

UDC Membership Meeting Minutes 03.23.2023

Location: Rambling House, Woodlawn, BX

Betsey Knapp convened the meeting to order at 6:55pm and noted that the location was a fulfillment of our commitment to hold meetings in all neighborhoods in the NW Bronx. She noted that there were several new members and other participants at the meeting and initiated a round of introductions.

Betsey acknowledged the holiday of Ramadan as a time for reflection, contemplation and celebration, and as a sacred time for Muslims.

Morgan Evers, State Democratic Committee representative presented an update on the workings of the committee and referred us to an NPR interview that Brian Lehrer conducted with [Jay Jacobs](#). Morgan signed a letter asking Jay Jacobs to step down, after the significant NY Democratic Party losses in November. Jacobs has deflected blame away from himself by calling many New York City elected officials far left extremists. Democrats in the U.S House have begun spending funds in New York state, and not in other states, as a sign of low confidence in the State party.

In preparation for the primary election in June, UDC invited both candidates for Bronx DA to attend this meeting. Tess Cohen was in attendance; Darcel Clark may attend a future meeting.

Tess Cohen presented her background and reasons for running ([see her website](#)). It has been decades since the Bronx had a competitive race for DA; this is an opportunity to educate Bronxites on the importance of the DA office, which is currently poorly managed, with high attorney turnover rates and inefficient operations. Tess has served as both a prosecutor and civil rights defense attorney. As a prosecutor, she served as Chief of the Prescription Drug Investigation Unit and held doctors accountable for prescription drug crimes. As a defense attorney, she fights against criminal justice system abuses; she has also represented victims of sexual assault. Tess reported that her support is strong in high crime neighborhoods where constituents have direct experience with the criminal justice system. As DA, she would focus on crime prevention programs, such as Gun Court, that intervenes with youths who have committed first time, nonviolent gun offenses.

Kim Furetti, Women of Woodlawn (WOW), addressed the meeting on the status of a long [planned footbridge](#) over the Major Deegan in Van Cortlandt Park. Estimates for the cost of the bridge have risen from \$12M in 2015 to \$38M currently. The Parks Department has officially squelched plans for the bridge, as part of Mayor Adams' budget cuts and has proposed instead a meandering footpath, which is no better than present options. WOW proposes continued advocacy with CB 8, 7 and 12.

Betsey Knapp presented a summary of the February 12 planning meeting of the EDS Executive Committee.

