



The Falmouth Democratic Town Committee Monthly Newsletter: February 17, 2016

Megan English Braga, Chair, started the meeting by asking for announcements. She made an announcement of her own: she will be running for one of the vacant seats on the Falmouth Board of Selectmen.



Megan English Braga

Yang Conley, acting Treasurer, reported the FDTC has \$5,522.57 in the bank. Reminder: Dues can be paid at any time. Check the tear out sheet at the end of the newsletter.

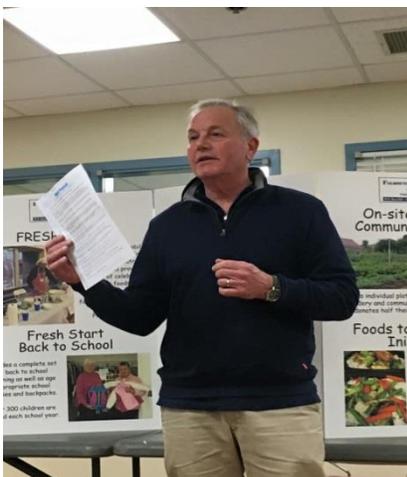
Ewell Hopkins, Chair of the Oak Bluffs Martha's Vineyard Democratic Town Committee, announced that he would be on the 2016 ballot as a candidate for State Representative for the western part of Falmouth, running against Tim Madden.



Ewell Hopkins

Michael Blanton, Bourne selectman, announced that he would be on the ballot running for the 3rd Barnstable County State Rep., running against

David Vieira. He is having a fundraiser Feb. 26th at Dino's Sports Bar in Mashpee from 5-7 p.m.



Matt Patrick

Matt Patrick spoke about his accomplishments as Falmouth's previous Representative for the 3rd Barnstable County State Rep, and reminded us of his candidacy against David Vieira in 2016. He has several events coming up.



Michael Blanton and Jessica Lambert

Mary Pat Flynn announced that she will not be running for a Board of Selectmen position in Falmouth. She will run again for County Commissioner of Barnstable County. There are two seats



Mary Pat Flynn

open this year. Sheila Lyons will not run again as she is running for Dan Wolf's seat in 2016. Mary Pat emphasized that the County Commission provides a number of services to Cape towns which the towns themselves cannot do alone or pay for.

Megan English Braga introduced **Brenda Swain**, Executive Director of the Falmouth Service Center (FSC). as our speaker of the evening.

Brenda Swain began by stating that all of us need help from time to time and that the Falmouth Service Center is not only a food pantry. Food, however, is a very important component of its services. The FSC is a member of the Greater Boston Food Bank. Of the 550 agencies which are part of that Food Bank, the FSC is in the top five in the amount of food given by the Food Bank to food pantries. In fact, 75% of the food given out is from the Boston Food Bank. The rest is donated by residents and local institutions, such as Jack and the Beanstalk which donates many vegetables at low cost. The FSC offers many food related useful programs which address the issue of 'food justice.' The Center, in its Foods to Encourage program, urges the use of healthy foods and offers programs on nutrition, cooking and food demonstrations, blood tests and blood sugar tests, meetings with nurses for advice, etc. The Fresh Market program goes to schools once a month to bring in vegetables, educators, chefs and recipes. Home Delivery is a program of healthy meals going to four or five dozen people a month.

In addition to food related programs, the FSC offers a number of financial assistance programs. There is a SNAP application assistance program (formerly Food Stamps), a fuel assistance program, a health insurance access program, a Cape Cod Times Needy Fund program which gives out financial assistance in paying house bills, assisting with storage of goods, etc. The Fresh Start program, a back to school program, helps up to 300 kids a year with a backpack of school supplies and new clothes. The FSC also has a clothing distribution program and Homeless Prevention Services program.

A large number of households were served last year by the FSC with 11,426 household visits to the FSC and 46,420 bags of food distributed. Over 450 volunteers act in many capacities and donations of food and clothing are encouraged. You can download a volunteer application from their website or call for details. One unique way to volunteer is



Brenda Swain



Brenda Swain and posters

the Grocery Bill of the Month program where you can make a monthly contribution to fresh fruits and vegetables in someone's monthly food bill.

Finally **Brenda** noted that the seasonal nature of employment on the Cape presents hardships for families. The gap between low and high income residents is growing. From 2008 to 2012 during the recession, the number of needy families grew. Now the numbers are flat, but at a higher level than previously. More than 35% of children in the schools qualify for free lunch.

Some of the audience work as volunteers at the FSC and mentioned that the atmosphere there is very positive and helpful and that **Brenda Swain** has certainly set the tone for that.

Submitted by **Kirstin Moritz**, Newsletter Editor , and **Martha Gillis** and **Zelda MacGregor**, photographers.

Calendar of Events:

Please note that our plans for any meeting may have to change due to availability of speakers but changes will be announced in Dmail notices from our Chair, Megan English Braga.

March 1: Democratic Presidential Primary Election so get out to VOTE! The ballot includes a vote for the 35 candidates for the elected members of our organization. Please vote for the slate as a group. You cannot vote for both for the group and individual members, so please select the entire group.

March 17: This meeting is on a **Thursday** but is our normal monthly meeting. It will be a FDTC Organizational Meeting scheduled at 7 P.M. at the **Falmouth Public Library, Hermann Room**. All elected members and dues paying members are asked to attend and participate in nominating and electing our officers and executive committee. We will welcome our newly elected members. In addition this meeting will feature a forum discussion between candidates **Matt Patrick** and **Michael Blanton**. Please note that this meeting is on a **Thursday** and at a different location than our normal monthly meeting.

March 19: This is a Saturday and is the Democratic Caucus meeting to choose delegates for the June 4th State Convention in Lowell, MA. The meeting will be at 10 a.m. at the Gus Canty Center. You must be in line before 10 a.m. for entry. You do not need to be present to be a delegate. If you are interested and cannot attend, please notify **Scott Simenas** or **Megan English Braga** (contact information below).

April 20th: Monthly meeting will feature speaker **Eva Millona, Executive Director of the MA Immigration and Refugee Advocacy Center**, on the issues of Immigration and Refugees and will be held at 7 p.m. at the Gus Canty Center.

May 18th: Monthly meeting will possibly feature a forum discussion between candidates **Ewell Hopkins** and **Tim Madden**. To be held at 7 p.m. at the Gus Canty Center.

June: Possible Fundraiser for the FDTC. Date and speaker to be announced.

