

PROPOSED MINUTES OF THE WASHTECH PLANNING COUNCIL

May 9, 2006

Attendees: Mark Wilson, John Hitzfelder, Rick Saling, Todd Tollefson, Roberta Wilson,
Aaron Dixon, Aram Falsafi, Brian Globerman

By phone: Marcus Courtney, Barbara Rader, Dan Gillespie, Erik Landahl

Minutes taken by: Barbara Kempf

Senate candidates Mark Wilson and Aaron Dixon came to speak to us.

Mark Wilson: He is challenging Maria Cantwell. He is progressive, doesn't agree with Cantwell on many issues, i.e. Bush energy policies, class action lawsuits, NAFTA, global competition for diminishing resources, Patriot Act, Iraq war, potential war in Iran. His background is traditional, former Marine who founded local veterans for peace chapter, former Teamster member, former commercial fisherman, concerned about balance and accountability. He has two sons who are veterans. He has previous third party affiliations, as a Libertarian and as a Green Party candidate. He previously challenged Patty Murray. He brings to the campaign his emphasis on coalition building, the movement to end to corporate welfare, an end to the so-called war on drugs, and the repeal of the Patriot Act and an effort to try to end the way money is funneled to the military and redirect it to programs to build employment programs.

Aaron Dixon: Green Party candidate, has been a community activist, not a political candidate till now. He helped found the first black student union at UW, was a member of the Black Panthers and worked with them to found a community medical clinic and a free breakfast program for children. They started the first food bank in Seattle, helped create Northwest Harvest, developed the legal aid program, and showed the government how to provide social services to populations in need. They founded Center House, for at risk youth and people of color. He decided to run because there has never been a time when so many Americans have been so displeased with our current leaders. We need people who are in touch with communities and community needs. The war in Iraq is one of most important issues for him and the need to take new look at our foreign policy. We need to re-focus so we aren't using foreign policy to exploit resources in other countries and outsource jobs from this country. Also, he war on drugs has created devastation in communities of people of color. We have wasted resources on incarcerating people, more than many other countries and it's very racist in nature. The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina showed how poor people live in this country and that there are thousands of communities in this country that are similar. We need to bring resources to end this American shame. The current administration's policies allowing corporate welfare is a national disgrace. We need to create a new America and have a cultural revolution. One of the ways to make changes is to vote for people who are progressive, sincere and have worked in the trenches and can create an America that works. The decline of the public education system is a disgrace making our system so unequal. One of the ways to end the economic racism in this country is to educate all our citizens. Health care is very unequal. As one of the richest countries we have one of the highest rates of infant mortality.

Marcus: We're concerned about the direction of the Democratic party. Endorsements: (Aaron: grassroots organizing in Yakima and Whatcom counties with Latino communities and Native Americans, Jobs for Justice, etc. Mark: 38th Dist. has endorsed

him, also 17th Leg. Dist. person, Vets for Peace, physicians for justice, Brian Derdowski, many other Dems who are appalled by Cantwell's votes. He is reaching many people through blogs, cable time, etc. There is frustration because of the media's view that it takes large amounts of money to get elected. Rick: met many progressives while campaigning for Kucinich. He wants to know what happens in the long run after this election. Mark: If Dems don't stand up, they will be sucked into the Iraq war problem for this administration. If not elected he plans to work for publicly funded elections. Aaron: agrees that people in this country and throughout the world are tired of the Iraq war. He will demand an immediate end and that money will be used to make this a better place for all of us. We're laying the groundwork for the future. We are too divided and we have to come together as a common people. A statewide grassroots apparatus is needed to elect local officials. Brian: How do they plan to address outsourcing? Aaron: It's a very important issue. He thinks we can do both. We need a more even policy to change the mindset of profit. We need to have people come before profit. Mark: He would work to put a stop to outsourcing. HIBs have created a Walmart atmosphere, especially for state projects sending publicly funded projects outside the country. The elephant in the room is the defense budget. Rick: How do they think they can really influence the election when they have no real funding which has always been the deciding factor. He thinks he has a 50-50 chance of winning the primary because people are fed up within the Dem party. You can't spoil a system that's already rotten. Aaron: He thinks that people are ready for change. As things continue to deteriorate, Cantwell and others are going to lose. John H. read a letter of endorsement for Aaron Dixon from him and three other members. Roberta said that it was very moving to hear Aaron's depth of experience and Marks brings a lot of savvy and depth on the issues. John said that this weekend is the COPE convention and would be a good time to endorse the candidates. Marcus said that organizationally we can't endorse either candidate. They don't seem to have extensive endorsements. Our members, esp. in Cingular tend to be Dem. and it doesn't help us as an organization to endorse a candidate who won't win.

Motion passed to vote on endorsement at this meeting. Rick: He prefers Dixon for his long range view but he thinks that Wilson is better for the primary. Brian: He thinks we have little to lose and a lot to gain by endorsing Wilson. Marcus: He thinks that organizationally we're taking a strong stand by non-endorsement of Cantwell. There are potential ramifications with other congress people if we endorse Wilson and/or Dixon. John and Rick both think that Cantwell's record which is considered liberal on issues that are seen as union oriented but not on the war and other things isn't really liberal since the other issues are really also anti-labor. Vote to endorse or non-endorse Wilson. Endorse wins 6-3.

Monthly report: Marcus: We won two grievances. We continue to move forward. We're joining a joint labor task force on attrition at Cingular. There is a district wide COPE competition among states with a baseball theme. DC update: Marcus is meeting with representatives on H1B issues but they're basically saying that if Gates says we need more H1Bs they'll give him more H1Bs.

Communications Committee: (Roberta) wrote about the Walmartization of Msft. They're now regularly firing 6.5% of their work force. She's been editing the testimonies and they're very powerful.

Msft. meeting summary: They encouraged people to join WT. They're starting a blog, talking to co-workers, but only 5 showed up for this meeting.

Education Comm.: (Barbara R.) Stanley CC and CWA issues aren't worked out yet. It needs to be cost competitive. She could set up a blog but needs to talk to Blake. We need to make it an agenda item at the next meeting. There are more decisions to be made.

Membership Comm.:(Dan) He can't be the PCCLC delegate anymore. We'll be making an interim appointment.

Legislative Comm.: (Marcus) After the series of meetings in D.C. we need to continue to hammer on the outsourcing issue and work to get co-sponsors on the bill.

Tech. Comm.:(Brian) Our anti-spam trial didn't seem to make much difference. The money might be better used for a desktop based anti-spam program. We'll be looking at other possibilities like having a stand alone device. Web site issues are proceeding somewhat. Communication with Blake is better but still slow.

Good & Welfare: (Todd) JwJ phone banking will be tomorrow night.
(Rick) He's been meeting with Loretta to get ready to meet with a bookkeeper and will have more to report next time.