

**DEMOCRATIC WOMEN OF DENTON COUNTY
GENERAL MEETING
April 24, 2010**

The April general meeting of Democratic Women of Denton County was held at the Gateway Center at University of North Texas in Denton.

The meeting was called to order by the president, Judith Ford.

Judith announced that the minutes from the previous month's general meeting were posted on the club's website. In addition, a copy of the minutes was posted in the meeting room for those who needed a chance to read them. Treasurer Machel Ashbaugh was not present because of illness so Judith announced the budget balance as of 4-24-10. The balance is \$3,273.49.

Old Business

Judith spoke about the March general meeting and the informative speaker from Planned Parenthood of North Texas. Additionally, DWDC had a booth at the Women of Color Conference held at U.N.T. in April. Toni Medellin was a speaker and she and Becky Young "womanned" the booth.

Judith announced that the organization's bylaws would be delayed until the end of the meeting so that the guest speakers could talk and leave as they finished.

Guest Speakers Several candidates for the Denton ISD school board and the Denton City Council were present to talk about their candidacy.

Candidates for the Denton ISD school board:

Dr. Glenna Harris – She is a pediatrician in Denton who has been on the school board for three years. She is a member of the Kiwanis Club. She is running for her second term at Place 3. Dr. Harris talked about the openings of Gonzales Early Childhood Center and Crossroads Elementary School for the school year 2010-11. Crossroads Elementary School has many "green" features. Dr. Harris talked about the successes of the current school board.

Sheryl English – She has been a realtor for 20 years. She has three children in Denton ISD in the 6th, 8th, and 10th grades. Ms. English is on Denton ISD PTA Executive Board as well as a PTA officer/member at the schools of her three children. Mrs. English spoke about the fact that none of the current school board members have children in Denton ISD schools. There has been a disconnect between parents of children in Denton ISD schools and the school board members. If elected, she wants to represent the parents and their children. Additionally, she plans to be an advocate for the children being served with special education services.

When asked, both candidates spoke to the issue of the school district's budget deficit for the 2010-11 school year. Dr. Harris talked about what had already been put into

motion. The superintendent and school board have proposed that each department reduce expenses by five percent. Strategies identified are staggered scheduling to reduce the bus route costs, using funds from retiring teachers to staff the new schools, and look at costs of traveling long distances for sports activities. Ms. English talked about the opportunities for raising additional funds, such as, grant writing. She would like to work on generating ideas for the search for additional funds in the community and the state. Ms. English stated that it is important to determine why some students are transferring from Denton schools to charter schools in the area.

Questions regarding when a high school would be opened on the 380 corridor were presented one of the attendees.

Charles Stafford- Mr. Stafford is running for re-election in Place 5 for the Denton ISD school board. He is a realtor, developer, and consultant. He stated that he has spent 12 of the last 22 years on the school board. He is the father of seven children who have attended Denton ISD. Mr. Stafford is proud of his role as advocate for children. He is a founding member of CASA.

Mr. Stafford talked about the outstanding performance seen by students of Denton ISD at this time. He addressed the difficult times that the district is entering. It will have a deficit of 4 to 10 million dollars in the near future. The school board has looked and is looking in every department budget to make spending cuts. They have been successful in already cutting out 2 million dollars.

An attendee addressed the issue of the superintendent's decision not to run President Obama's address to public school students of the U.S. The question regarded why the board did not make a decision about the speech. Mr. Stafford stated that the school board did not get to meet to decide about carrying the president's speech. The superintendent alone made the decision to record the speech and make it available to students. After public outcry, he apologized. Mr. Stafford felt that there was no "good" solution. He repeated the superintendent's comments that "his decision caused the least amount of disruption to the students and their school day." The attendee stated that many students have still not seen it.

Another question from the audience concerned whether Denton ISD would carry a Bible study class as an offered course. Mr. Stafford stated that although the SBOE has authorized curriculum for a Bible study class, Denton ISD has no plans to add it to the curriculum.

Regarding the plans for a high school on the 380 corridor, Mr. Stafford stated that the land has been purchased and when enough high school age students live in that area, a new high school will be built. It cost 80 million dollars to build Guyer H.S. and a new high school would cost approximately 120 million dollars.

Candidates for the Denton City Council, Place 6

Elborio “Eli Gemini” Beltran- Mr. Beltran is a candidate for At Large Place 5. He was unable to attend the meeting but sent a letter to be read to the attendees by Toni Medellin, vice-president of DWDC.

Hatice I. Salih- Mrs. Salih is a Denton business owner who is running for the second time for a place on Denton City Council. She has lived in Denton since 1980. She discussed the issues she sees as important for the Denton City council. The budge crunch faced by the city is one of the primary concerns. Despite decreases in property taxes and city sales taxes, the city has a 568 million dollar budget. Additionally, there is a 212 million dollar debt still owed by the city from debts left from the 1970’s.

The second concern that Mrs. Salih has is the gas drilling taking place in the city. She is opposed to drilling in residential areas such as the current gas well being drilled on Bonnie Brae. The third concern is the old infrastructure in Denton. For example, the drainage system that failed during the 2007 flood has not been repaired and amended.

James King- Mr. King is a CPA and Insurance agent. Aged 49, he grew up in Denton and attended public school. He stated that one of his assets is his ability to work in groups. He is a member of the Public School Foundation board.

When asked by an attendee, their stances on natural gas drilling in the city. Mrs. Salih stated that she would be opposed because of the affects on the health of citizens. Mr. King stated that he would not oppose the drilling because we must find a way to produce energy at home and not buy it from foreign countries.

Mrs. Salih feels that the city council is behind in studying the options the city has regarding gas well. There should be ordinances to protect the citizens from drilling.

Candidates for Mayor

Mayor Mark Burroughs—Mr. Burroughs could not attend, but sent a statement to be read to the attendees. Statement was read by Toni Medellin, Vice President DWDC.

Bob Clifton- Mr. Clifton is a self-employed businessman who is running for mayor against the incumbent. He grew up in Denton and returned to the city ten years ago. Mr. Clifton feels that there has been a clique running the city of Denton government for 30 years. Mr. Clifton feels that there is corruption in the city government. He stated that too much money is being misspent. He said 73% of the budget is spent in salaries. Additionally, he said that 62 million dollars in certificates of obligation are about to be sold.

Mr. Clifton stated that his job would be to clean up city government. He would find out where the money is going. He would make decisions and not pay hired consultants to make decisions.

John McClelland- Mr. McClelland who is a candidate for a local water district in the Paloma Creek Subdivision lives on the 380 corridor in Paloma Creek. Mr. McClelland explained exactly how and why FWSD districts are formed. His discussion of the formation and workings of water districts formed by developers was very enlightening.

New Business

Members voted on passage of the DWDC by-laws. Several copies were available for those present. The proposed by-laws have been posted on the DWDC website for one month. The motion to accept the bylaws was approved and passed by vote count.

Announcements were made.

- 1. Member Kathie Lagerblad announced a moveon.org meeting scheduled for May 8 from 2 to 3:30 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is a community forum to talk about how to frame the issues concerning citizens.**
- 2. A SoDeCo meeting will be held on April 26th from 6:30 to 8:00 pm at Landmark Grill in Lewisville.**
- 3. Young Democrats meeting will be held on Thursday, May 6th from 6:30 to 7:30 at Sneaky Pete's in Denton.**
- 4. Denton County Democratic Party, Executive Committee Meeting will be held on May 13th at 7:30 p.m. at the Courthouse on the Square.**
- 5. The next DWDC meeting will be a workshop to prepare items to be sold at the State Democratic Convention. It will be the first time that all the members of DWDC will be able to participate in contributing to a fundraiser for our club.**
- 6. There will be no general meeting in June.**
- 7. The July 14th meeting will be held in a TBA location. The topic will be "It's a Man's World Unless Women Vote."**
- 8. The meeting for August will be on Saturday, August 21, 2010 at Little Elm Park. It will be a Denton County Democratic Party all day picnic. DWDC will sponsor Brunch by the Lake.**

The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes are respectfully submitted by Nancy Noah, Secretary