

Occupy CU General Assembly Minutes

Friday, April 6, 2012

Champaign Public Library

NEXT MEETING: Friday, April 13, 2012, Champaign Library, Room B, 6 – 9 pm

In attendance: Sandra, Dada, Ya'aqov, Theresa, Sarah, Rachel, Chris, Chandler, Scott, Michael, Andrea, Pam, Mark, Karen

LOGISTICS/AGENDA PROPOSAL

Theresa provided an agenda on the white board, it was amended, then approved. Ya'aqov kindly agreed to facilitate. Theresa took notes.

WELCOME WORKSHOP: Several people shared who they are and why they are drawn to the Occupy movement.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

~ Chris announced the Weekly Street Corner Protest for Saturday, 4/7, 2 – 4 p.m. at Main and Neil Streets in Champaign. This is the week we join AWARE for their anti-war protest. Prior to the protest, there will be a lunch in West Side Park at 12:30 where people can bring their lunch. We will be learning some protests songs thanks to Pam.

~ There will be a showing of “The Invisible War” about sexual assault in the military and how it gets covered up. Sponsored by IVAW and the Women’s Resources Center (among others), it will be shown on 4/12 at 7:30 pm at Allen Hall, located at Gregory and Dorner.

~ Rachel announced about organizing around Women’s Rights. Please join in for the “Take Back the Night” march on Thursday, 4/19. People will gather at Lincoln Square Mall at 6:30 or so, then march thru Urbana to campus and end up at the Illini Union.

~ Rachel will be sharing her thoughts on nonprofits and nongovernmental agencies and how they are being used as surrogates to provide services when the government does not, but may be facilitating neoliberal aims at “The Nongovernmental Impulse Symposium” on 4-19 to 4/20 (see website for more info). There will be other speakers as well. This symposium At the Levis Faculty Center, 919 W. Illinois Street in Urbana.

~ Don’t forget to listen to Occupy the Air radio show on WEFT 90.1 FM from 12 to 3 pm Saturdays.

~ Michael brought fliers that focus on the 4/10 town meeting as well as our usual ocCUpy info. Since they contain timely information, we should get them out as soon as possible.

NEW BUSINESS

1. There was a discussion about having a table at the Farmers’ Market once the season starts in May. Rachel said we need to find a good way to make use of the space, not just have papers on a table. Dada said it might be a good way to build our

mailing list. Sarah said that when she has worked at tables such as this, she feels it is a great way to have discussions with people, to get to know the people who align with us in a better way. Some felt that it might be hard to staff the table week after week. Sandra suggested that if we take part/share AWARE's table, we should pay for our share. We could ask our members to contribute at a GA on the weeks we will staff the table. Rachel thought it would be good if several groups would share a table together, such as CUCPJ and JWJ and AWARE and ocCUpy. We also discussed if we should do both the table as well as a rally each week. Rachel suggested that a group of interested people meet to look into getting several groups together to have a table.

2. There was a short discussion on the 4th of July parade. Since it was an item brought up by Karen and she was not in attendance when it came up, we pushed the discussion off. In conjunction with the parade, Ya'aqov suggested that we revisit the way we might participate in something like a parade.

3. Scott and Sarah announced that a NATO/G8 potluck is scheduled for Wednesday, 4/11, from 6 to 7:30 pm at Sarah's house at 412 W. Illinois Street in Urbana. The purpose is to get all the people together in one space who are working on the upcoming NATO summit protests and to help everyone coordinate their efforts.

Sarah would like to have an open discussion but wanted it to be social and involve food. It was announced that the GEO has voted to stand in solidarity with the IVAW march/protest and it also authorized \$1000 for a bus to transport people to Chicago in May. Sarah said that if we are representing our community, we may want to have a community event, such as a teach-in, etc. to drum up interest and educate people about NATO and the protests. If anyone has agenda items for the potluck, please be in touch with Sarah. Child care will be provided. Ya'aqov asked how the NATO protest was related to Occupy. Sarah said that we have shared reasons for protesting and we can mutually support each other, not only in solidarity but in logistical help. Ya'aqov asked that the G8/NATO committee provide ocCUpy with data/information that can be used on signs (i.e, the cost of a missile compared to the cost of some social service). Scott suggested as inspiration, we look at MLK's "Beyond the Viet Nam War" speech. No one can express the issue better than that.

5. Rachel announced the Midwest Zinefest, 4/28, from 12 - 4. Rachel paid for an Occupy booth and asked for people to volunteer to sit at the booth. It will be a place where we can give away things freely or charge for the work we collate. Rachel needs help with putting the zines together as well.

6. Rachel asked about interest in activist grassroots training. She said that she envisions it for the summer where whole families might get involved and as a venue for both newcomers to activism, as well as old timers. She will work on it in the future.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Outreach Committee: the Outreach committee talked about doing some skits or performances to enrich our public demonstrations. Ya'aqov presented something he wrote as an assignment at the SDaS about the county jail expansion. He mostly wanted to show us how to speak effectively in public within a time limit. Michael provided feedback. Pam expressed the goal that as activists, we should not

overshoot the mark and not be self-righteous when we speak out. There was an involved discussion about how we protest. People shared thoughtful remarks about why they protest, as well as how and in what ways they feel actions are effective.

RECAP/REPORT ON COMPLETED ACTIONS/EVENTS

The group acknowledged Chandler and Michael for their efforts for the items that are to be voted upon on 4/10. Rachel asked how we were going to distribute the email more widely and people volunteered to share the information about the vote with JWJ, the Peace List, Channing Murray, UU, CUCPJ, and the GEO. We discussed how to prepare for the vote on Tuesday night. Karen will send an email that contains Belden Fields' remarks about corporations from his teach-in so that we have information in case we want to speak out at the votes on Tuesday.

PROPOSALS/OPEN DISCUSSION

1. There was a discussion about the jail issue. Sandra shared a lot of what she has been seeing at the county board meetings. Mark shared how he feels the criminal justice system in Champaign County is schizophrenic and that he makes allowances for being gauche or boring or a little wrong in the name of furthering the discussion of important causes. It is important to shake up the general mindset.
2. How do we conceptualize the 1% versus the 99%? Rachel wanted us to not take this slogan too literally and that for her what Occupy is about is the power imbalances in race, sex, gender, labor, etc. We will be missing a lot of opportunity if we don't look at the intersection of things. We cannot get lost in the 1 % discussion. She said that a revolution that gains traction resists the things that are not present but it is also active in actions where we can build the community we want to see and let that bleed into other actions. We should be looking at building the society we want to see and challenge ourselves. There followed a discussion about how useful the designation of 1% is in certain ways with comments from Michael and Dada. There was also a discussion about how people see our Occupy
3. Pam brought up an email from Dave about moving the GA to time before the protest on Saturday afternoons. Theresa said she will ask the listserv for times when the general population might like to see the GA be schedule. Pam also said she will share a list of people who are on the radio who can inform the public about our issues. We simply need to give all the media people enough lead time if we want them to mention our events.
4. There was a discussion about how the GA might be more welcoming to those who attend. Dada and Mark said that this is always an issue in groups, but that if we notice a pattern of people coming once and then not coming again, we need to look hard at why that might be happening.

5. Michael shared his thoughts on why we should leaflet (is this a verb?) There are few pathways to communicate with others. Most of what we do is on the street corner. We have really small window of time on the street. Short sound bites. We can reach more people who may never come to a meeting when we are out at a protest but the time is super short. Leaflets provide an opportunity to get through that small window. Handing someone a flyer is the right length for contact and it is something that can be shared with a total stranger. It is important that we move outside of our circle. How to be more effective? We need to find where people are, make eye contact, and hand a leaflet to them.

6. Visits to schools. Ya'aqov will bring this up another time.

7. Activism burnout. We have to think of what each of us can do to help each other. We also discussed how we should differentiate general support for an idea from actually saying that you will provide real help.

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FACEBOOK <https://www.facebook.com/OccupyChampaignUrbana>

OCCUPYCU.org <http://occupyCU.org>

OCCUPYthe AIR weft.org or occupytheair.blogspot.com OR

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