

**Meeting:** Michigan Indo-American Democratic Caucus

**Recorder:** Shanti Menon

**Date of the Meeting:** December 8, 2002

**Location:** Bloomfield Hills, MI

**Participants:**

Usha Nair                      Shanti Menon                      Swarn Rajpal                      Mark Brewer

Anita Rajpal                      Ramesh Verma Bhimsen Rao                      Victor Naidu

Sharath Konanur                      Sashi Menon                      Trilochan Singh Pravina Ramanathan

K.P. Singh                      Amarjit Chawney                      Kris Dighe                      Gopi Nair

Shankar Pathak Abha Singh                      Jayanthi Balakrishnan

Jayashree Kommareddi

**Minutes:**

In the absence of Ram, Usha as Vice-President of the caucus presided over the meeting. Swarn introduced a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Ramesh and approved unanimously.

Anita Rajpal introduced a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Gopi and approved unanimously.

Bhimsen Rao sought a clarification on the events at the October meeting – did some of the members who left early do so because they had other commitments or for any other reason. He was told that members left because they had other engagements. The meeting was extended through a motion which was passed unanimously.

Swarn Rajpal presented the Treasurer's report for the period between 8/25/02-12/7/02. A sum of \$325 has been added through membership dues. The total funds in the caucus now stand at \$3459.08

Ramesh introduced a letter sent to MDP on November 20, 2002, detailing the fund raising efforts and contributions of Indians to the MDP. Additional information was provided –two fundraisers were organized for Jennifer Granholm and Butch Hallowell in Midland. Jayashree hosted a fundraiser in Flint.

Usha introduced Mark Brewer and invited him to speak to the general body.

Mark thanked members of the Indian community for participating in the election process and helping the party. He invited everyone to attend the State convention on February 15, 2003.

Mark stated that he had received a letter of resignation from Ram

The Appeals Committee of the Michigan Democratic Party had discussed the Appeal filed by some members of MIADC challenging the Board elections that were held in July. The Committee felt that given the passage of time and the fact that the by-laws had been passed, and elections were going to be held in January – there was no need for them to rule on the Appeal. Mark has been advised to work with MIADC on the election.

Mark had gone over the by-laws. Other than the fact that the Chair and the Vice-Chair had to be members of the opposite sex – the by-laws were in keeping with MDP rules.

Ramesh raised a question about having two Vice-Chairs to represent members of different regions in India. Mark stated that it would not be a problem as long as we adhered to the gender rule.

Ramesh praised Ram as a man with the vision to start the organization. It was unfortunate that he had chosen to resign. He introduced a motion to recognize Ram's contribution to MIADC and thank him for all that he had done. The motion was seconded by Shankar Pathak.

Kris raised a question whether Ram had resigned from his position as chair or from the caucus. Mark clarified that Ram had resigned as Chair.

Usha will act as Chair of the caucus until a new Chair is elected.

Anita asked what was to be done if no woman was available to fill in the position as vice-chair. Mark said that in such a situation the position should be left vacant.

Ramesh introduced a motion to hold the election for officers and board members on January 19<sup>th</sup>. The motion was seconded by Gopi. The motion was passed unanimously.

Pravina raised a question whether it was necessary to be a citizen to vote in the MIADC elections. Mark stated that only citizens can become members of MDP, so in effect only citizens can vote in the MIADC elections. Non-citizens can be Associate Members.

Mark stated that we restrict voting for officers and Board members to citizens only. Associate members may vote on all other matters. The by-laws need to reflect this.

An Election Committee was appointed. The committee includes – Kris Dighe (Chair), Jayashree Kommareddi, and Jayanthi Balakrishnan (member). The committee is responsible for developing criteria and conducting the elections.

The new officers and Board will be installed on February 15. Individuals need to be members of both MDP and MIADC to be eligible to vote and contest for positions.

Mark explained the different ways in which the voting for the Board can be done:

1. Cumulative voting – each voter gets 8 votes and can decide how to divide the votes among all the candidates.
2. Voters can list candidates in order of preference
3. Slate voting – individuals form slates and voters vote for a slate. If there are two or more slates then candidates from each slate is chosen in proportion to the percentage of votes that each slate receives.
4. The voting has to be open and public.

Gopi proposed a motion that the election committee be delegated the authority to determine the type of voting to be followed during the elections, with input from the caucus membership. The members of the caucus are to be notified about procedures one week prior to the meeting. The motion was seconded by Sharath.

Mark stated that the November state and national elections were disappointing for the party. The state has the second democratic governor in 40 years. The State house was down by 16 seats.

Anita asked Mark what role the caucus could play in the Democratic Party. Mark suggested the following activities – fundraising; recruiting precinct delegates; getting members of the community to run for office; greater participation in party meetings.

Kris moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Sharath.