chris Busby)