

Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County
Mission/Strategy/Priorities/Budget Meeting
7 January 2023

The purpose of this meeting was to brainstorm / organize ideas about what we could/should be doing as the LP SCC. It was not a formal business meeting, so no specific actions or policies were approved. The intent of this document is simply to provide a record of the main topics that came up, to be used as a basis for further discussion.

Attendees: Joe Dehn (county chair), Jim Bertonis, Elizabeth Brierly, Bob Goodwyn, Brian Holtz, John Inks, Alan Kaiser, Davit Rachvelishvili, Sal Robles, Kennita Watson

Mission

Why do we have a Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County, in addition to other libertarian organizations?

Citation from our Constitution: "to proclaim and implement the Statement of Principles of the national Libertarian Party by engaging in political and information activities within the County of Santa Clara".

All present appeared to agree that we do need a county organization. There was some question about which activities might be considered "political" vs. "information", but it seemed that everything we want to do can be considered one or the other, or both.

Strategies

What things can we actually do to support this mission? (Note: It is common in strategic planning to make further distinctions, e.g., between longer-term and larger-scale "strategies" and shorter-term smaller-scale "tactics"; for the purpose of this meeting we were considering them all together.)

complementary positive/negative approaches

- getting libertarians elected, and
- stopping anti-liberty candidates from getting elected
- promoting libertarian actions/decisions by current officials, and
- preventing/discouraging anti-liberty actions/decisions by current officials

ways to promote/discourage legislation

- lobbying (e.g., "lobby day" directed at county/city officials)
- ballot measure arguments

possible issues

- reduce the power of corporations / "getting money out of politics"
- eliminate restrictions on individuals contributing their money/labor to campaigns
- gun-related ordinances

types of campaigns and their relationship to the county party and need for resources

(in first two we play a supporting role, last three we can play a defining/motivating role)

- presidential
- statewide (Governor and other state offices, US Senate)
- partisan district offices – informational, might or might not involve significant resources
- active local campaigns – to get elected, normally will require significant resources
- "stealth" local campaigns – to get elected, in cases where offices are uncontested

ways county party could support campaigns

- doing research on issues
- training (e.g., coaching sessions)
- writing/issuing press releases
- identifying appropriate offices (especially for "stealth" opportunities)

hiring staff to do critical tasks

- treasurer (especially campaign finance regulation compliance)
- public relations
- coordinating the work of volunteers and committees
- fundraising

internships (students doing work for us)

finding out what candidates and office holders think about issues

interviews of non-Libertarians running for office

- for potential endorsement
- as a form of publicity for our ideas

hosting issue-based events

- could be in-person or online
- having candidates / office holders / authors as speakers

seeking out people whose liberty is being trampled / rights violated

- to identify potential supporters
- to provide support to them (e.g., legal defense)
- as a way to help the public understand our positions

knowing our own members better

- asking about their interests when they join
- Membership Committee talk to existing members
- surveying/polling registered Libertarians

attending meetings of governing bodies (e.g., county supervisors, city council, school board)

- as a way to inspire potential candidates
- as a way to find people who already care, then figure out if they are libertarian
- note that county and larger cities also have other boards/commissions that meet regularly

getting members to serve on local appointed boards/commissions

other places where libertarian-leaning and politically active people can be found

- special-interest organizations (where interests overlap)
- social media (noting who is writing sensible things)

door-hanger project

- can be done in connection with a campaign or not
- can be done in combination with coffee/pizza/whatever

somehow increasing activism in San Jose (*which accounts for about half the county by population*)

- appealing to different demographics
- addressing local issues (e.g., city legislation, issues in various school districts)
- is "big city" politics different?
- potential for local organization since largest number of our members live there

making better use of information technology

- Discord
- NationBuilder

traditional activities for members/prospects

- social meetings (coffee, pizza, pool)
- booths, parades

Priorities

General observation: What gets done will be determined by some individual wanting to do it and having a passion for it. LP SCC can endorse (or not endorse) the activities of our members but "top-down" direction will have limited effect.

Participants were asked to identify, of activities mentioned above, which they thought were most important, independent of whether they themselves were interested in doing them. Following are activities mentioned in that discussion, the list itself not in any priority order.

- lobby day
- interviewing candidates
- recruit members and candidates by doing outreach about our positions
- recruit members and candidates by being involved in allied organizations
- working with other Libertarians to monitor some governmental body
- San Jose members getting together to become aware of what is going on with city
- door-hanger project
- whatever brings in new members – everything depends on this
- getting people to go to meetings (of government bodies and our meetings)
- running for office

Budget

General observations:

- some things can be done without spending any money (entirely volunteer)
- in some cases a small amount of money could greatly enable volunteers
- money is needed for certain kinds of activities, but those activities also enable fundraising (because people are much more likely to give if they see things happening)
- useful for fundraising to have different size projects
- some kinds of expenses require fundraising commitment up front (e.g., for paid staff)

Things likely to need money:

- paid staff
- hiring speakers
- printing material for door-hanger project
- legal defense fund
- paid advertising (e.g., billboards)

Volunteers for Specific Activities

During the course of the meeting, several people mentioned that they were personally interested in or volunteering to work on certain things.

Bob Goodwyn – vetting candidates for endorsement
(interview them, scoring for issues and suitability as a representative)

Brian Holtz – monitoring Palo Alto Unified School District
(follow agendas, share info with registered Ls in district, attend meetings with other Libertarians)

Alan Kaiser – identifying libertarians in Elks Club for possible activities

Sal Robles – getting San Jose people together to identify things they can work on locally