

## Hampton Roads Green Party Agenda 02/13/22, 2-4pm

Join the online meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZUkcuCrrDgpGNUSe\\_0k5MxVc2GghaMKq0PX](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZUkcuCrrDgpGNUSe_0k5MxVc2GghaMKq0PX)

### 1) Procedural

#### a) Take Attendance/Introductions

Steffanie Aubuchon, Tobi Bierle, Blaizen Bloom, Charles Brown, Garry Hubbard, Charlotte Jobe

#### b) Establish Quorum

Quorum established

#### c) Establish Proper Notice & Ratify the Agenda

Proper notice was established.

#### d) Ratify Last Meeting's Minutes – [January 9th](#)

The last meeting's minutes were ratified.

#### e) Unfinished Business

No unfinished business

### 2) Officer/Committee Reports

#### a) Co-Chair – Blaizen Bloom

Blaizen had nothing to report.

#### b) Secretary - Steffanie Aubuchon

Steffanie had nothing to report.

#### c) Treasurer – Steffanie Aubuchon

Steffanie reported that the \$15.99 annual fee for the HGRP website domains was paid 2/13/22.

This left us with \$136.11 in funds. Blaizen added that they followed up on the refund from HR Pride and are waiting to hear back.

#### d) IT Admin – Blaizen Bloom

Blaizen had nothing to report.

#### e) Education/Membership Committee

The committee has not met.

#### f) GPVA Update

##### i) Local Rep – Steffanie Aubuchon

Steffanie did not have any additional information to add to Blaizen's report.

##### ii) Non-Male Co-Chair – Blaizen Bloom

There was a state meeting via Zoom. Blaizen reported that Tom Yager was elected as Non-Female Co-Chair. No press secretary was elected; the position is currently open. Sid Smith was re-elected as General Secretary. Everything HRGP voted to support/endorse at the previous HRGP meeting on January 9, 2022 passed. Blaizen Bloom was endorsed by the GPVA for Chesapeake School Board. Garry Hubbard was nominated by the GPVA for CD-02. Blaizen, Steffanie, and Garry were in attendance from the HRGP.

### 3) Universal Rent Control Measures - Tobi Bierle

Tobi is working to get universal rent control measures in Hampton Roads. They have reached out to Peninsula Indivisible and NAACP but have not been able to speak to them yet regarding it. Tobi currently has a group of four people, and they are working on researching and determining their plan. They explained how universal rent control differs from traditional rent control. Traditional rent control only affects some rental units within a city and limits the actual dollar amount of the unit rental itself; there are still non-rent controlled units within the city and landlords can charge random fees to raise the cost (i.e. a monthly fee to rent the key to the unit) to match the non-rent controlled units. Universal rent control affects all units within the city to eliminate the marketplace and puts a cap on how much profit margin the landlord can make on the unit total; this ensures landlords are still making a profit on the units and allows for automatic adjustments to rent due to inflation. Tobi would like the profit margin to be 1-5% and stated it is currently often around 400%, and this would free up renters' income to be used on other things and will stimulate the local economy. Tobi mentioned the Virginia Tenants Right Act and that a landlord must now give a reason to evict someone and the federal moratorium that was temporarily in place due to COVID that said landlords could not evict due to late payment. Tobi would like additional local protections against evictions without a just cause. Tobi would also like an abandoned property provision that would allow the city to take control of the property if the owner was not taking necessary care to maintain the property, and the city would give the property to the current tenant along with assistance to fix the property. Tobi feels Newport News is the best city to start with as current City Council member David Jenkins who is running for Mayor has stated his interest in implementing this in the city. Cleon Long is running for the seat that Jenkins is giving up to run for Mayor and has also expressed an interest. Tobi is also trying to find out if Newport News has an oversight department regarding apartments to see if one needs to be created or, if there is a current one, to ensure it has the resources needed to function properly. They would also like landlords to be required to give contact information for the oversight committee to all tenants.

Blaizen asked how long Tobi and their team have been working on this and how far they've gotten. Tobi has been thinking about the general idea since October/November and started really looking into this around New Year's. They were able to meet with Tidewater DSA about 3

weeks ago to enlist their help. Blaizen stated that Jenkins has also been helping with the UE and the push for collective bargaining in Newport News. Charles also stated that Jenkins has been good on labor issues, and he feels he will be an ally in this. Tobi stated that Jenkins has previously tried to raise the local minimum wage in Newport News but was unable due to Virginia being a Dillon's Rule state. Tobi does not feel there are any other allies currently on the City Council for this, but that the City Manager has some influence over several members of the Council so there is merit to trying to win her support. They also suggested a big show of support from allies across Hampton Roads at a future City Council meeting.

Garry asked how many rental units are currently in Newport News, what is the basic income, and what is the current transit/transportation situation. He mentioned this is a multifaceted issue. Tobi stated they are not sure of the current number but there are many apartments in Newport News; most have 200-300 units. The lowest rent for a 2-bedroom apartment that Tobi could find when they looked it up a few weeks ago was \$630/month, but that same complex is now going for \$1,010/month. The lowest they could find with availability was \$950/month, and they approximated the average at \$1,250/month. Tobi stated at the current state minimum wage \$11/hour (effectively \$9.35/hour after taxes) someone would need to work 33.5 hours per week just to pay a \$1,250/month rent.

Blaizen asked about Tobi's approximate time table. Tobi does not have a definitive time table; they would really like to get this done by early 2023. Tobi is trying to work out the details to be able to fully explain it to people and then build a coalition to bring a big show of support to a City Council meeting.

Charles asked if Tobi has connected with those working for rent control in Richmond. Tobi was not aware of a push in Richmond; they have found people in other cities that were pushing for different rent control measures but none working for measures similar to Tobi's ideas. Charles also mentioned NorVA; Tobi is aware of a group in Arlington that is pushing for a cap on annual increase amounts.

Blaizen asked Tobi to keep HRGP in the loop, so that we know when and how to support. Eventually Tobi would like to implement this throughout Hampton Roads so that other localities around the country will follow suit. Tobi's email is [drbeierle27@gmail.com](mailto:drbeierle27@gmail.com).

#### 4) HRGP/GPVA Candidate Updates

##### a) Garry Hubbard, Candidate for CD-02

Garry is working on getting Donor Box and a website set up so that he can start getting donations. Garry is working with Steph and Matt on getting signatures; 1,000 are needed to get on the ballot. He has a Facebook group that is a roundtable for Civic Leagues; he is going to try to get volunteers from the group with a focus on the ones in Virginia Beach. He currently does not have the funding to hire any campaign staff, so volunteers and donations are important.

Blaizen told Garry to reach out to them as needed.

b) Blaizen Bloom, Candidate Chesapeake School Board

Blaizen has been very busy with the campaign. Blaizen and their campaign manager AP Britain recorded some videos. One video that was a fundraising and volunteer pitch was shared out on social media; it has not yielded volunteers yet but has led to about \$500 in donations. This brings Blaizen to about \$2,750 in donations; their original goal by November 2022 was \$3,000. Blaizen also was collecting petition signatures this past Tuesday at South Norfolk Library, this past Thursday at Major Hillard Library in Deep Creek, and yesterday at Central Library in Great Bridge. After the petition drive at Central Library, they also spent three hours canvassing in the Riverwalk area which is an area of the city where Greens have done well in previous campaigns. Blaizen has been pushing their social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and is learning how to use Tik Tok. They have also met with someone from Matthew Hoh's Senate Campaign. There is an upcoming petition drive for Matthew Hoh in Elizabeth City, NC March 12th. They are also looking to do a rally to boost fundraising for all candidates running in the Hampton Roads area (Matthew, Blaizen, Garry) and are currently looking at Lafayette Park in Norfolk on March 26th. Blaizen has been continuing to attend School Board meetings and is planning to attend the next City Council meeting. Another campaign video is currently being edited; Blaizen is grateful for AP's professional experience in this area.

5) Past Month Events/Endorsements/Sponsorships

a) VA Beach Rally for City Workers - January 18th

The newly formed UE chapters have been fighting for collective bargaining for city employees. Blaizen spoke at the meeting representing the HGRP.

Charles stated there will be another rally March 1st. He added that the Southern Workers Assembly is also planning a COVID strike in NC, and the Tidewater Workers Assembly is having a call this coming Friday at 6pm.

b) Newport News Rally for City Workers - January 25th

The newly formed UE chapters have been fighting for collective bargaining for city employees. Blaizen spoke at the meeting representing the HGRP.

c) GPVA State Party Meeting - January 29th

Blaizen didn't have anything to add to what was previously discussed under the GPVA Co-Chair's report.

6) Upcoming Events/Future Event Suggestions:

a) Potential GPVA Virtual Zoom Rally w/Matthew Hoh - February 27th

- i) Zoom & Livestream
- ii) Time: 7pm

Blaizen will provide more information as it becomes available.

b) VA Beach Rally for City Workers - March 1st

- i) Rally at 5:30pm
- ii) Location: VB City Hall

If anyone would like to sign up to speak, you can do so (don't have to be a Virginia Beach resident). You can even sign up after the meeting has started if you miss the beginning of the meeting.

c) Elizabeth City Petitioning - March 12th

- i) Time: 12pm-6pm
- ii) Location: TBD (Elizabeth City)

This will help build bonds and make connections between the VA and NC Green Parties while helping collect ballot signatures for Matthew Hoh.

- iii) Being Organized by Matthew Hoh Team
- iv) Joint-Campaign Event, Hype of March 26th Rally

d) [757 Stop the Violence 6th Annual Gala](#) - March 17th

- i) 5-8pm @ The Women's Club Of Portsmouth
- ii) Tabling Costs: \$75
- iii) Sponsorship Costs: \$100
- iv) Application due March 10th (5:00pm)

This is pricey but is a Hampton Roads-wide organization dedicated to reducing violence in Hampton Roads.

e) GP Candidate Anti-War/Pro-Peace Rally - March 26th

- i) Feature Matthew Hoh & Local Green Candidates
- ii) Time: 11am-6pm
- iii) Location: Lafayette Park in Norfolk
- iv) Rally Fundraiser & Community Event
- v) Work with Richmond Defenders, HRCPP, other Anti-War/Pro-Peace Activists

Blaizen will be reaching out to allies in Norfolk to help with this event.

f) Earth Day to May Day Event - April 22nd-May 1st

- i) What do we want to do?
- ii) Make Local Candidate Events?
- iii) Eco-Class Solidarity Action?
- iv) Collaborate with Local Groups (Tidewater MPP, TDSA, ODU YDSA, VB Coalition)

This is a few months out, but we should brainstorm ideas to discuss more in the future.

g) [South Norfolk 4th of July Parade](#) - July 4th

- i) Parade:
  - (1) Line up Time: 8:00-9:30am
  - (2) Start Location TBD

- (3) No Cost
- (4) Application Due June 22nd
- ii) Tabling:
  - (1) Time: After Parade
  - (2) Location: Lakeside Park
  - (3) Cost: \$35
  - (4) Application Due June 5th

We have not been able to do this the last couple years because of COVID, but it's something HRGP has participated in previously - we were in the parade in 2018 and were a fan sponsor in 2019. We will need two teams (one to be in the parade and one to set up the table) if we decide to do both. Blaizen recommends we attend the parade as it is free. Blaizen also recommended tabling as \$35 is also very affordable and this is one of the bigger 4th of July events in the area. If we decide to attend, this can be promoted on our HRGP Social Media and website as well as Blaizen and Garry's campaign pages. Blaizen would like to make a decision at the next meeting.

#### h) Candidate/Local Fundraising Events?

Now that the weather is getting nicer, it will be easier to have outdoor events to get us out in the community. We should brainstorm ideas to discuss in the future.

#### 7) General Discussions

Regarding universal rent control, Tobi added they would like a provision that would incentive charities to run not-for-profit apartment complexes. Garry recommended contacting housing authorities in each city. Tobi would also like the cities to make it easier for the citizens to get government housing.

#### 8) 2022 Monthly Meetings: 2nd Sunday of each month from 2-4pm over Zoom

- a) Next Meeting - March 13th