

## ***November 2020 Minutes of the MCDEC***

***An early Happy Thanksgiving and Happy Holidays to you all.....Since we're not meeting again until next year, I thought I'd go ahead and send out the minutes from Tuesday's meeting while they are still relevant. Our next meeting will be on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – the day before Joe Biden and Kamala Harris take office!***

***For those who attended, please email me with any corrections or additions and I'll edit and resend the minutes before the January meeting.***

***Everyone, pay special attention to the DECF portion below and provide any feedback or new ideas you have to Carol Ann and me. Since Carol Ann meets with DECF this Sunday to discuss the 2020 election, please provide your comments today or tomorrow if possible.***

***Thanks,  
Hank Bonner  
Secretary/Treasurer***

**Call to Order:** Carol Ann called the November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting to order at 6:30.

**Members and Guests Present:** Carol Ann Leonard, Liz Piel, Jon Page, Sam Hay, Hank Bonner, Dave Cross, Bridgit Kirouac, Patty Koff, Chris Sarubbi

### **General Announcements:**

- Thanks to all who helped with the November election.
- Thanks to everyone for attending Caucus meetings during the year and to our speakers, including all the candidates who appeared at our meeting and who included the environment as one of their main talking points.
- Special thanks to member Ginny Sherlock for sending her emails throughout the year alerting us to information on the BOCC, City of Stuart, and other environmental matters of interest. Knowing about the upcoming agenda items and issues is so important as it allows us in a timely way to contact the commissioners and other officials.
- Please do what you can to support Ossoff and Warnock in the Georgia runoff. It's important that Democrats become the majority in the Senate. See email from Carol Ann dated 11/16/2020 for details on how to help.
- On November 22 Carol Ann will attend a meeting with DECF. They will be discussing lessons learned from the Florida 2020 election and looking ahead to 2021. She will share what was discussed in an email after the meeting. Also, our Board of Directors at MCDEC will be meeting to discuss our by-laws, the changes they would like to see for 2021, and ensuring we have all needed officer and director positions filled for 2021. Current officers are Carol Ann Leonard (Chair) and Hank Bonner (Secretary/Treasurer). The Vice-Chair position is not filled at this time. Sam Hay and Ben Lovelace are Directors. Ben is also the

Parliamentarian. If you would like to offer your name for officer or director, let Carol Ann know.

- The Bills Committee will be compiling suggestions regarding the environmental laws we would like to see put into place during the 2021 legislative session. If you have suggestions, email Carol Ann at [bonbinifromcal@aol.com](mailto:bonbinifromcal@aol.com).

**Minutes:** October minutes approved.

**Treasurer Report:** Current balance is still \$485.

### **Environmental Presentation:**

Carol Ann discussed a piece from WPTV's Protecting Paradise series. It dealt with JM Lawson dairy in Okeechobee teaming up with Brightmark Energy to convert 230,000 tons of manure each year into renewable natural gas. They hope to have this fully operational by the end of 2021. This will be achieved by using anaerobic digesters at the Larson farms where the manure will be converted into renewable natural gas and put into the pipeline system. This should be a positive for the environment since it will reduce the methane/greenhouse gas emissions from the farms. Here is the link to the video: <https://www.wptv.com/news/protecting-paradise/okeechobee-county-company-turning-manure-into-natural-gas>

As Carol Ann noted, this sounds good, but she questioned whether it would be even better for the environment if these dairy farms followed the regenerative farming approach we learned about from Stacey Scott in our October meeting.

**Rivers Coalition Update:** Next meeting is on November 19 at 11 a.m. on Zoom. Carol Ann previously sent out an email about this.

**DECF:** Carol Ann will be on a DECF call this Sunday, Nov 22 about the 2020 election and how Florida can get Democrats to run and how we can help get them elected. Those on our call brainstormed suggestions on how to achieve this. Note: Throughout this discussion it was noted that the pandemic affected what we were able to do this year in terms of campaigning. Many of the suggestions below would mainly work in a post-Covid world. Among the ideas were as follows:

- Engage in more door-to-door canvassing and less time on phone calls and postcards. In-person contact is important. Too many mailings by various groups and candidates decrease their effectiveness.
- Make greater effort at voter registration... (COVID-19 hurt us this year with canvassing and registration efforts.)
- Why not use Stacey Abrams' efforts in Georgia as a model for how to increase voter registration here in Florida? Unfortunately, Florida Democratic Party has not passed down that type of info to county parties so we don't even really know what her methods were...Historically there seems to be a lack of continuity within the Florida Dem Party since things change every 4 years.

- We need a charismatic Democratic leader like Stacey Abrams in Florida to help coordinate policies and action within Florida and also motivate and excite Democrats. Anna Eskamani, a House of Representative from Orlando, was mentioned as someone who is held in high regard.
- Create advisory group to help candidates run for office – including help on identifying campaign managers, providing business and donor contacts for raising money, creating campaign website, getting media exposure, helping secure volunteers for the candidates, etc. MC Dem Executive Committee should work on establishing this advisory group now so we're ready for the next election.
- Take advantage of TV debates and interviews that local channels produce. Use radio for advertising.
- Democrats need to counter the Cuban/Venezuelan belief in Miami and elsewhere that Democrats are socialists. Republicans (especially Scott and Rubio) have done a good job of reaching out to those voters. Democratic Party has not invested resources to combat the socialist narrative and earn their vote.
- Walk the walk: Reminiscent of "Walkin' Lawton" Chiles, candidates need to decide to run early in the election cycle (not just a couple of months before the election) and spend time making contact with voters in their district. Walk! Knock on doors! Stop and talk to people! Make your name and face known to voters! Liz and Bridgit provided examples in CT and Maine where the Democratic candidate did that and won their elections even in Red areas.
- Get young people involved. Get them interested in the environment and they might end up influencing their parents to focus more on the environment and vote accordingly. Work with schools to encourage projects related to environment. Hold events that draw families, perhaps a "water fair" with various exhibits, face painting, bounce house, boat rides, etc. Rather than just having a table at public events and passively sitting there waiting for people to walk up, try to be more active, invite the Rivers Coalition Kids, emphasize the Environmental Caucus, have exhibits about science and water issues, get folks involved.
- We should focus on climate change. Many said they believed this is the #1 environmental issue before us and Democrats need to keep attention on this, even as they talk about our local water issues. This might also draw in younger Democrats.
- Explore re-starting the Black Democratic Caucus, the Hispanic Democratic Caucus, and High School Democratic Caucus. Identify individuals who could be a part of those groups, meet with them, and start networking within those groups. MC Dem Executive Committee could take this on.

**Old Business/New Business:** Hank mentioned that the Bill Committee needs to meet to decide if and how to proceed with meeting with our local legislators about legislation for 2021. Carol Ann will notify committee members about the meeting time. Liz mentioned we should not only be contacting local legislators but also writing Biden's EPA head and Secretary of the Interior whenever they are announced. These people should be made aware of issues we are concerned about locally as well as undoing the damage done nationally during the past 4 years under the Trump administration. The more people that write them, the more impact this will have.

**Meeting Concluded:** Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.