

**Gettysburg DFA Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 16, 2009**

Present: Rosalie Dillan, Roger Dillan, Lasco, Lou Hammann, Jeanne Neylon, Wendy Mizenko, Joseph Breighner, Peter Boving, Elaine Jones, and Will Lane.

The meeting opened at 7:20 PM with the **approval of the minutes** from the November 18 Steering Committee meeting with one correction, the name of the author of *Ecological Intelligence* which is Daniel Goleman not Golen.

Testimony at the Senate Banking and Insurance Committee in Harrisburg

Elaine (and others) reported on the testimony by advocates of Single Payer (including Dr. Dwight Michael) at the Senate Banking and Insurance Committee meeting earlier in the morning. "Our team was spectacular," Elaine said. Those testifying in favor of Single Payer were given about thirty-five extra minutes to complete their presentation. The chairman of the committee, Don White, however, commented that no one should "misinterpret" the hearing as showing support for Single Payer as a realistic option. Lou commented that Chuck Pennachio showed "remarkable restraint" in not demanding release of funding for a feasibility study. Rosalie added that the presentations by "our team" were, indeed, remarkably professional and effective. According to Lou, most of the opposition representatives "at least pretended to be open to dialogue" but "wandered" according to their particular affiliation. Elaine also mentioned that Chairman White commented on the positive tone of the hearing and added that "we really should have had this as a roundtable."

Health Insurance Reform at the National Level

"What's been happening blows my mind," was the way Elaine opened the discussion of reform legislation at the national level. She also mentioned Howard Dean's statement: "no public option, not mandate... this bill should be killed." "We're clearly in a different place than I'd hope we'd be at this point." Lasco commented that Dean "wants to go for the reconciliation process" and get 51 votes for something solid. Basing decisions on the mere threat of a filibuster, he said, "is not sound policy."

The general consensus of the meeting was that we are all disappointed by the apparent outcome in Washington and that meaningful action on reform in the coming year will probably move to the state level.

Reflections on our December 2 Meet-up Program

Elaine thanked Joe for an excellent program on ethical consumerism at our recent monthly meeting, and asked if the PowerPoint is up on our website. Lou will check with Lorraine, his neighbor, about whether she's had time to post it. Joe then commented that the upcoming "cap and trade" bill will likely run into the same problem that the health insurance reform bill has encountered: corporate lobbying influence on elected representatives. This is "the fundamental problem" at the moment, he said. In other countries, Lasco added, there are strict limits on electioneering prompting Lou to report that on January 24 he and Pat will be attending the 100th birthday celebration of Doris Haddock, aka Granny D, a long time advocate for campaign finance reform. He expects that a "re-launch" of the campaign for reform will come from the many people attending that celebration.

In response to Lou, Elaine asked whether we should be working in partnership with the many groups that are already working on campaign finance reform. Wendy suggested that Common Cause might be an important group to consider. Lou commented: the Supreme Court is about to decide whether corporations are “persons” in fact. If they say yes, we might as well give it up and leave.

The three groups mentioned as possible partners: Common Cause, Alliance for Democracy, and Granny D’s ad hoc birthday group.

Treasurer’s Report

Jeanne reported that there has been no change in our account since the last Steering Committee meeting. Our current balance is \$1869.51.

Health Care Task Force Report

Will briefly summarized the task force plan for 2010 (see attached). He also mentioned a new idea for a musical fundraiser in support of the feasibility study on single payer for Pennsylvania. The event would raise money but also serve as an outreach tool to area musicians and new constituencies for our work on reform.

EES Report

Democracy Now (with Amy Goodman) has done a great job covering events in Copenhagen, but other media have done a much less satisfactory job. And, “the way things are going we are headed for 770 ppm by 2100,” according to Peter. The next two days, he said, should be interesting “with all the politicians coming to town.” But pictures of our own vigil on the square in Gettysburg are available on our 350.org webpage [About a dozen people gathered under the big clock on the square with a 305 sign to the accompaniment of tuba music and Christmas carols from student musicians across the square by the hotel.] Unfortunately, Peter noted with regard to Copenhagen, “We won’t be happy when it’s over.”

On the topic of Energy Raising, the news was much brighter. A house in Greencastle has been identified for the first solar water heater project. Bill Mooney is serving as the technical consultant for this work. A meeting for those interested in doing a project at their home is set for Wednesday, January 27. The first Energy Raising will take place in March in Greencastle.

Community Service Report

Elaine reported for Denise Weldon-Siviy that 185 blankets had been collected in the recent drive. Joe presented an additional two blankets to bring the total up to 187.

Planning for January Meet-up

Elaine raised the question whether our mission has changed now that “things have changed so much with the election of Obama.” She confessed that in the recent past she had assumed that Single Payer “probably can’t happen” But now, “Do we really have to make this happen at the state level. Should reform be our main goal for 2010? Do we need a real come-to-Jesus moment?”

Lasco commented that we need to be careful to stress objectives, such as funding for a feasibility study, ahead of goals, which can get too big and vague. Will added that he agreed with Lasco but “if we are serious about reform at the state level we will need to take a more regional approach.”

A general discussion of strategies for working regionally followed. Wendy suggested we connect with other DFAs around the state (and other similar organizations as well) and take our program—“Dwight on tape”—on the road. “We need to go to people,” she said, “rather than expect them to come to us.” She added that we need to create a speaker’s bureau and charge a fee for each speaker since people tend not to value what comes for free.

Lou commented at this point that “people really do not understand the legislative process” but that “a prior question” he would like to pose would be, in terms of our goals, “are we focusing on informing constituents, or on moving representative”? Will commented that we need to move beyond “informing” to organizing, and Lou agreed but added that elected officials don’t pay attention because they are “bought.” He pledged to set up a task force on campaign finance reform in response to the Granny D. birthday celebration.

Wendy, continuing the discussion of working regionally, stressed the importance of partnerships with other groups. Peter mentioned the local food movement as a great partner on issues related to food justice.

In terms of the meet-up itself, Elaine suggested a format with reports task forces with discussion following on objectives and goals for DFA in the year ahead. Elaine will create a post card notice to send to the 200 members without email; she will ask Harriet to work on labels. Lasko and Wendy will assist with the mailing.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Will Lane
Acting as Secretary