

Oak Park/ Huntington Woods/Royal Oak Township
Democratic Club Meeting (Zoom)
March 18th, 2021

Called to order at 7p.m.

Guest speaker Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald

- Speaking on progressive policy.
- Criminal justice reform.
- Do things right, not fast.
- Formed a Trafficking Unit (Human Trafficking and Drug Trafficking).
- Re-evaluating the juvenile lifer cases, reversing 22 cases from predecessor.
- Immediately investing in treatment courts.
- Established a hate crimes unit.
- Working to address cash bail.
- Working on the unusually high homicide rate.
- Domestic violence cases are up.
- Child abuse and neglect is 50% down, which means it may not be getting reported.

Open for questions

First Question - Judge Jaime Powel Horowitz

Q. Oakland County promised to participate in specialty courts. Is that going to happen?

A. Prosecutor McDonald: Yes, We have successfully implemented those specialty courts. For people who don't know, these are problem-solving courts (i.e., Sobriety Court, Mental Health Court, and Veterans Court).

Follow-up: Judge Jaimie Powell Horowitz - Mental Health Court will take dual diagnosis (i.e., Mental Health and Sobriety, which often go hand and hand).

Judge Appel - Looking forward to the new programs. Mental Health Court and Sobriety Court are grant funded and give the prosecutor an opportunity to create a carrot and stick kind of thing. For instance, someone who didn't do something with criminal intent, but because of mental illness. They will then be referred to the court for proper treatment. Progressive implementation of sanctions.

Prosecutor must be on board!

Second question - Marie DeFer

Q. Why can't we eliminate cash bail?

A. Prosecutor McDonald: We are attempting to do that. Oakland County has 1.2 million people and we have 30ish District Courts. It's very difficult at the moment. I have to get prosecutors to arraignments and to agree to this. Working with other prosecutors to get this implemented. Have to show it works.

Guest Speaker Solomon Rader

Q. Conviction Integrity Unit - Maybe people were over-charged or over-convicted.

A. Prosecutor McDonald: We need time and funds. We will get there. Must undo the damage done from prior prosecutor.

Prosecutor McDonald had to leave at 7:30

Guest Speaker Judge Appel 7:30-7:41

- Consistency to implement progressive programs.
- People have more access to court because of Zoom.
- For tickets, people can show up to court on Zoom, which has increased turnout.
- Mental Health Court is very successful. Attorney is present.

Guest speaker Judge Horowitz 7:40

- Judge Appel runs the most progressive court.
- Uptick in domestic violence is an issue.
- Release non-violent offenders, but make sure to keep violent offenders off the streets.
- Safety issue to make sure the offenders do not go back to the home.
- High risk assessment and domestic violence team is being put together.
- Making sure we are communicating with Haven and our advocates there.
- Amnesty programs are on the rise because of Zoom, which is a good thing.
- Future of keeping online services.
- As of April 11th, you can apply to expunge a marijuana charge on your criminal record.

Open for Questions. 7:52 - 8:10 pm

Starting with our Treasurer's report. Treasurer Andrew Cissel was absent.

Chair Mary Ann Fontana reporting

- Hard money account \$3226.22.
- Soft money \$388.14.
- We made 2 donations in our soft money account in the last week.
 - \$100 to the Friends of Royal Oak Township
 - \$100 Book Drive

Committee Reports 8:15pm

Lauri Lisi

- School bond election for Oak Park and Royal Oak Township Precinct 2.
- Planning on doing a phone bank Saturday April 10th.
- Lit drop Saturday April 17th.
- Precinct delegate committee will be meeting soon for further discussion on this matter.

State Rep Regina Weiss report

- 31.4 million dollars increase funding for Michigan indigent defense.
- Notes in chat about governor's budget and criminal justice reform.
- Bookbeat is participating in the book drive. Stop by and buy a book for the schools.
- Mary Ann had offered her garage for book donations.
- Lansing update:
 - Trying to appropriate old dollars that we have through the state School Aid bill passed.
 - Covid relief passed, but Republicans keep slapping it down and playing games with the governor.

- The money is sitting in Washington that is Michigan's money and the Republicans won't let us use it.
- Dropping a bill on Tuesday next week. Hopefully?
- Possible press conference about this Monday or Tuesday.
- 7-up strike in Redford. Teamsters negotiations fell apart.
- It's getting ugly.
- Solidarity protests are going on. If you are comfortable going do so.
- Voted to approve a package for FOIA bills. Bi-partisan package.
- Republicans will not release the appropriated funds.

Commissioner Yolanda Smith Charles 17th District

- Are you fired up?
- Disappointed in legislation.
- Disabled people need to be vaccinated first. They were missed.
- Why are certain communities getting vaccinated and some aren't?
- Attend a public meeting, if possible.
- If you want to know more about ARP stay tuned.

Commissioner Charlie Cavell 18th District

- Ending cash bail is a paradigm shift. Good pressure is welcome.
- Indigent Defense Council. Hire non-profit or public defender's office.
- 18th district making up for lost time and doing things to make progress.
- Increasing service in the 18th district. We need volunteers.
- Sustainability.
- Covid 2.0 weekly meetings. Message Charlie if you want to attend.
- Oakland County's budget is huge. 460 million dollars. Let's do this right.

Mayor Marian McClellan

- Sunday Fundraiser March 21st at Sahara Restaurant from 2-4.
- City of Oak Park is getting 2.5 million dollars from federal relief bill.
- A lot of it is spoken for from losses that we have suffered.
- To pave one mile of road, it costs 5 million dollars per lane.
- Vote about Roosevelt School. Please vote yes. They are building a state-of-the-art school there.
- Women's rights are newer than you think. We celebrate the month of the women. Jannae Scott Oak Park Hero. Works at Henry Ford Hospital. Lobbied for us to get a Covid station at the community center. Wednesday morning from 9-12. Register online through the Henry Ford Health System. Community center is giving rides to get the vaccine. If you know someone who needs the vaccine and doesn't have access to a computer, please call the nurse-on-call. They will get on the save my spot list and they will be called when their turn comes up.
- Oak Park road diet, new bike lanes and fences. New parks. Play equipment and public art. If we raised \$50,000.00 they will match.
- Patronicity grant, we would love your help.
- Ed Bottomly will be giving a talk at the Oak Park Library.
- New Gastro pub. Beer and wine center on 11 Mile. Gastro pub just opened.
- Beloved Senator Carl Levin wrote a memoir. Give it a read.

Mr. Jones Michigan Disability Caucus

- Interim chairperson for the Michigan Disability Caucus
- How many people knew there was a disability Caucus in the Democratic Party? There is an

Outreach program Launching in 2021.

- Trying to encourage more representation in Michigan.
- Caucus all areas throughout Michigan. Represent all spectrums of disability. We do not discriminate between disabilities. All disabilities should be valued.
- Life, you never know what you're gonna be confronted with. We welcome new membership. For diversity and inclusion.
- We are having an upcoming election in May. If you want to learn about this caucus, Sean Whitehead can help with that.
- Website mdpdc.vote@gmail.com. All you have to be is an updated member of the Democratic party, and you can join the caucus. All we ask is support people with disabilities. We are at the dinner table, but not on the menu. My contact information is wide open. Thank you for letting me be a part of this.

Board of Education Al Elvin

- Speaking next month on the bond proposal
- Teachers are back in school
- Students are returning in person soon
- Look out for the students

Mona Dequis Michigan Dem Party

- Calling people on Secretary of State removal list.
- 98% of people have moved out of state.
- Virtual phone bank. Phone, laptop, or PC.
- Calls are quick and easy. We need to clean up our own database. 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. everyday.

Shaun Whitehead

- New library director Oak Park.
- First day April 12th.

Chair Mary Ann

- We will get a \$500 grant from the Oakland County Democratic Party.
- Become a member of the OCDP.
- Donate \$10.
- Comedy night with Jay Leno.
- Fundraiser for Forgotten Harvest.
- Zoom event \$50.

Commissioner Charlie Cavell

- Jeffery Nolan helped disabled people get vaccine.
- Jeremy Moss getting transparency for the government.
- Off the record with Tim Skubick.

Nina Abrams

- DPDOC.
- April 6th meeting with Dem club chairs and liaisons.
- Statistics collected on elections.
- We have done well. Great work.
- Without us, we would be looking at a different world. Thank yourselves for your work. (Clap)

- clap) Planning program for precinct delegates
- Statistic meetings. Keeping delegates informed.
- Restructuring and reorganizing. Getting our volunteers out in the street. We are not waiting till we just need your vote.

Any announcements for good and welfare?

None

Next month

Al Elvin and Ellen Lipton

Meeting adjourned at 9:27.