

MINUTES (approved February 24, 2021)

Lincoln County Democrats General Meeting Wednesday, January 27, 2021

The meeting started at 6:00 pm

Chair Michael Gaskill began the meeting by welcoming participants, who all joined virtually via the Zoom application, and described how he would conduct the meeting.

Thank you to outgoing officers

Michael thanked outgoing Lincoln County Democratic Central Committee members for their service.

New officer introductions

Chair Gaskill introduced Vice Chair Cherie Harbour, Treasurer Wendy Girard, Secretary Carol Shenk, and Publicity Manager Eliot Sekuler, who each made a brief statement

Statement from the Chair

Chair Gaskill described his background in grassroots organizing and outlined his vision for the Lincoln County Democrats: expanding membership, fighting complacency, supporting Democratic representatives in local and state government, and making local and state politics more accessible.

Acknowledgment of elected officials present

Chair Gaskill and others welcomed State Representative David Gomberg, Lincoln County Commissioner Kaety Jacobson, Newport City Councilmember Cynthia Jacobi, Waldport Mayor Greg Holland; and Lincoln City Councilmember Judy Casper.

Updates from elected officials

State Representative David Gomberg – Representative Gomberg began by noting that representation on the Oregon Coast has flipped in recent years to be majority Republican, and that in the 2020 election, he had prevailed with lowest margin since first running in 2012.

Gomberg stated that we are in “unimaginable times” and that he had never imagined that people would be breaking in to a boarded-up State Capitol building carrying guns. He noted that his colleague who illegally let people into the building, which was locked due to the coronavirus (public meetings were being conducted virtually), would be held accountable with due process. Gomberg said it is an anxious time at the Capitol, and that legislators come in once a week to be present in the chamber to vote according to the state constitution.

Gomberg's main areas of focus are the response to the coronavirus pandemic, the state budget, and wildfire recovery. Gomberg added that the Coastal Caucus is opposing the proposed dissolution of the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI), its functions being incorporated into the Oregon State Department of Environmental Quality. This agency studies and develops response plans for earthquakes and other land hazards, and so this agency is critical to coastal communities.

Gomberg discussed the economic impact of the pandemic. The state has provided aid to struggling restaurants and other small businesses. Because restaurants and bars are closed, the State is not selling lottery tickets, the funding from which had been earmarked for the Oregon Coast Aquarium capital project, the Big Creek Dam replacement project; the Lincoln City Cultural Center capital project. Gomberg is advocating for funding for these items.

Other priorities include allowing Canadians to use driver's licenses as identification in purchasing alcohol in the state; simplifying the permitting process for events that are now being held over multiple days to accommodate social distancing requirements; and obtaining funding for the newly accredited Oregon Coast Community College.

In the current legislative session, Gomberg is co-chairing the Budget Committee on Transportation and Economic Development, is Vice Chair of the Full Ways and Means Committee, and serves on the Special Committee on Wildlife Recovery.

Lincoln County Commissioner Kaety Jacobson – Lincoln County Commissioner Kaety Jacobson reported on the county response to the coronavirus pandemic. Individuals age 75 and older are now being prioritized for the vaccine, but there is a waiting list for the limited supply. The county will be involving the business community in plans to vaccinate non-medical, essential workers. The county is assessing barriers to access and Jacobson encouraged everyone to reach out to older people in their community who may have difficulty with the online registration. Jacobson noted that county health officials were relieved to receive Biden's vaccine distribution plan. She reported that they are working on a \$250,000 grant to help childcare providers accommodate operational changes required by the pandemic, which has worsened access to childcare in Lincoln County, already a "childcare desert." The grant would also provide scholarships for low income families. Other pandemic-related issues include strengthening the rural broadband network.

The Federal Emergency Management Association is projecting that temporary housing for those displaced by the Echo Mountain wildfires will be available in February. FEMA is now coordinating with the Confederated Tribe of Siletz Indians instead of Lincoln City. The first stages of cleanup are getting underway

In response to Chair Gaskill, Commissioner Jacobson invited the public to view Commission meetings on Mondays at 3pm via the virtual GoTo meeting platform. Public comment is currently being accepted in written form only.

Chair Gaskill recommended that participants to sign up for Representative Gomberg 痴 email list: rep.davidgomberg@oregonlegislature.gov.

Vice Chair Cherie Harbour thanked Jacobson for support of vaccination for school teachers and thus helping get children back to school.

Commissioner Jacobson responded to several questions regarding access to the vaccine. Chair Gaskill shared the Lincoln County Vaccine Page <https://www.co.lincoln.or.us/hhs/page/lincoln-county-covid-19-vaccination-schedule>

Commissioner Jacobson recommended also signing up for Lincoln Alerts for updates

via text message, and she encouraged everyone to help spread a positive, pro-science message about the vaccines. She underscored that bureaucracy, not science, was streamlined in vaccine development.

In response to a participant question, Commissioner Jacobson reported that ideas for changes to regulation of vacation rentals in unincorporated Lincoln County include reducing occupancy, clarifying the three-strikes rule, and addressing septic system issues. One participant commented that vacation rentals should be taxed as businesses, not as residences.

Timber Tax Fairness Initiative

Catherine Thomasson, representing Timber Tax Fairness, requested via chat that she be scheduled for a future meeting. Chair Gaskill noted that the Coast Ranges Association, on whose board he resides, provided some data for the recent investigative reporting on the timber industry by Oregon Public Broadcasting, *The Oregonian*, and Pro Publica.

Ms. Thomasson wrote the following:

There is grave impact on Water issues, too. read here;

<http://www.taxfairnessoregon.org/how-to-protect-our-water/> Lastly here is a interview on the radio of the presentation.

“My email is thomassonct@gmail.com Please email me if you'd like to be on the Lincoln Co team. We are working to find some examples of logging impacts on drinking water in Lincoln Co. so email me with your suggestions.”

Leigh Evans added that the Democratic Party of Oregon's environmental caucus is part of the State Central Committee and has significant representation.

Solicitation to fill open committee positions

Chair Gaskill announced that volunteers are needed for following committees:

Candidate Recruitment, Coordinated Campaign, Nominating, Program, By-Laws, Budget, and Organization. Chair Gaskill suggested forming a new standing committee to track local (County and City) issues, and he invited interested members to propose other committees, for example, labor or environment. The Lincoln City Club will be tracking the State legislative calendar and could use help.

Newport City Councilmember CM Hall commented she would like to talk to about Emerge Oregon, for which she serves as board president, at a future meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Wendy Girard reported that as of December 29, the LCDCC account held \$5,000.

The chair requested approval to reimburse Secretary Carol Shenk for her expense (\$30.99) in upgrading the Mail Chimp account as well as the annual expense, which exceeds \$300. There were no objections.

Chair Gaskill will research the best way for the LCDCC and members to contribute to support the Otis Fire recovery. One participant mentioned that some fire victims are being denied reimbursement by their insurance company.

Another participant noted that a member named Brian, who she thought had possibly served in the Navy, was from the area and she wondered if the Committee could check on him.

Lincoln City Club Update

Adrienne Green reported that they are looking at timber tax and watershed issues, as well as broader policy issues. She reported that anyone is welcome to join the policy team, which is currently Adrienne Green and Judy Bowman. The contact is lincolncitydems@gmail.com. Also upcoming is the Lincoln City Mayor's race.

Announcements, Other

Newport City Councilmember Cynthia Jacobi asked about the Democratic Headquarters office space in Newport. Former LCDCC Vice Chair Carolyn Crandall responded that they had only intended that the office be retained through the election year. Chair Gaskill thanked Crandall for acquiring the donated space and suggested LCDCC consider finding a new office location.

Gary Jacobi [is this who was with Cynthia?] commented on Melissa Cribbins's unsuccessful campaign for state senator. He noted that she lost by about the same count of votes as was received by Green Party candidate from Lakeside Oregon. Chair Gaskill said he would like to look at and analyze the data to see where we can strengthen the party and help our neighbors to the north and south. It was noted that Dick Anderson was popular because he had been mayor of Lincoln City, and that people need to put pressure on him to reach across the aisle as he promised in his campaign.

Former LCDCC Chair Steve Crandall added that Lincoln County had 13,000 Democrats and turned out 15,000 votes, and though he can't see who voted for who, it appears the Democratic Party turnout was around 90%. He guessed that the remainder was non-affiliated voters.

Chair Gaskill noted that the election to fill Anderson's mayoral seat in Lincoln City is in May. **Susan Wahlke announced that she is running for Lincoln City Mayor**, to fill the seat vacated by Dick Anderson, who was elected State Senator. Wahlke noted that in 2018 she had lost the election to Anderson by only 16 votes. LCDCC Publicity Manager Eliot Sekuler reported that the Lincoln City Club would like to support Wahlke, and Chair Gaskill offered the LCDCC's support in her candidacy.

Vice Chair Harbour shared that the LCDCC will be participating in an Oregon Democratic Party leadership training, and that this will help the new committee learn about the county apparatus.

Chair Gaskill closed with comments that he is excited for the future of the party and is grateful for the work everyone has done in the past few years.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Leigh Evans to Everyone (6:47 PM)
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