
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

◆ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ◆ President: Mary Peppito ◆

May General Meeting:

Zoning on Broadway 108th - 110th Streets

A discussion of existing zoning, proposed rezoning, alternatives for new construction, and the need for affordable housing.

- What zoning changes have been proposed?
- New Construction: how much should be allowed?
- Affordable Housing: how best to help create it?
- How can the community be involved in the decision-making process?

Confirmed Speakers:

Dan Cohen, State Committeeman
Kevin Corté, Founder, Alumni Planning Solutions
Dave Robinson and **Robert Stern**,
Morningside Heights Community Coalition

Please join us on Zoom

Thursday, May 11

Club business 7:30pm

Forum 8:00pm

Register: bit.ly/may2023forum

for more information: DistrictLeaders@BroadwayDemocrats.org

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Volume 48, Issue 5

May 2023

President's Corner

Ethics, Shmethics

Mary Peppito

*Integrity, Shmintegrity; Norms, Shmorms;
Democracy, Shamocracy*

Trump led the way in brashly defying ethical and political norms. Now Trump's Republican party is breaking new frontiers, ranging from making it tougher to put citizen-led referenda issues on the ballot with the aim of curtailing legal abortion, to disenfranchising voters by removing their chosen representatives, to ethical lapses of certain U.S. Supreme Court Justices.

*Referendum shenanigans: raising the bar
to prevent democracy*

Republican gerrymandered legislatures are making it harder to govern by direct democracy. For example, in Ohio, the Republican legislature is trying to make it harder to get a referendum on the ballot to protect abortion rights (something supported by a majority of Ohioans) by raising the number of votes required to pass any referendum from the current 50% threshold to 60%.

Missouri, not to be outdone, will have a similar measure on the ballot in November which aims to raise the number of voters needed to pass citizen-led initiatives from a majority to a supermajority. Missouri Republicans are outright lying to voters, claiming that the measure will only require voters to be U.S. citizens and properly registered Missouri residents (which is the law already), not even mentioning that a yes vote would increase the threshold for a ballot initiative to pass.

North Dakota has passed legislation stiffening the requirements for voter-proposed constitutional amendments; while in Arkansas, voter ballot initiative restrictions were enacted by the legislature and signed by the governor, even though voters had rejected such a measure months earlier.

*Disenfranchising voters
by ejecting their elected officials*

Tennessee showed its true colors by expelling two Black legislators who, together with a White legislator, were speaking for their thousands of

constituents who demand action on the epidemic of gun-violence. Similarly, Montana has shamefully expelled the state's only openly transgender Representative for her views on transgender rights, thereby disenfranchising her constituents.

Similarly, legislatures in other Republican controlled states are ousting elected officials they disagree with. For example, Republicans in Houston dismissed the elected school board and replaced them with their hand-picked officials. Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Georgia have seen efforts to remove progressive, duly elected prosecutors that do not toe the Republican line.

And then there's the Supreme Court ...

The recent revelations of ethical lapses by some U.S. Supreme Court Justices call the Court's integrity and rulings into question. For decades, Justice Thomas enjoyed luxury vacations paid for by a right-wing billionaire who has an interest in cases before the court; yet the Justice never saw the need to disclose these gifts. Justice Thomas also felt it was OK not to disclose that the same billionaire had purchased his mother's home, where she now lives rent-free (saving her an estimated \$155,000 since 2014). And Thomas failed to recuse himself from cases implicating the interests of his wife, a firebrand conservative activist.

Justice Gorsuch didn't disclose that he had sold property to the head of a law firm whose litigators frequently appear before the Court. And finally, Chief Justice Roberts' wife earned over \$10 million from law firms that practiced before the Court. And these are only the more *recent* ethical lapses; there have been many others. See <https://fixthecourt.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Recent-Ethical-Lapses-by-the-Justices-Sept.-2022.pdf>.

These are just a few of the areas where Republicans are subverting democracy with anti-majoritarian tactics. Disenfranchisement of felony offenders in Virginia, Republican-led attempts to make it harder for young people to vote on campus, and gerrymandering are all in their playbook as well. We will need to work harder than ever to claw back our democracy in 2024.

MP

District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

Good News – and Closure – On Petitioning, Elections, and Districts

Petitioning

We filed a pretty good number of signatures for our local District Leader, County Committee, and Judicial Delegates/Alternates candidates. Our petitions were accepted, no one filed against us, and so we are all elected. Technically our new two-year terms begin the day after the June 27 primary. No one filed against our Civil Court Judge Candidate Dana Catanzaro or our outgoing (because her district moved south, out of our area) Council Member Gale Brewer. Council Member Shaun Abreu drew one opponent, but his petitions were so inadequate that he was dismissed from the ballot without Abreu having to object to them. That means that Dana, Gale and Shaun are not on the ballot for the June 27 primary, and are the Democratic nominees in the November general election. So, for June 27, we all won.

This also means that there is **No Primary Election in our area** June 27. The rules for primaries are that if there are no opposed races the polls do not open. The only exception for us is that polls will open in the one ED we have in the hotly contested 9th Council District, where Yusuf Salaam, Inez Dickens and Al Taylor are challenging Kristin Richardson Jordan. This ED is located between 110th and 111th Streets, Manhattan Avenue to Frederick Douglass Boulevard. Many of us as individuals will be working for Yusuf, but for the club officially, and in the rest of our district, there will be no election June 27, and not much of an election in November. But wait til next year!

Assembly Redistricting: Done at Last!

Danny O'Donnell and his fellow Assembly Members were elected in 2022 from districts that the NY Supreme Court (idiotically) decided would have to be redrawn this year, for the 2024 election. There was little objection, even from Republicans, to the 2022 districts themselves; the courts just decided they didn't like the procedures. They tasked the Independent Redistricting Commission with drawing new lines. Their first draft wasn't terrible, but was kind of in La La Land, doing things like putting four Amsterdam-Morningside blocks into the 70th Assembly District, with nothing to connect them to the neighborhood they're in except for Morningside Park, which is not exactly accessible. But this time the IRC actually listened to the testimony of people who know their communities, and the new lines,

already signed into law and in effect until 2032, are pretty good.

In our area only two blocks differ from the 2022 lines. The aforementioned 110-111, Manhattan-FDB block goes from the 69th to the 70th AD, and the La Salle-Tiemann, Broadway-Claremont block goes from the 70th to the 69th. In terms of the all-important criteria of restaurants, we lose Café Amrita and gain Pisticci and Toast. Strange things often happen at the borders of districts, these minor adjustments are something we can easily live with. Best of all, Assembly Members Danny O'Donnell and Linda Rosenthal are no longer in the same district. So, locally, quietude and harmony this year and probably next. But lots of other things are going to happen in 2024!



Zoning on Broadway 108th - 110th

Gretchen Borges and Daniel Zweig,
Steering Committee Members

Forum Thursday, May 11, 7:30pm, on Zoom

Many who live south of W.110th Street have only recently become aware of a rezoning plan that, while focused primarily on Morningside Heights, also includes proposals that could have a major impact on this particular section of Broadway.

At our May 11 forum, following up on the articles in our previous newsletter, we hope to provide more information and help facilitate more open community discussion about the changes proposed for this area. Confirmed speakers:

- **Dan Cohen:** NY State Committeeman, Affordable housing advocate with over 25 years of experience in the housing industry
- **Kevin Corté:** Founder/Principal of Alumni Planning Solutions, former Project Manager at NYC Council Land Use Division
- **Dave Robinson** (President) and **Robert Stern** (Board Member): Morningside Heights Community Coalition

Some questions we hope to discuss:

- What does current zoning allow, and what changes have been proposed?
- Would the proposed changes help create affordable housing?
- Can the zoning limits proposed for Morningside Heights be achieved without the proposed 108th to 110th changes?

- How and when did Broadway south of W.110th become part of this proposal?
- How far along is the process?
- How can affected community members become involved in the process?
- Is there a better way to achieve a desired increase in housing in this area?
- Is there a developer/owner with a known project now in this area?
- Will these changes increase our ability to negotiate with a potential developer for needed civic improvements?
- Is this the proposal that would best serve our community?

Join us for the forum on May 11 – we hope to all learn a lot. Register: bit.ly/may2023forum.



Disclaimer: unless otherwise indicated, items herein reflect the views of their authors only. They are published as a part of our club's commitment to the free and open exchange of ideas on topics of interest, but their publication should not be construed as an endorsement by the editor, the Steering Committee, or the Broadway Democrats club.



Neoliberalism: What does it mean? Why does it matter?

Susan Crawford,
Steering Committee Member

April Forum Follow-up

Our April Forum featured Morningside Heights' own Professor Mitchell Cohen, who addressed a dimension of our political and economic lives that tends to fly under the radar. "Neoliberalism: What Does It Mean, Why Does It Matter?" raised questions about this often misunderstood political and economic philosophy that mediates much more of our everyday lives than most Americans realize.

Dr. Cohen delineated the trajectory of neoliberalism from Adam Smith's philosophy for a "laissez-faire" marketplace in the 18th century, in which prices are set by market forces, to a re-thinking, even "re-purposing," of Smith's philosophy in the late 1930's-40's via Friedrich Hayek's "Road to Serfdom," to Milton Friedman's "Chicago" school

of economics, to our present privatization of ever more of our public goods and services.

For those not familiar with how neoliberalism affects us, or even what it means, here's a primer:

- <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/n/neoliberalism.asp>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/15/neoliberalism-ideology-problem-george-monbiot>
- <https://economichardship.org/2023/03/what-is-neoliberalism-an-economic-and-political-system-devoted-to-the-free-market/>

See the items linked below for further elaboration. If you missed the forum, or want to hear it again, it was recorded and is available for replay at www.broadwaydemocrats.org.

With so much ground to cover, a second forum could have easily followed to address how neoliberalism affects our everyday lives. Not to worry! A weekly missive from Donald Cohen's "In the Public Interest" can keep you up to date on the privatization efforts, nationally and worldwide, at the heart of neoliberalism.

For further reading and viewing:

- <https://www.socialeurope.eu/everything-know-neoliberalism-wrong>
- <https://www.alternet.org/2018/11/international-monetary-fund-flexes-its-muscles-latin-america>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dr19_jQ8zAs&ab_channel=InstituteofDevelopmentStudies
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRTtrRYGGxw&ab_channel=InstituteofDevelopmentStudies
- Neoliberalism and Corporate School Reform: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6TmoaitkF94&ab_channel=McMasterHumanities

If you want to go deeper, google Quinn Slobodian and/or Wendy Brown.



Stay in touch!

visit us at

<http://www.broadwaydemocrats.org>

or

join us on Facebook at

facebook.com/groups/BroadwayDemocrats/





2023 SPRING FLING

Sunday, May 7th
3:00pm to 6:00pm

The Ellington
2745 Broadway
(corner of West 105th Street)

Presenting

The Excellence in Democracy Award
**New York State Senator
Cordell Cleare**

&

The Ida and Jesse Frankel
Community Service Award

**The Columbus-Amsterdam
Business Improvement District**

For more information & to purchase tickets:
www.broadwaydemocrats.org/fundraiser-2023.html
bwaydemsfundraiser2023@gmail.com

Send to: The Broadway Democrats, P.O. Box 1099, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025

Special Interests:

E-mail:

Telephone:

Address:

Name: (title, honorifics, and pronouns optional)

To join the Broadway Democrats, please fill out the form below and mail with your check (made out to "Broadway Democrats") to the address at the bottom. Welcome!

In order to vote in club elections (endorsements, elections of officers, judicial convention, amendments), you must be an eligible, voting member of the Broadway Democrats. You must have attended at least one of the previous nine monthly public meetings and you must pay your dues. Dues partially defray the costs of presenting forums and putting out this newsletter. Dues are \$25; senior dues are \$10.

Membership

The Broadway Democrats Newsletter

May 2023

FIRST
CLASS

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