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SEPTEMBER 2016

NEWS

A monthly publication of THE METROPOLITAN DEMOCRATIC CLUB of SEATTLE



Seattle City Councilman Mike O'Brien, left, talks about the risks of transporting Bakkan crude oil. To his left are Elizabeth Stanton, Senator Eugene Lux, and Chas Redmond.

Villeneuve reviews ballot measures

Nine statewide ballot measures, a King County charter amendment, and Seattle's I-124, will be reviewed by Andrew Villeneuve at the September 14 meeting of the Metropolitan Democratic Club of Seattle. Mr Villeneuve is executive director of Northwest Progressive Institute.

This review will take a full hour, so he requests that people write their questions down before or during the meeting. He will take questions after his presentations. He says his objective is to describe the measures, not to tell people how to vote.

Please see the list of ballot measures on the general endorsement ballot included with this newsletter. I-1433 has been omitted as the MDC has already endorsed it.

Resolution requests transparency from Bakkan crude oil transporters

A resolution relating to the transport of crude oil by rail through the City of Seattle was adopted by the City of Seattle a year ago, Seattle City Councilmember Mike O'Brien told members and guest of the Metropolitan Democratic Club of Seattle at its August 10 meeting. Mr O'Brien had been invited to speak on "The Future and Risks of Transporting Fossil Fuel."

The resolution asks for transparency from railroads transporting crude oil through Seattle, so the city can be ready to respond to accidents and spills, Mr O'Brien said.

Oil transport is a serious problem as the oil industry proposes to send enormous trains (300 tank cars per train) of Bakkan crude oil through Seattle, he continued, and Bakkan crude has explosive propensities. One of these trains would carry three million gallons of it. The train route goes through tunnels that are 100 years old and that have not been updated. To upgrade these tunnels would be very expensive. It also runs under buildings in which the drivers of Washington state economy have their offices. This is an uninsurable risk. The cost of upgrades make oil trains financially unsound. The oil and railroad industries are externalizing their costs.

There is very little the city can do about oil transport beyond setting stringent standards at railroad crossings. However, Mr O'Brien says, he is optimistic that Republicans and Democrats will work together to find a solution, as "everyone has a stake in this."

Breaking news!

Amanda Hohlfeld, King County Regional Field Director for People for Patty Murray, has announced that Senator Murray will be a sponsor of the MDC's Diamond Jubilee.

New members

The MDC welcomes new member King County Councilmember Rod Dembowski and Paula Polet.

mark your

MDC Calendar

September – December 2016

MDC meetings take place the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, noon – 1:30 pm, Plaza 600 Building #205, 600 Stewart St, unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday September 14

Topic: Review of general election ballot measures.

Speaker: Andrew Villeneuve, executive director of Northwest Progressive Institute

Sunday, September 18

Diamond Jubilee – 60 years of promoting progressive values.

Wednesday September 28

Topic: General election endorsement proceedings.

Speaker(s): Members and guests of the MDC.

Wednesday October 12 – TBD

Thursday October 13

Fundraiser to benefit Justices Barbara Madsen, Charlie Wiggins, and Mary Yu.

Wednesday October 26

Topic: Global warming

Speaker: Dr Bob Brown, retired research and academic professor in the Atmospheric Sciences Department at the University of Washington.

Wednesday November 16 - TBD

Saturday November 19

Retreat to develop operating plan for 2017.

Wednesday December 11

Winter Holiday Party, a potluck at the home of Maryanne Tagney and David Jones.

Wednesday December 14

Topic: Review and approval of 2017 operating plan.

Speakers: Members of the MDC.

letter to the editor

A rebuttal to the opponents of ST3

Opponents of the expansion of Sound Transit's light rail system advocate high-capacity (60-foot-long articulated) busses moving primarily in HOV lanes as an alternative. They say the Seattle Metropolitan Area's future transportation needs can be met in this way at much less cost.

They are right that light rail has a very high up-front cost. But light rail has much lower operating costs. One driver can operate a light rail vehicle with four times as many passengers. Light rail is also more energy efficient.

The real problem with high-capacity busses is they don't solve the problems:

- 1) They must move in mixed traffic and cannot go faster than other passenger vehicles authorized to use HOV lanes.
- 2) They obstruct other vehicles because of their size and relative clumsiness.
- 3) They completely block other traffic when they are loading and unloading. A good example of this occurs at the Morgan Street Junction in West Seattle. I see this frequently.

Because they move more slowly in mixed traffic, more high-capacity busses are needed.

They also require more maintenance.

As high-capacity busses begin to fill up the HOV lanes, there will be a growing demand by commuters to add lanes to I-5, I-405 and I-90. Adding freeway capacity will cost more than the up-front cost of light rail.

Rather than an expensive fleet of high-capacity busses, smaller busses should be acquired to go through the residential neighborhoods and feed passengers into the light rail system. This would reserve the HOV lanes for van pools and other special vehicles, reduce congestion, and move thousands of people at high speeds through the areas' traffic bottlenecks.

I urge the Metropolitan Democratic Club of Seattle to endorse ST3.

Allan Munro



From the editor

Please send notices of upcoming events, letters, articles, and book reviews to Editor Eleanor Munro at walkere1@msn.com or 1925 41st Ave SW, Seattle WA 98116 no later than the fourth Wednesday of the month. All contributions are subject to editing. For more information call 206-370-1374.

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Membership renewal date appears on above label

September 2016

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Return Service Requested