

Culver City Democratic Club

Active Democrat



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Post Office Box 4254 • Culver City, California 90231-4254

General Meeting on Zoom — 7p.m. Wednesday, May 12, 2021

Program: Housing Density: What, Where, Why, and How?

President's Message by Jeff Schwartz

Social(ist) Etiquette

Since this newsletter is going to drop on May Day, I thought I'd use this space to talk a little about the Democratic Socialists of America. I was late to DSA. I only joined in 2018, inspired mostly by the election of DSA members Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar to the House of Representatives. Before then, I had been too wary of left factionalism and of third parties as splitters.

These concerns disappeared at my first meeting. As I should have known from the careers of AOC, Ilhan Omar, and Bernie Sanders, DSA's electoral strategy is to work within the Democratic Party. They've learned from the relative failures of the Green and Peace and Freedom Parties that, without reforms such as ranked-choice voting, electoral fusion, and proportional representation, third parties can only be spoilers, and they host a very big tent, from European-style social democrats to anarchists.

DSA also felt familiar because its roots are in the pre-1960s left of Eugene Debs, Norman Thomas, and Michael Harrington. My grandparents were "Yipsels:" members of the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL), like Bernie Sanders.

However, I'm not here to recruit for DSA (although if you are interested: <https://dsa-la.org>). Rather, I want to describe a few techniques DSA uses to run meetings which I have found very impressive. These are not unique to DSA; I have even encountered some of them in my day job at a public library as guidelines for leading a book club, among other places, but I have never seen them used as well or with as large and contentious a group as in DSA. I am not arguing that the CCDC

should adopt these, at least not yet, but I think that being aware of them has made me a better collaborator.

1) Progressive Stack. The CCDC already uses this in some discussions. "Stack" just means queuing up the people who want to speak on an item. Often speakers will be asked to declare if they are pro or con, so the stack can alternate sides. What makes it progressive is that the person running the stack can move people who speak often down the list and people from underrepresented groups up the list in a kind of affirmative action.

2) One Meeting aka One Diva, One Mic. All attention should be on the person speaking. No whispering, no heckling, no DMing, no side discussion in the chat, etc.

3) Why am I Talking? A discussion can be about putting ideas forward rather than forming a majority. If someone else has made your point, let it go. You don't need to cosign it with your own comment, just cheer after the first speaker makes it. City meetings are the opposite of this: it seems important to show up with an overwhelming number of people to present a set of talking points, but the CCDC is a membership organization, not an elected public body.

4) Assume Good Intentions, but Challenge/Oops, Ouch. There is a lot of reactionary culture war propaganda making people worried that they're going to get "canceled" for using the wrong pronoun or some other linguistic transgression. Let's assume that everyone who has come to our meeting is a friend and ally, and that if they say something that isn't cool, it's an honest mistake. On the flip

side, we all need to be prepared to take advice and criticism and apologize if we unwittingly offend someone. We're here to work together to make things better.

5) Parliamentary Procedure This doesn't seem very progressive. What's next, that we'll all call each Mr. and Ms. like we're at boarding school? However, informality can be a cover for unwritten rules and gives insiders an advantage. Some of you may know Jo Freeman's 1970 feminist essay "[The Tyranny of Structurelessness.](#)" DSA embraces Robert's Rules because having a transparent standard set of processes allows people to participate more equitably. There's nothing special, secret, or personal about how the meeting runs, and it makes the chair more of a moderator than a leader. DSA-LA recommends [this 4H video](#); I think there may be an element of humor involved in that choice. Our implementation of Robert's Rules has been on the slack side. We don't have a parliamentarian or City Clerk to keep things within the lines, and there's no training for club leaders.

As I've discussed in this space before, the Republican brand has been toxic in our area for years, and Donald Trump made it even more so. Thus, anyone seriously interested in local politics will call themselves a Democrat and potentially join this club. At the same time, the center-to-right status quo which lasted a century in this city has been successfully challenged from the left several elections in a row. Now this club is a larger and more diverse group than ever and regularly takes on more controversial issues, so our meetings have become more difficult. Looking at other diverse and intense organizations can help.

May 12, 7:00 p.m. CCDC General Meeting via Zoom

[Register in advance for this meeting](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our Club website: www.culvercitydemocraticclub.com

Follow us on Twitter: @CulvCityDemClub
and Instagram: CulverCityDemClub

Sign up to [volunteer](#) for or donate to
our endorsed candidate for State Assembly, Isaac Bryan
<https://isaacbryanforca.com>

May 3, 2021

Last day to register to vote in the AD54 Special Primary Election
[To register or verify your registration, click here](#)

May 4, 2021

[Parks, Recreations, and Community Services Commission Meeting](#)
7 PM

May 6, 2021

Culver City Community Meeting
[Public Works: Mobility & Traffic Engineering](#)
6 PM

May 9, 2021

Mother's Day ([originally envisioned as a day of peace](#))

May 10, 2021

[Culver City Council Meeting](#)

May 12, 2021

CCDC General Meeting via Zoom
[Register in advance for this meeting](#)
7:00 PM

May 17 – May 18 – May 19, 2021

[Culver City Council Budget Meetings](#)
3:00 PM

May 18, 2021

Assembly District 54 Special Primary Election — Last Day to Vote

May 19, 2021

[Culver City Community Meeting — Stormwater Quality Master Plan](#)
6 PM

May 24, 2021

[Culver City Council Meeting](#)
7 PM


June 4, 2021

SAVE THE DATE!

Club fundraiser with The Actors' Gang


June 9, 2021

CCDC General Meeting via Zoom
7:00 PM



ENDORSEMENT
California State Assembly District 54 Special Election

MAY 18 - VOTE FOR ISAAC BRYAN



ORGANIZER · COALITION-BUILDER
LEADING ADVOCATE TO RE-ENVISION JUSTICE

"Isaac Bryan is at the forefront of the movement to fundamentally change the justice system in California and shares my commitment to a system that is truly just for all. I am proud to endorse Isaac Bryan for State Assembly. He is committed to addressing the root causes for poverty and inequality and his leadership will help transform calls-for-action into greater accountability for our communities."
— Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell

"Because Isaac Bryan served as an integral team member of mine, I know firsthand the experience he brings to the table as an organizer, academic, coalition builder, and leading advocate to re-envision justice. As the founding director of the UCLA Black Policy Project and the co-leader of L.A. County's Measure J coalition for reimagining justice, Isaac Bryan has proven to be an effective driver of change. That's why I support Isaac Bryan for the 54th State Assembly District I've represented for the past two-plus years. I'm proud of our work together to make California more just, while strengthening the services that truly make every neighborhood safer."
— State Senator Sydney Kamlager

"AD54 needs representation that can bring together its diverse constituency while pursuing bold solutions to our shared challenges. Isaac Bryan will provide that leadership."
— Culver City Mayor Alex Fisch

"Isaac Bryan will bring to the legislature a strong and passionate progressive vision, grounded in his life experiences. He has enormous public policy skills, and, as his leadership of Measure J revealed, a remarkable ability to successfully build coalitions to promote positive social change."
— Rick Tuttle

"I have served with Isaac for the past two years as an Assembly District Delegate for AD54. He combines the values of a grass roots activist with deep institutional knowledge. He will serve our District well!"
— Cynthia Hart

The Culver City Democratic Club proudly endorses Isaac Bryan for State Assembly

Last day to vote is May 18

Why I voted for Isaac Bryan

I first encountered Isaac Bryan during the 2019 ADEM elections in the 54th district when I heard the powerful speech he gave prior to the balloting. I was exceedingly impressed by his passion and conviction as he spoke about the need for genuinely progressive representation. It was no surprise that he won his election that day. Isaac made such a strong impression on me that I looked him up when I got home that evening, reading his Facebook posts and watching videos where he was interviewed. Ever since then, I have taken every opportunity to listen to him.

Isaac always speaks very candidly about the need for justice. I admire his courage and commitment. I appreciate the incredible work he did as co-chair of the successful Measure J campaign, which was supported by many Culver City voters. Because he built and led this coalition, nearly one billion dollars of the LA County annual budget will now be allocated to address racial justice through youth development, job training, small business development, supportive housing, and alternatives to incarceration via public health. I also deeply respect the work he has done as the founding director of the UCLA Black Policy Project. Isaac has a Master's degree in Public Policy Analysis from the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs. His personal story is also remarkable. He is able to represent people who have been disenfranchised in a genuine and powerful way, and this is much needed.

—Disa Lindgren



Sadness and hope—the conviction of George Floyd’s murderer

by Carlene Brown

Less than a year ago, I cried for days following the chilling video of George Floyd’s murder, a lynching that “tortured an entire community . . . unable to stop it,” according to CNN’s Van Jones. I felt compelled to attend George Floyd’s memorial in downtown LA, organized



by interfaith and union leaders I had worked with for decades.

Again and again, Black people thanked me for being there. And it was there that I fell in love with the Black Lives Matter movement, whose spiritual underpinnings were highly evident to me. A couple of days later, I proudly marched to the Culver City police station with over one thousand young people to participate in a rally organized by People of Color for Change (POC4Change).

On March 30, 2021, I was drawn to an article in the online publication Common Dreams, “[Righteous Witnesses to a Murder: He Was Begging for His Life](#)” by columnist Abby Zimet

As the Chauvin trial had begun to move forward, my heart felt especially tender, and I couldn’t shake the urgency to make George Floyd’s life sacred. So I printed the article and pasted it in my journal. As an artist’s sketch of George Floyd’s beautiful face allowed me to look into the windows of his soul, I drew hearts around his likeness, placed my hand of love on George’s heart, and wept.

My heart echoed the words of columnist Abby Zimet in calling the second day of the Chauvin trial “wrenching” and the three trial witnesses “righteous,” “potent” and “unflappable.” My heart agreed

with her depiction of defense questions as “fractious and often racist”—including Eric Nelson’s feeble argument that Chauvin’s obscene use of force was merely “unattractive but necessary.”

I rejoiced in Zimet’s observation about the absurdity of the defense portraying George Floyd as a “scary superhuman black dude” that three cops could not overcome—and the implication that “because he was struggling with addiction” he deserved to die.

OPINION

The words of one observer planted in me a ray of hope: “Sadly, George Floyd died that day, but there were angels on the scene.” The 17-year-old heroine Darnella Frazier, who recorded the video, was one of those angels, as was her 9-year-old cousin Judeah Reynolds whose t-shirt bore the word “LOVE.” At the top of my journal entry I wrote the words of Martin Luther King: “Love will have the final word.”

Day by day as the trial wore on, I returned daily to that journal entry to place my hand on George Floyd’s heart and affirm the words of Martin Luther King.

On April 7th, I found another column by Abby Zimet that concludes with an ominous message: “Only a failing state . . . holds a four-week trial for a slow murder by asphyxiation that the whole world saw. Given the blistering testimony and evidence, we don’t know if any psychopath has ever been so brutally exposed as so manifestly culpable of murder. What we do know: If he isn’t found guilty, there’s no hope for this country.”

In the ensuing weeks, I poured over every article I could find about not only Chauvin and George Floyd, but articles about Daunte Wright, Lt. Caron Nazario, and Adam Toledo, assuring myself that the whole world was watching. But what would it mean for these young black and brown men if there were no guilty verdict for Chauvin? Could it possibly be that there really is no hope for this country?

Even though I tried to hold on to the thought that perhaps all these atrocities

were happening in such close succession to “crack open the world’s heart,” I still found myself in the company of Van Jones and perhaps millions of others on the morning of April 20 when the Chauvin verdict was expected to be announced. “Even with all this evidence, people woke up this morning afraid to hope,” said Jones on CNN.

Jones went on to present a long list of people who “did the right thing” and thus led to the guilty verdict for Chauvin: the young girl who held her phone and filmed the murder, community members on the sidelines who begged Chauvin to stop, the EMT, those who called the police on the police, the police chief who fired Chauvin, millions of people marching, the governor who stood up and took the case to Keith Ellison to make sure it was done the right way. “The message here: “we must get involved like the girl who held the camera,” said Jones.

On April 26th, I got involved by speaking at the Culver City Council meeting. “I choose to stand in hope alongside the Culver City Democratic Club, Culver City Action Network and POC4Change,” I said. “They are doing the right thing by calling us to reimagine public safety . . . I urge the Culver City Council to ‘do the right thing’ here tonight by officially adopting the recommendations of [the Solidarity Consulting report.](#)”

Vice Mayor of Culver City, Dr. Daniel Lee, MSW, wrote this message following the meeting that adjourned beyond 2 am: “We took the first incredibly small step towards addressing public safety in Culver City in a care-focused manner. Much appreciation for everyone who spoke. But, very specifically to the young people from #POC4Change. You keep a lot of us going when everything is heavy. Mobile crisis response. Altered procedures of traffic violations. Resident oversight.”

Liberty Bell

“With Justice & liberty to all”
Bell been cracked so long
It shook us to hear it ring
So loudly: George Floyd!

by ZiggZaggerZ

Save the Date!

On Friday, June 4, the CCDC presents a very special fundraiser with the Actors' Gang.

For only \$50 you can be among the first to see their new online show, "Hard Times," adapted from Studs Terkel's book and directed by Tim Robbins, and join an exclusive after-show discussion with members of the Gang (possibly including Tim Robbins himself).

Watch your inbox for details!

Resolution

This resolution is submitted to the Culver City Democratic Club by Cynthia Hart. Under current California law, journalists may enter natural disaster emergency areas for the purpose of gathering information. SB98 seeks to extend that protection to

areas where protests are taking place. This important protection of the public's right to know is stuck in the Senate Appropriations Committee until later this month. Your support is requested to help nudge this item out of Committee.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF SB98 PROTECT JOURNALISTS' ACCESS

Whereas a free press, protected by the First Amendment, is essential to the functioning of a Democracy in which we the people have the information we need to be able to hold our government accountable; and

Whereas in the last year, we have seen increasing numbers of journalists zip-tied, man-handled, pepper-sprayed, tear-gassed, rubber-bulleted, and outright arrested for committing journalism wherever and whenever police would have preferred that their actions be unwitnessed and

Whereas current California law allows journalists access to disaster sites even when evacuation orders are in effect so that they can gather news and inform the public, however those protections do not extend to First Amendment protest sites, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Culver City Democratic Club calls upon the California State Legislature to enact SB98, that would protect journalists gathering news at First Amendment protest sites and hence the public's right to know what is being done in our names.

"AB1400 is not dead"

That's what Assembly Member Ash Kalra told the CDP Progressive Caucus recently.

Disappointing, but not surprising, the California legislature has turned AB1400 CalCare Single Payer Healthcare into a two-year bill. This means that the next opportunity for CalCare to receive a hearing and move through the legislative process will be January 2022.

The upside is that this gives supporters eight months to organize! Our Club's Vice President, Jeanna Harris, says, "It will take time, patience and grit to get this passed." But nobody is giving up!

Jeanna likens our current healthcare system to a tangle of "spaghetti" that fails people. By contrast, CalCare is comprehensive.

Here are the seven principles of CalCare:

Universal coverage. Everybody in, nobody out.

A single public program.

Fully comprehensive benefits.

Freedom to choose your care provider. No more "in network" or "out of network."

Free at the point of service. No more copays, premiums, or deductibles.

A just transition for displaced workers in the insurance industry.

Patient care based on patient need. No more financial incentives to avoid providing necessary care.

Jeanna Harris and Ron Birnbaum will continue to answer your questions about AB1400 at CalCare Office Hours on Sundays at 5 PM Here is the link: bit.ly/calcare-office-hours.

To paraphrase one of my favorite political scientists: parties are indispensable tools for people to get control of their government. Our job now is to help people get control of their party.

—*Daraka Larimore-Hall*

Letter: State laws take away local control of zoning

Dear City Council members:

Would you give up your lungs to help heal your heart? Would you do this without seeking information on other effective alternatives? Just as our lungs are a vital element in sustaining our life, so too is Culver City's ever-diminishing green space vital to both our mental and our physical health. Helping with airflow, rainwater capture, and carbon sequestration via our trees and urban gardens, we cannot sacrifice it to address our homeless & housing crises.

On this Earth Day, I'm writing to ask everyone to join me in letting our City Council know that just as we were willing to provide the City with the research to end urban drilling, so too we'll help provide viable alternatives that effectively address our homeless crisis and also provide affordable housing without destroying our neighborhoods.

To paraphrase Santayana, we need to be aware of our history to not repeat it. In the 1920s well-meaning civic leaders got conned permitting Big Oil's greed. One hundred years later, now in the 2020s, Wall Street developers' greed is striving to con us in the guise of addressing af-

fordable housing and homelessness. The crisis is real, just as that of an ailing heart. But the state's solutions proposed in Senate bills 9 & 10 will, over time, prove to be as harmful as Big Oil's effects on our health and that of the climate.

Culver City, just as we united to set a precedent to end urban drilling, let's unite to find healthier meaningful alternatives than the state has proposed: 1) taking away our local control of land use, and 2) obliterating single-family R1 and duplex R2 area designations, to allow multiplexes. Jamming in more housing on these lots, as would be allowing McMansions, are not healthy solutions.

State law already allows three houses on R1 & R2 properties as additional dwellings.

Let's demand that the state NOT erode democracy by taking away our City's right to respect its people's voices, especially in such a sensitive area as land use.

Dear Mayor and City Council members, you are sensitive caring leaders as evidenced during this year of crises. I thank you for blessing us with your dedication. To allay our fears, I urge you to more visibly invite public input by 1) holding

citywide Webex meetings inviting the Public to come to learn more about the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) requirements, and 2) inviting the public to submit proposals that do not erode any more green space while addressing homelessness and affordable housing with rent-to-own options in a significant way.

I trust you will widely publicize the May 10th City Council meeting dealing with redevelopment and housing. I trust that before the finalizing of the General Plan in October there will be ongoing pertinent meetings to create viable solutions that our residents—housed and unhoused, homeowners and renters—will appreciate.

Given our City's brain trust I'm morally certain that just as we've led the way to end urban drilling, so too by working together we shall be role models of what a smart city can create to address homelessness and housing without having it cut out its lungs to help heal its heart.

Respectfully,
Suzanne De Benedittis,
PhD/Social Analysis & Social Ethics
April 22, Earth Day 2021

Culver City, we have a problem—housing

The Culver City Patch reports that Apple plans to add more than 3,000 additional employees to their Culver City Campus. The Patch quotes our Culver City Mayor Alex Fisch as saying: "Apple's investment in Culver City shows once again that we live in one of the most desirable places on earth."

Now where are those 3,000 people going to live? Come to think of it, where are the school teachers, accountants, and other essential workers going to live? In their cars? In far-away suburbs built in brushfire zones?

If we accept that we must build more housing here, will that housing be affordable by school teachers, accountants, and other essential workers? How do we avoid forcing density into communities with insufficient infrastructure and affordability requirements? Is economic disruption of newly affluent communities of color really a necessary

precondition for housing justice? How do we make any new housing a benefit to the City and its residents and not just a giveaway to for-profit developers?

And who makes all those decisions anyway? There have been proposals to take away that power from elected City Councils and instead have preemption by States (SB9 and SB10) or even the federal government. Others say that all building permits should be approved "by-right" and "ministerially" (i.e. by City Staff) and avoid all that fuss of Public Comment at Council meetings.

I really had not given all this too much thought being, as I am, safely ensconced in a cozy condo with plenty of density and diversity (and plenty of parking), until last month's meeting when we were offered for consideration [a resolution to end exclusionary zoning](#). I did a bit of reading on the subject this month. I found questions, but no answers.

I offer for your consideration, some ideas generously provided by others.

From Culver City Planning Commissioner Nancy Barba:

- [A Study of Culver City Housing](#)
- [Missing Middle Housing](#)
- [Housing for All](#)
- [Building More and Doing Better](#)

From John W. Heath, President of United Homeowners Association II:

- [If You Sell a House These Days the Buyer Might Be a Pension fund](#)
- [That Suburban Home Buyer Could Be a Foreign Government](#)
- [UHA II website](#)

On page 6 of February's newsletter:

- [A much-needed conversation on housing](#) by Mark Lipman "By far the most consequential decision facing Culver City today is the question of zoning."

—Cynthia Hart

Resolution

CALLING FOR AN END TO EXCLUSIONARY ZONING IN THE CITY OF CULVER CITY

Whereas, there is a serious housing crisis in Culver City and neighboring communities, and exclusionary zoning is one of the reasons for the housing crisis; and

Whereas, exclusionary zoning is comprised of a suite of land-use policies that prevent multi-plexes, townhomes, apartments, and other more affordable housing options from being located in expensive single-family housing neighborhoods (where wealthier, predominantly-white people live), and while exclusionary zoning is ostensibly race-neutral, exclusionary zoning policies have invariably resulted in segregation, because, in fact, this is what these policies were designed to do (see [this analysis from UC Berkeley's Othering and Belonging Institute](#) for info); and

Whereas, some cities have begun to address this injustice, initiating the process of ending exclusionary zoning in high-opportunity areas; the [city of Berkeley being the most recent town](#) to take such a step in California, and we are increasingly aware of [Culver City's history of anti-Black exclusion](#) and the enduring white supremacist legacy that it has left us in many areas, including exclusionary zoning, which results in segregation that is both unfair and harmful, therefore be it

Resolved, that the time has come for the City of Culver City to dismantle that legacy, with the hope that this starts a wave of desegregationist housing justice that will spread across Southern California; and be it further

Resolved, that the Culver City Democratic Club supports the effort of Culver City for More Homes to seek an agendized discussion of exclusionary zoning by the Culver City Council during its meeting on May 10.

Submitted to the Culver City Democratic Club for adoption by Club member Disa Lindgren



Club t-shirts are available once again! All cotton, made by union workers in the USA, in sizes S, M, L, and XL. Yours for a donation of \$20 or more via [Act Blue](#). Contact jeff.lawrence.schwartz@gmail.com to arrange pickup or delivery.

Di's Corner:

by Diane Rosenberg

Update on Club member Charlotte Gunter. She is healing beautifully even though it has been slow going. Still going for physical therapy. Her attitude is wonderful and she misses everybody.

Update on me: I saw the surgeon this morning for a followup on the surgery that I had on my left knee cap on Wednesday, March 10. They took quite a lot of X-rays. The surgeon was extremely pleased on how my knee was healing. He told me it isn't necessary for me to go for physical therapy and wants to see me again in six months.

The Club sends their condolences to Club member Stephen Dunwoody and his family on the passing of his brother Joe, who passed away April 21 from Covid-19.

Congratulations to Vice Mayor Daniel Lee, who is graduating with a Doctorate in Social Work from USC. He focused on income inequality and generational poverty from a child development lens.

To join the Culver City Democratic Club or renew your membership, you may go to [ActBlue](#) or call Membership Secretary Diane Rosenberg at (310) 398-5328