

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Sixth Ward Democratic Organization**  
Southside Wellness Center – Saint Louis, MO  
General Membership Meeting – January 15, 2009 at 7:00 pm

Alison Gee (Chair) called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the November 20, 2008 meeting approved. Moved/Seconded: Damon Jones/Christine Ingrassia.

**Treasurers Report:**

In Steve Zeiger's absence, Alison Gee presented the Treasurers Report. Moved/Seconded: Ollie Stewart/Christine Ingrassia.

**Candidates for Mayor**

Francis Slay, the incumbent spoke of his 8 years in office. He noted many accomplishments in the areas of safe and clean neighborhoods, a decrease in nuisance crimes, a reverse-911 system for seniors, more law enforcement resources and support for victims of violence, job training programs, educational opportunities for children as well as recreational and after-school programs, a decrease in lead poisoning, and increase in access to early childhood education, a decrease in homelessness, support for vulnerable veterans, among other things. He stated that his careful to watch how public money is spent and pointed to a reduction in staff in his office. He also noted a commitment to diversity in his hiring practices and called out the Airport Director, City Counselor, Public Safety Director, and Chief Engineer as examples of hiring African-Americans and women. He also spoke of efforts in the city to fight the increasing STD rates, including a new public/private partnership, The Spot, which provides drop in services for youth.

Denise Watson-Wesley Coleman spoke of her early years in Chicago and of being raised to always 'be the best you can be.' After college she had three children, and worked as a secretary and a teacher. On a trip to visit her brother at Ft. Leonard Wood, her 9-year old daughter drowned, which lead to considerable distress in her family life. In 1979, she remarried and moved to St. Louis, where she went to SLU School of Law. She recounted individuals who have helped shape her life: Destiny, a school student; Byron, a high school student involved in the Obama campaign; her husband an 8<sup>th</sup> District policeman for 10 years; Emmanuel Cleaver; and an African-American female partner in her law firm. Her interests are particularly keen regarding poverty, investing in children, crime, and the racial divide. The number one problem is schools and her solution is to increase mentorship programs particularly for middle and high school students.

Irene Smith spoke last. She is a native St. Louisan who grew up in a large blended family in public housing. She attended parochial school, then Beaumont HS, then St. Louis University graduating with a degree in Urban Affairs. She also studied business and African-American studies and was the first African-American woman to graduate from UMC law school. She became the first African-American to serve as attorney to the St. Louis County Council under Gene McNary, and served as in-house counsel to the police department. She was the first and only woman to head the Dept of Human Services which served seniors, children, prisoners, and the disabled. In her opinion, the current mayor has dismantled the public health system, is not addressing health disparities, is not addressing problems in the school system, or with development and the crisis in affordable housing. Employment is down and her proposal would

focus on increased attention to green initiatives, and a 'barefoot college'. She was critical of the mayor's approach to crime, to local control of the police department, and to after-school programs for kids as well as population loss. She would hit the ground running, hire the youngest and brightest to deal with crime, education, and increasing city services. She would focus on affordable housing and helping veterans, and find ways in the police budget to put more cops on the beat.

After a secret ballot election, the Sixth Ward Democratic Organization voted to endorse:  
Francis Slay for Mayor  
Darlene Green for Comptroller

A motion from the floor and seconded was made and approved to make public the result of the mayoral endorsement vote (the comptroller running unopposed)

Slay	23
Smith	12
Coleman	1

### **Election of Officers**

Bev Buchheit moved, and Richard Callow seconded, a motion to approve the slate by acclamation. The motion was approved

### **Elected Officials Reports**

Kacie Starr Triplett mentioned a mortgage assistance and counseling program, the soon-to-open Villa Lighting, several new restaurants and shops opening, and an upcoming job fair to be held at the Clinton-Peabody complex. She reminded members of President-elect Obama's 'call to serve', as well as the upcoming Inaugural Ball at City Hall to support the African-American Aldermanic Caucus Foundation.

Ollie Stewart welcomed Bev Buchheit back from a spell of bad health. Bev stated she is back on her feet and glad to be back. She noted that Debra Carnahan retired her judgeship and has moved to DC to be with the family. She also announced that Mary Entrup was appointed to replace Debra.

John Maxwell announced a \$10 inaugural fundraiser being sponsored by the Democratic Central Committee at the Pageant.

### **New Business**

There was no new business

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:35pm