

LIVONIA DEMOCRATIC CLUB

Minutes
March 14, 2007

The meeting opened at 7:30 pm with a welcome to all from President, Pat O'Neil. He informed the group that State Senator Glenn Anderson sent his apologies for not being able to attend our meeting, as planned, due to a death in the family.

We began our meeting with brief speeches by two candidates running for Schoolcraft College Trustee. In attendance this evening was LDC member, Joan Gebhardt, who was recently appointed as Trustee. She invited the club members to a fundraiser, at the Senate Coney Island and asked for the club's support of her campaign. Also in attendance was Brian Broderick, an incumbent, running for his third term as Trustee. He is looking for volunteers to help get out the vote on Election Day. He too, invited the club members to a fundraiser.

Special Presentation:

Frank Kalinski, VP Politics, introduced Brian Golden, President of the Farmington Historical Society who was here to share the history of Michigan's Urban Transportation System dating back to the turn of the century.

Brian shared his collection of old slides from the mid 1800s which showed how major thoroughfares such as Grand River, Orchard Lake Rd. and Shiawassee started out as Native American Trails. The Plank Road Act of 1850 allowed the placement of planks over the dirt paths and users paid a toll to use the "roads". In 1860, tracks were placed either on, or near, the roads and they were eventually fitted with electric power. In the early 1900s, Trolley Lines, utilizing these old rail lines, were in full swing with cars that could reach 70 mph. Detroit United Lines provided trips from Detroit to Bay City, Lansing, Battle Creek, Port Huron and Toledo. Pleasure trips were advertised on these Inter Urban Lines with daylong trips from Detroit to Pontiac and back for 95 cents. Some rail cars were 60 feet in length. And there were party cars, with amenities, for rent.

At the time of the Great Depression many light rail tracks were removed, as the rail cars could no longer compete with automobiles and busses. 1930 marked the last service of the Inter Urban Lines. Brian explained that only a couple of these rail cars exist today, in museums. He did mention that other cities outside the U.S., such as Toronto, still utilize Light Rail Lines.

Two members of the non-profit group TRU (Transportation Riders United), Megan Owens and Patrick Droze, addressed the group with a proposal to utilize existing Light Rail Lines (Amtrak lines) and create a mass transit system from Detroit to Ann Arbor. They explained the benefits: 1. It provides another choice for travel and would get people off the highways, 2. Riders can utilize transit time more effectively, and 3. The areas involved would be redeveloped and revitalized.

A three-year train service plan is in the works with an option of a line that would travel to Metro Airport. There would be a limited number of trains to start as a need analysis is done. Transportation Riders United is looking for additional volunteers to help with the effort. Their website is www.detroittransit.org. An added note, LDC VP, Frank Kalinski, is a member of TRU if you have questions and Sen. Glenn Anderson is a member of the Transportation Committee.

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We were pleased to see Sen. Glenn Anderson join us after the presentation. He offered his assistance on the state level and looks forward to helping our group thrive. He invited our members to join him at one of his coffee hours or to call his office.

At 8:55 pm we held an abbreviated meeting:

Pat announced that the Treasurer's report and minutes of last month's meeting were available for review.

He thanked the members for voting him in as LDC President. He stated that he would like to have a special presentation at each of our meetings. Next month we plan to hold a Livonia School Board, Candidate Forum. He also stated that he wants to form a small committee to create a presentation on how the Republican Party has lied about our democratic candidates.

Pat reminded the members of our Peace Vigil that will be held on Saturday, March 17th, from 4:30 – 5:30 pm, at the Veterans Memorial Park on the corner of Farmington and 5 Mile Rd. This marks the fourth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, with no end in sight.

With no further business to discuss, Pat thanked all for attending, and the meeting closed at 9:00 pm