

Blue Power 2020 Action Forum Newsletter

From Jo Lown...

This forum has been increasingly well attended throughout February. Some of the discussions from last Wednesday's meeting (2/20/19) are briefly summarized here.

National Issues: We touched on the Mueller investigation, the filings, indictments and other cases. Reports that the investigation was over and the Mueller Report was coming out this week appear to have been unfounded. Still, the waiting is stressful, especially as democratic norms continue to be undermined. Case in point, Trump's baseless declaration of a "national emergency," because he was denied money for his vanity wall, is seen by many as a very dangerous power grab.

Update: Democratic leaders have since filed a bill against his claim of an "emergency." It is expected to pass the House. Then McConnell must put it up for a vote on the Senate floor, where it only needs a simple majority to pass. So far, it looks like all Democratic and some Republican Senators are on board.

Action item: Contact Senators by calling the Capitol switchboard (202) 224-3121. A switchboard operator will connect you directly to the Senator's DC office.

State Issues: We discussed the process of restoring voting rights to eligible former felons. Amendment 4 was intended to be self-implementing, so local election officials are not required to contact them or to proactively help them to register. Folks are looking into how to properly reach out and assist in restoring their voting rights. We hope to hear more about this in future meetings.

Other "hot topics" at the state level include education (teaching standards, charter schools) and guns ("stand your ground," arming teachers). The legislative session begins next week. Stay tuned.

Local Issues: On the local level, there were discussions about school safety, which included reinforcing and/or modifying buildings, concerns about "militarizing" schools, and a fairly strong consensus against arming teachers. As a panel of local officials is engaging in discussions on school safety, we will likely be hearing more about this issue at future meetings.

The "sick" Sheriff building is an ongoing problem under discussion. Some of the many questions are: What can/should we do with the building? Can it be "cured"? Will we be wasting more money trying to cure it? Is it more practical/economical to just add on to the EOC?

We also discussed the issue involving the restaurant at Bings Landing (A1A). The (unconfirmed) word is that the parties are talking and trying to resolve concerns.

Finally, we discussed the need to encourage the development of housing that working families and seniors can actually afford while avoiding the inaccurate, negative connotations that some people use to attack "affordable housing."

The next forum meeting is tomorrow, February 27, at 12:30 pm.

Hope to see you there.

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Mike Cocchiola
President, PCDC



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