

News

Home / News

http://www.buckslocalnews.com/news/langhorne-manor-democratic-party-finds-its-voice-takes-steps-to/article_079711ac-80bc-5acb-be0a-9eb95ab73cae.html

Langhorne Manor Democratic Party finds its voice; takes steps to formalize committee

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Langhorne Manor Borough Hall.

LANGHORNE MANOR >> The Democratic Party in Langhorne Manor Borough has found its voice and is now taking steps for that voice to go public by formalizing a Democratic Committee, with the help of county and state officials.

The timing seems right because 40 percent of the municipality's population of just over 1,400 _ a 55 percent jump since the 2010 census _ are registered Democrats, and for decades, the majority of its elected officials, including all members of the council, are Republicans.

It's a matter of representation, said Jamie Gilpatrick, who along with his husband, Jimmy Bason Gilpatrick, attended the first meeting after receiving flyers distributed in the borough.

That meeting was arranged by Alicia Gasparovic and Joe Vitella, who were separately canvassing the Manor to recruit Democrats at first, but decided to collaborate on their efforts.

"While canvassing before the elections, I heard that another resident (Vitella) was doing the same. We found there was a lot of interest. Joe recruited neighbor Alicia Eissler, and together and we had our first small meeting with a core group of close neighbors to talk about what we wanted to accomplish. We discussed local, state and national issues, the history of the neighborhood, and our borough council. We shared ideas on what changes we would like to see," Gasparovic said.

On the local level, the group want borough officials to expand and update the town's Web site to show an advance, or at least a preliminary meeting agenda. Information on how to obtain permits, and a list of zoning regulations would also be helpful, Gasparovic said.

"It's difficult to find out that information because the office is only open part-time," she said.

The borough's Web site shows office hours from 8 a.m. to noon on Monday; 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesday; and 4-6 p.m. on Thursday.

The newly formed committee holds its meetings in members' homes because borough officials have denied requests for the meetings to be held in borough hall, citing liability issues and the logistics of having someone from the borough see to having the building open, and locked at the end of such meetings, Gasparovic said.

Other issues that need to be addressed, according to the group, include road maintenance and drainage problems.

The main goal for now is to be recognized officially as a Democratic Committee, and outside help is on the way, said Jamie Gilpatrick.

"Helene Ratener, vice chairman of the Bucks County Democratic Committee, and a member of the Middletown Democratic Committee, has been advising us on how to formally establish ourselves as a Langhorne Manor Democratic Committee. Others like Bristol Township State Representative Tina Davis, and Bucks County Commissioner Diane Marseglia have also encouraged us," Gilpatrick said. "Government works best when both parties work together, as checks and balances. We don't have that now," he added.

Vitella said that, while the work of the council is important, more diversity is needed.

"While we appreciate all the hard work of the mayor and our council members, we believe our government works best when all viewpoints are represented," Vitella said.

The committee plans to jump start its efforts by holding its first fundraiser at 3 p.m. April 29 at the Gilpatrick residence, 205 West Park Ave. All interested people are invited and are asked to RSVP by April 22 to the LanghorneManorDemocrats@gmail.com.



