



El Cerrito Democratic Club

October 2022 Newsletter

Contents:

1. El Cerrito Democratic Club General Information
2. Tuesday, November 22nd General Membership Meeting – *In-Person and on Zoom!*
(No October Membership Meeting or Annual Dinner)
3. Minutes from the September 27th General Membership Meeting
4. Steppin' Up and Steppin' Out – *HUGE THANKS to the ECDC Walkers!*
5. ECDC Endorsements for the November 8th General Election
6. Future Events – *Mark Your Calendar!*
7. Membership Renewal Reminder and Instructions
8. Call for Newsletter Submissions
9. Link to the ECDC Website and Bylaws

ECDC
PO Box 192
El Cerrito CA 94530

Newsletter Editor: William Ktsanes

1. El Cerrito Democratic Club General Information

The El Cerrito Democratic Club (“ECDC”) provides a forum for area residents to discuss and take action on issues and campaigns of local, national, and international importance. Our General Membership Meetings are open to all and held on the fourth Tuesday of each month except October and December, when we typically have our annual dinner and holiday party.

In September we converted from an all-Zoom to a hybrid format accessible both in-person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Ave, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and remotely via Zoom. It was wonderful to be in community and once again gather in person!

As our planned guest speaker California State Treasurer Fiona Ma was no longer able to attend due to a schedule conflict, the ECDC Executive Board voted to cancel this year’s October annual dinner. Instead, we will host an ECDC holiday party from 6-9 pm on Friday, December 9th at Hana Gardens. *Save the date and mark your calendars! You and your guests are invited!*

The holiday party will be an opportunity to get together to connect and reconnect with one another, celebrate the holidays, and welcome the coming new year! As we’re still in the planning stage, more information will be forthcoming in the November newsletter and presented at our next membership meeting.

Our next monthly General Membership Meeting will be at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, November 22nd. We encourage you to come to Hana Gardens or join the Zoom call a few minutes early to mix-and-mingle with fellow ECDC members.

Officer elections for the El Cerrito Democratic Club occur annually and were last held during the General Membership Meeting in January 2022. Special thanks to our volunteer officers:

El Cerrito Democratic Club Officers (2022)

- President – Greg Lyman
- Past President – Janet Abelson
- Executive Vice President – Champagne Brown
- VP Media – Madeline Kronenberg
- VP Membership – Neil Tsutsui
- VP Programs – Carolyn Wysinger
- VP Publications – William Ktsanes
- VP Records – Jonee Grassi
- VP Treasurer – Ed Crowley

The specific duties of officer positions are described in section “VII. Officers” of the Bylaws posted on the ECDC website at <https://ecdclub.org/club-documents/>.

If you're interested in participating more actively in the ECDC, please consider volunteering with the Club. We anticipate several Board openings in January 2023 and invite you to join. We also need volunteers for tasks and projects that arise throughout the year. *Help is always greatly appreciated!*

The El Cerrito Democratic Club and its activities are supported by volunteers and the annual dues of its members. Please see the "Membership Renewal Reminder and Instructions" section towards the end of this newsletter for directions on how to join the ECDC or renew your membership.

Lastly – and ***MOST IMPORTANTLY*** – if you haven't done so yet, please vote. *Thank you!*

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications



2. Tuesday, November 22nd General Membership Meeting – *In-Person and on Zoom!*

(No October Membership Meeting or Annual Dinner)

As in September, our November monthly meeting will be in a hybrid format, accessible both in-person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Ave, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and via Zoom. (Again, there is no meeting or dinner in October.)

Zoom Link to Join the ECDC Meeting: <http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg>

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87570578180?pwd=MWN0T2hVY0VXeEhubHNoaE9xZGpKUT09>)

Zoom Meeting ID: 875 7057 8180; Zoom Passcode: c5fQKR

Dial in by phone: +1 669 900 6833 or +1 408 638 0968

Meeting ID: 875 7057 8180; Phone Passcode: 468602

Please note that the Passcode is different if you dial in by phone rather than join the meeting through the Zoom link above.

Tentative November Meeting Agenda (to be Updated Next Month)

6:20 pm – Assemble and Mingle

6:30 pm – Call to Order

6:35 pm – Approve Minutes from the September 2022 Meeting (**Action Item**)

6:39 pm – Officer Reports: Treasurer, Membership, Programs, Publications, Media, Records

6:45 pm – Democratic Party of Contra Costa County (DPCCC) Report

6:50 pm – ECDC Diversity Committee Report

7:00 pm – Program: TBD

7:40 pm – Election Recap and Reflections, Holiday Party Plans,
Member Feedback Regarding ECDC’s Hybrid Meeting Modality

7:50 pm – Good of the Order

8:00 pm – Adjourn

** Please send calendar events to the Executive Board in advance of the meeting.*

- Greg Lyman, ECDC President

3. Minutes from the September 27th General Membership Meeting

6:20 pm – Assemble and Mingle.

6:36 pm – President Greg Lyman called the meeting to order. Recording of the meeting began.

Present: This was the ECDC’s first hybrid meeting. Eleven people were present on Zoom. Seven were present in-person at Hana Gardens.

Minutes

Dwight Merrill notified the club that openings for Stege Sanitary District directors will be by appointment as there are three seats open and only three candidates. The race will not be on the November ballot as previously reported. After clarification that the information regarding the race was in the ECDC monthly newsletter rather than in the minutes, Ed Crowley moved and Dwight Merrill seconded a motion to approve the minutes of August 22, 2022 meeting as presented; motion passed unanimously.

Officer Reports

Treasurer: Ed Crowley reported \$12,733.33 in the bank account. No substantial changes from last month.

Membership: Neil Tsutsui reported a total of 183 members.

Programs: Carolyn Wysinger announced that the club's annual dinner will be on Saturday, October 22, at Los Moles restaurant from 6pm to 9pm. The keynote speaker will be Fiona Ma. The speaker portion of the event will be available on Zoom.

(Note: The October annual dinner was subsequently cancelled as California State Treasurer Fiona Ma had a schedule conflict and was no longer able to attend.)

Publications: William Ktsanes requested that members keep sending articles for the newsletter.

Media: Madeline Kronenberg was not present.

Records: Jonee had nothing to report.

DPCCC Report

Champagne Brown reported that the DPCCC met on September 15th and focused on getting out the vote (GOTV). The kick-off of the GOTV campaign in El Cerrito will be on October 8th to distribute DPCCC and El Cerrito materials. Michael Nye reported that Ben Therriault is running for Martinez City Council.

Diversity Committee

Buddy Akacic encouraged everyone to read Elijah Cummings' book We Are Better Than This.

Walk Piece for El Cerrito

Greg Lyman announced that 5,000 copies of the club's materials are being printed. Volunteers are needed to help bundle and deliver the materials to homes. Contact Greg for more information on volunteering.

Program

Carolyn Wysinger introduced Dr. Kenneth "Chris" Hurst, Sr., Superintendent of the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD). Dr. Hurst described the strategic plan for the WCCUSD which includes the development of an equity statement, core values, and goals. He indicated the plan has been discussed in community meetings and is being presented to the School Board for feedback. Dr. Hurst reported that while staff shortages have been reduced, there are still sixteen unfilled positions. Associate Superintendent LaResha Martin Huffman described a grant of \$29.5 million that the district received for the Community Schools Partnership Program. She hopes to improve the admission rate of WCCUSD students to the University of California system. Dr. Hurst introduced Mr. Booker who manages the district's COVID and physical safety strategies. Each school has a "safety tracker" through which the

school is monitored and offered safety support. Staff member Dr. McEntire reviewed the finances of the district. He reported that the financial picture is looking better than it did a few months ago due in part to increases in cost-of-living allowances and a recovery fund of approximately \$38 million. For the first time since 2011, the State will contribute funding for transportation to help make the schools more accessible to students. Club members asked how the district plans to address the increase in the number of children who will arrive with the new housing being built in El Cerrito. Dr. McEntire said the district works with a demographer to study developments and growth in school enrollment. A determination is then made whether to build a new school, re-open an old school, or expand an existing school. A club member asked about the difference between charter and non-charter schools both academically and financially. The response was that the amount given per student is the same for both, but the district loses about \$5,000 per student who leaves for a charter school. The speakers did not have information regarding academic differences but offered to get that information for the Club. Many questions were asked about reading and math proficiency scores, which are lower for African-American and Latinx students. Dr. Hurst said it is why he is focused on the strategic planning to correct this long-standing and very concerning situation. Two WCCUSD trustees, Leslie Reckler and Jamela Smith-Folds, were present. The Club thanked all of the speakers for their hard work for our children and our schools.

ECDC Members Targeting Close State and National Races

Neil Tsutsui reviewed some of the California races for the U.S. House of Representatives that are very close and could be won by Democratic candidates Josh Harder, Rudy Salas, Christy Smith, and Adam Gray. Ed Crowley moved and Leslie Reckler seconded a motion that the Club take Neil's suggestion to highlight these candidates and encourage club members to expend their person efforts to support them. The motion passed unanimously. Information about the candidates will appear on the ECDC Facebook page.

Good of the Order

The club's check for \$200 was not received by the DPCCC in time to support their Annual BBQ, but the club will nonetheless donate the funds to the DPCCC as planned. Michael Nye reported that no Republicans have responded to the seminars on hot races offered by California Reliance for Retired Americans ("CARA"). Linda Cain asked that in the future speakers explain the acronyms used. Cheryl Sudduth announced National Disability Employment Awareness Month and an upcoming presentation to the Board of Supervisors. She also indicated that she will soon provide details about a statewide campaign to encourage pledges to limit water use.

Adjourn – 8:05 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jonee Grassi, VP Records

4. Steppin' Up and Steppin' Out – *HUGE THANKS to the ECDC Walkers!*

Special thanks to Rebecca Benassini, Ed Crowley, Paul Fadelli, Kathy Fleming, Jonee Grassi, Thomas Ktsanes, William Ktsanes, Patricia La Douceur, Greg Lyman, Scott Lyons, Carl Mason, Al Miller, Lisa Motoyama, Glen Nethercut, Rochelle Pardue-Okimoto, Gabe Quinto, Tessa Rudnick, Marty Seuss, Neil Tsutsui and Carolyn Wysinger for *steppin' up* to volunteer and *steppin' out* to canvas on behalf of the El Cerrito Democratic Club (“ECDC”) and California Democratic Party (“CADEM”). Jonee, Al and Greg counted and bundled thousands of ECDC and CADEM endorsement flyers. Carl put together address lists and maps of registered voters. Rebecca, Ed, Paul, Kathy, Thomas, William, Patricia, Greg, Scott, Carl, Al, Lisa, Glen, Rochelle, Gabe, Tessa, Marty, Neil and Carolyn walked door-to-door (and up-and-down hills) distributing the flyers and talking with El Cerrito voters. It was truly a group effort – *local, grassroots organizing at its best!*

THANK YOU, EVERYONE!!!



Left: ECDC volunteer walkers William Ktsanes, his son Thomas (“Bon”) Ktsanes and their dog Peter Pan going to door-to-door with flyers in hand

Top: ECDC and CADEM endorsement flyers and street maps bundled and ready to go

- Greg Lyman, ECDC President; and William Ktsanes, VP Publication

5. ECDC Endorsements for the November 8th General Election

El Cerrito Democratic Club Endorsements – November 8th General Election	
Voter Initiatives	
Proposition 1 – Constitutional Right to Reproductive Freedom	Yes
Proposition 26 – Allows In-Person Roulette, Dice Games, Sports Wagering on Tribal Lands	<i>No Consensus</i>
Proposition 27 – Allows Online and Mobile Sports Wagering Outside Tribal Lands	No
Proposition 28 – Provides Additional Funding for Arts and Music Education in Public Schools	Yes
Proposition 29 – Requires On-Site Licensed Medical Professional at Kidney Dialysis Clinics and Establishes Other State Requirements	Yes
Proposition 30 – Provides Funding for Programs to Reduce Air Pollution and Prevent Wildfires by Increasing Tax on Personal Income Over \$2 Million	Yes
Proposition 31 – Referendum on 2020 Law that Would Prohibit the Retail Sale of Certain Flavored Tobacco Products	Yes
Statewide Races	
United States Senator	Alex Padilla
United States House of Representatives Newly-Formed California Congressional District 8 (Currently District 3)	John Garamendi
California Governor	Gavin Newsom
California Lieutenant Governor	Eleni Kounalakis
California Secretary of State	Shirley Weber
California State Controller	Malia Cohen
California State Treasurer	Fiona Ma
California Attorney General	Ron Bonta
Insurance Commissioner	Ricardo Lara
California Superintendent of Public Instruction	Tony Thurmond
Local Races	
State Assembly - Newly-Formed District 14 (Currently District 15)	Buffy Wicks
AC Transit At-Large	Alfred Twu
East Bay Municipal Utility District Board of Directors - Ward 4	Andy Katz
Contra Costa County Clerk-Recorder	<i>No Consensus</i>
Contra Costa County Community College Board of Trustees - Ward 1	John Marquez
Stege Sanitary District Board of Directors (The three openings were uncontested and filled by the three qualifying candidates.)	<i>Not on the Ballot</i>
West Contra Costa United School District School Board - Trustee Area 5	<i>No Consensus</i>
El Cerrito City Council (Two Openings)	<i>No Consensus</i>

6. Future Events – *Mark Your Calendar!*

ECDC October Annual Dinner – Cancelled; replaced with the “ECDC Holiday Party” below

Election Day – Tuesday, November 8th; General Election; October 11th through November 8th early by-mail voting; run-off races, local elections and ballot initiatives

ECDC November General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, November 22nd (4th Tuesday of the month); hybrid format, in-person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Ave, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and remote via Zoom link <http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg>; no General Membership Meetings in October and December

ECDC Holiday Party – 6-9 pm, Friday, December 9th, Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Ave, next to El Cerrito City Hall); in-person

ECDC January General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, January 24th (4th Tuesday of the month); annual ECDC Executive Board nominations and elections; hybrid format, in-person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Ave, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and remote via Zoom link <http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg>

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

7. Membership Renewal Reminder and Instructions

Big thanks to all who have renewed their membership! Following our newly approved membership period, if you renew now you will be a member in good standing through September 30, 2023. If you have not yet renewed, you can do so online at:

<https://ecdclub.org/join/>

Or by mailing a check to: ECDC Membership
PO Box 192
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Please note that our new dues are \$5 for students, \$15 for individual members, and \$23 for two adults at the same address. The cost for a printed hard-copy newsletter has increased to \$18 (in addition to dues). Please make checks payable to “El Cerrito Democratic Club” and provide an email address for all individual members. If you have questions, please email Neil Tsutsui at membership.ecdc@gmail.com.

Thank you!

- Neil Tsutsui, VP Membership

8. Call for Newsletter Submissions

The El Cerrito Democratic Club Newsletter is published monthly in advance of the General Membership meetings. ECDC members, friends and supporters are invited to submit articles and announcements regarding local issues and events of interest. Submissions should be emailed to me, William Ktsanes, at wktsanes@gmail.com for review and editing.

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

9. Link to the ECDC Website and Bylaws

Periodically the Club updates our Bylaws. The bylaws were changed in October 2018 to meet DPCCC requirements; revisions were proposed and adopted during the January 2021 and August 2022 ECDC meetings. The ECDC Bylaws are posted on the ECDC website at <https://ecdclub.org/>.