



UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

P. O. Box 158, Los Alamos, NM 87544

www.lwvlosalamos.org

Volume 74, Number 9
January 2022

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Calendar

- January 6 LWVLA-AAUW Legislative Preview, Zoom, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- January 8 LWVNM Advocacy Workshop, Zoom, 10a.m.-noon
- January 13 LWVNM Virtual Legislative Preview with the LWVNM Action Committee,
Zoom, 5:30 p.m.
- January 18 2022 Regular Legislative Session Opening Day, noon
- January 24 Program Planning Meeting, Zoom, 6:30 p.m.
- January 20 Lunch with a Leader, LAC Economic Development Administrator Dan Ungerleider,
Zoom, noon
- January 27 Board Meeting, Zoom, noon
- January 27 Dede Feldman talk hosted by the LA Public Library, Zoom 7-8 p.m.

Lunch with a Leader: Dan Ungerleider

Our next Lunch with a Leader program will be on January 20 from noon-1p.m. via Zoom. Dan Ungerleider is the Economic Development Administrator of Los Alamos County.

He is a certified city planner with over 30 years of experience in public and private sector planning. Since earning his BS Degree in Community and Regional Planning at Iowa State University, Ungerleider has been an active member of the economic development planning

community. He is a dedicated advocate of public-private partnerships and education to create affordable and environmentally sustainable development.

Ungerleider specializes in all areas of urban and regional planning, including community and economic development, planning and zoning, permit and inspection services, appearance review, code enforcement, public outreach and facilitation, cross-functional team leadership, strategic planning, land acquisition, entitlement, and development project management.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

Co-President's Message: Manipulating the Vote: Let Us Count the Ways

Because of the recent census requirements to create new, equitable voting districts, we are hearing some of the same old words.

Gerrymandering is my favorite villain because of its charming but sinister origin: Gov. Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts created a partisan voting district that looked like a wriggly salamander.

Other attempts to manipulate votes are not so amusing. New Mexico voters are likely disgusted by the recent buddymandering* by the NM Senate. Some manipulations are as ancient as the poll tax, but most are modern tricks. Requiring specific forms of voter ID and restricting poll locations or times (especially in minority communities) can easily distort which votes get counted.

Conversely, to increase voting by all citizens, not just a selected group, we are happy to support inclusive techniques such as mail-in ballots, drop boxes, early voting periods, same-day registration, even automatic voter registration.

Even though I feel comfortable with knowing which of these methods of voting will result in a fair election, I would like to see more independence in running elections. I wonder why most states' elections are run by a partisan Secretary of State and partisan County Clerks. I marvel at the care taken by our New Mexico Secretary of State to run fair elections and our own County Clerk's similar transparency. But I often worry that their sincere efforts are more a matter of good will than law.

The League of Women Voters was founded on the principle of universal suffrage. My admiration for the way in which New Mexico

and Los Alamos now run their elections is balanced by my despair at the way they are run elsewhere. The League still has much work to do.

Becky Shankland

* The League of Women Voters called the process followed by the Senate this week "...an example of 'buddymandering' in which incumbents have been protected at the cost of fairness and equity. The process has been conducted with little to no transparency." [By Marjorie Childress, *New Mexico In Depth*]

Legislative Preview

The 2022 Legislative Preview sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos and the American Association of University Women will be held via Zoom on Thursday, January 6, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Our legislators—Representative Christine Chandler, Senator Leo Jaramillo, and Senator Roberto Gonzales—have agreed to come and share their views on the upcoming session. Also, Secretary of Public Education Kurt Steinhaus will discuss what has been done so far to address the court's findings in *Yazzie v. Martinez* and what is needed in the way of funding to do more.

All of the speakers will answer questions from the audience.

The 2022 New Mexico Legislative Session will begin in Santa Fe on January 18 and continue for 30 days, ending on February 17. Since it is a short session, legislation will be limited to budget matters, issues receiving attention from the governor, previously vetoed bills, memorials, and resolutions.

The Legislative Preview will be limited to 100 participants. Register to attend by using this link: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcrduutqj4vH9Lxxg2wChH_etFx_cWjEPFH



Advocacy Workshop

Prepare for the 2022 Legislative Session

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico Presents

Effective Citizen Advocacy at the Legislature
Special Focus on the Budget and Taxes

Saturday, January 8, 2022, 10 a.m. to Noon*
Webinar on Zoom – Register here

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81453530596?pwd=QldFTWpXemYzUFJOaGRhZWhtd085UT09>

The public is invited

Learn tips from legislators and an experienced lobbyist about how to interact with legislators, speak at hearings, and advocate for your cause.

Speakers:

Senator Gay Kernan (R-Hobbs) – Ranking member, Tax, Business & Transportation

Representative Susan Herrera (D-Embudo) – Member, House Appropriations & Finance

Linda Siegle – Long-Time lobbyist

Ms. Linda Siegle is president of a consulting company focused on lobbying the legislature for non-profit agencies and strategic planning. She is a former member of the Santa Fe County Health Policy Commission and has served as chair of various state councils and committees. Ms. Siegle is an elected member of the Board of Trustees of Santa Fe Community College.

Note: This is training on the legislative process. Questions about positions on specific issues will not be permitted.

* Originally scheduled for December 11, 2021. Moved because of conflict with the special session on redistricting.

<https://www.lwvnm.org/>

act@lwvnm.org

Program Planning Meeting

In preparation for our Annual Meeting on April 21 and the LWVUS Convention in June, we will hold a program planning meeting via Zoom on Monday, January 24 at 6:30 p.m. All League members are invited to participate. This is your opportunity to help choose the issues to which we dedicate our time during the next year. Is there a study we should undertake? How do we feel about the decisions being made for our County?

New members may ask, “What is League Program?” Program is the basis for the League’s education and action efforts. It includes the current League positions and plans for updating them as well as the issues that League members choose for study and action. We are constrained in that the problem must be one that can be addressed by governmental (as opposed to private) action. Also, there must be members available to work on the issue, and the issue should be one in which the League is likely to make a difference in the outcome.

To develop a new position, the League must adopt a study and carry it out through research and discussion. Advocacy is based on adopted positions. Leagues may act on national program only in conformity with positions taken by the LWVUS. Similarly, state Leagues are responsible for determining action policies and strategies on state issues. Local Leagues may use state or national positions for lobbying at the local level, but local positions may not be used at the broader levels.

Barbara Calef

Observer Corps Reports

County Council

December 7, 2021

The Council voted to continue the Zoom/hybrid format for future meetings.

The bulk of the meeting was spent discussing ordinances regarding the new law legalizing cannabis in the state of New Mexico. Given that this is a new law, the County Council is working under unfamiliar legal circumstances. The great extent of public comment on the topic left no time for decisions, so the discussion will continue at the Council meeting scheduled for January 4. At the time of the December 7 meeting, one couple had applied for a license to produce and sell cannabis in the county.

Updated numbers on COVID -19 cases were presented by Beverly Simpson, the Emergency Management Commander for Los Alamos County. She reported that 92.7% of eligible adults in Los Alamos are fully vaccinated. A booster clinic is scheduled for the weekend of December 11, 2021, and there will likely be more clinics based on recent criteria approving boosters for children aged 16 and 17.

Julie Williams-Hill gave a presentation as the newly appointed Public Information Officer for Los Alamos County. A COVID -19 Committee has been established, though the search for a coordinator is still ongoing. The first newsletter published by the Committee opened with a local pediatrician encouraging those under the age of 18 to be vaccinated.

The meeting also included a presentation on the reliability of electricity in the County.

Ellen Mills

December 14, 2021

The County Council met virtually via Zoom.

During public comment, Ryn Herrmann, the Chamber of Commerce Director, expressed gratitude to the Council for its proclamation in support of Small Business Saturday, which was a notable success for Los Alamos local businesses.

The first order of Council business addressed recommendations from the Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB) regarding the County's use of pesticides on public land. The ESB presentation by Dina Pesenson, ESB Vice-Chair, focused primarily on the use of pesticides (notably, Roundup) containing glyphosate. Glyphosate is a suspected carcinogen, kills all plants, and is used routinely by County staff on targeted areas. Pesenson pointed out that 17 countries have banned or severely curtailed the use of this chemical and that over 150 cities and hundreds of school districts in the United States also forbid its use. The ESB recommended that the County:

1. Require posting of pesticide application information 72 hours in advance whenever possible or within 24 hours of application.
2. Stop use of any herbicide containing glyphosate on county land.
3. Prioritize and expand Integrative Pest Management efforts by relevant departments to actively decrease the amount and frequency of chemical use on county land.

A follow-up to the ESB perspective was provided by Cory Styron, Director of the Department of Community Services. Styron summarized the protocols followed for the use of glyphosate in County operations and emphasized the practical implications of completely banning its use in the County, particularly given the absence of equally effective alternative treatment chemicals or methods. In Los Alamos County, glyphosate

herbicides are routinely used on medians and gravel landscape areas, around electrical switching stations and the solar panel array (for fire control), and on right-of-ways, along airport fence lines, paved surfaces and runways, and other locations.

The Council passed a motion (7-0) directing County staff to develop a plan for implementing the ESB recommendations within 90 days.

Katie Leonard, Chair of the Los Alamos Resiliency, Energy, and Sustainability Task Force, presented a prioritized list of FY23 budget request items targeting reduced carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions for consideration by the Council. The list included funding of positions for a Sustainability Coordinator, natural gas staff, an Education Coordinator, and a Community Outreach Educator. Other requested budget items included funding for a Climate Action Plan and studies of greenhouse emissions and electrical resource options. Council noted that many of the budget items could fall under the purview of the Department of Public Utilities, which might not agree with the prioritization of these items, in which case the County would need to decide whether to act independently. The Task Force plans to make a presentation to the DPU. The Council passed a motion (6-1, Reagor opposed) directing the County Manager and DPU Manager to include task force recommendations as budget options during FY23 budget process.

On November 16, 2019, the County entered into a Project Participation Agreement with TNJLA LLC, a New Mexico corporation, supporting the development of an extended stay hotel facility, a banquet-style conference center, and a stand-alone food and beverage space on the 20th Street extension in downtown Los Alamos. Under the conditions of the agreement, the development was to be fully open and operational by November 16, 2023. On October 19, 2021, Mr.

Tushar Patel, the Principal of TNJLA LLC, requested that the completion date be extended to August 31, 2024. Mr Patel explained that TNJLA LLC has been unable to obtain financial backing for the project because costs are \$3 million higher than initially projected, in large part due to COVID issues, and that costs are expected to come down by the second quarter of 2022. The Council denied the request (motion passed 6-0, 1 recusal), agreeing with County staff that the existing 48-month window is adequate to execute this project.

Phil Gursky, Chair of the Los Alamos Community Health Council, presented the Health Council's proposed approach to developing a Comprehensive Health Plan for the county. Such a plan is a NM Department of Health requirement. Preliminary steps focus on identifying barriers to individual and community health and well-being, and assessing the county's current health status, as compared to the status statewide and in selected counties. A Kellogg grant will fund a social coordinator from the Alliance of County Health Councils across the state. The Council unanimously approved the LA Community Health Council's process for the development of a Comprehensive Health Plan.

Randall Ryti, Council Chair, reported on the United Nations Climate Change Conference that he attended in Glasgow and identified many potential opportunities for Los Alamos to mitigate its contributions to climate change. Possible actions include joining one or more alliances, improving youth engagement, taking regional approaches for transportation, installing solar storage for school buildings, developing community solar projects, and adopting a County policy for life-cycle analyses in purchasing decisions (e.g., purchasing electric vehicles in lieu of internal combustion engines for the County fleet).

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Planning and Zoning Commission

December 8, 2021

The Los Alamos Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission met virtually via Zoom on December 8, 2021. The top agenda items were the review of a site plan and its associated waiver and the election of a new P&Z chair and vice-chair.

The Shriners presented their proposed site plan to construct a new 2000 sq. ft. ancillary structure immediately adjacent to the existing Masonic Temple (Lodge) to be accessed from the Lodge parking lot at 1400 N. Sage Loop in Los Alamos. The structure would be used to store the Shriners parade equipment, replacing the storage facility lost when the Masonic Lodge sold its property on Trinity Drive to Natural Grocers. The Shriners also plan to host occasional, small community activities in the building.

The Shriners also sought a 4-ft building height waiver for this new structure, with a roof peak height of 16 ft to accommodate the size of the Shriners' iconic Model T Ford and its distinctive fez hat top. Zoning regulations stipulate a maximum height of 12 feet for new accessory structures in areas zoned for single-family residences (R-1-8). However, because the fraternal order has been at this location since 1951, predating the Development Code of 1965, the Lodge is grandfathered in under a Special Use Permit.

The Los Alamos County Department of Community Services sent notices of the Shriners' proposed construction to all affected parties within 300 ft of the site. Seven nearby residents attended the meeting. While expressing their appreciation for the positive impact of Shriners activities, those who spoke expressed objections to the proposed location of the garage on the east

end of the Lodge, primarily on the grounds that the garage would change the character of the neighborhood. Noting that the proposed footprint of the garage (2000 sq. ft.) exceeds the square footage of most residences in that neighborhood, speakers compared the garage to a commercial warehouse such as one might find in an area zoned for light industrial use. Another resident decried the impact on the local viewshed because the building would block their view of the Jemez Mountains.

Speakers suggested that locating the garage behind the Lodge or in the northwest corner of the property, out of sight of neighborhood residents, might be options acceptable to them. However, the applicant stated that these alternative locations were problematic because sloping ground would necessitate much dirt movement prior to installing the structure's concrete footing, and lack of vehicular access would necessitate the construction of a road to the garage.

The P&Z Commission voted 5-to-1 to deny the application for the proposed construction because several of the criteria required by the County's Development Code were not addressed in the written proposal. Two unmet criteria were directly related to residents' primary concerns: negative impacts on sight lines and on public welfare. Other criteria not explicitly addressed by the submitted site plan were the management of landscaping, traffic patterns, and storm water runoff.

Commissioner Rachel Adler was elected as Chair and Commissioner Neal Martin as Vice-Chair, for the upcoming 12 months, replacing Commissioners Terry Priestley and Beverly Neal-Clinton, respectively.

To increase visibility and transparency, and thereby public involvement in land use decisions,

the Los Alamos County (LAC) Department of Community Development reported that it has enhanced its public notification process by posting a LAC Notice of Proposed Land Use in a visible manner on any subject property coming before the P&Z Commission.

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

December Lunch with a Leader: Municipal Judge Elizabeth Allen

Los Alamos County Municipal Judge Elizabeth Allen took office in January, 2019. The Municipal Court handles traffic, animal control, and other Municipal Code violations. It is separate from the Magistrate Court. Judge Allen noted that the experience of most residents is limited to her court.

One of Judge Allen's first actions when she took office was to go paperless or "paper lite" to reduce waste. All of the forms for her court are posted on the court website: https://www.losalamosnm.us/government/courts/municipal_court. She also found online interpreters for any language. Those measures prepared her court for handling cases during the pandemic. To further facilitate continued service, she signed up for Zoom, which has worked well for the purpose.

Other innovations introduced during the pandemic include having officers request email addresses and phone numbers in addition to the information on a driver's license. That makes it easier to contact people even if they have moved. The NM Supreme Court, which sets the rules for all courts in NM, has created the Emergency Response Team to review and approve all plans for reopening before in-person courts are allowed to resume. Judge Allen's court is now hybrid.

Compliance has greatly improved now that it is not necessary to appear in person.

Judge Allen explained some of the methods used to enable the accused to be released pending trial and even after conviction. Avoiding incarceration due to lack of funds helps to keep costs down for the government as well as the accused. Soberlink is a breathalyzer system with facial recognition. Electronic monitors allow the court to sentence a person to house arrest instead of jail. SCRAM is also used for alcohol and location monitoring.

Teen Court is part of the Municipal Court. It is a diversionary program that keeps first time teen offenders with traffic infractions or misdemeanor offenses out of the traditional court system. The teen, who must accept responsibility for the offense, appears before a judge and jury of peers, and is sentenced. The sanctions are determined by the Teen Court jury, and usually include community service and jury duty at future Teen Court hearings. During the pandemic, community service has been expanded to include options such as requiring the teen to do chores at home or at PEEC. They also assign teens to engage in the restorative justice program conducted by the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board (JJAB).

The Municipal Court offers classes as alternative sanctions. They include anger management, financial management, DUI education, and many others. Judge Allen wants to replace negative behavior with positive and is willing to try new approaches for that purpose.

Barbara Calef

LWVLA Board of Directors 2021-2022

Officers:

- Co-president: Barbara Calef
- Co-president: Rebecca Shankland
- 1st Vice-President: *Unfilled*
- 2nd Vice-President: Ellen Mills
- Secretary: Rebecca Chaiken
- Treasurer: Rosmarie Frederickson

Directors:

- BPU Observer: Julie Williams-Hill
- Director at Large: Adelaide Jacobson
- Director at Large: Felicia Orth
- Director at Large: Akkana Peck
- Fundraising: Ellen Mills
- Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster
- Publicity: Jody Benson
- Reservations: Amy Birnbaum
- Voter Services: Lynn Jones

Off-board Directors:

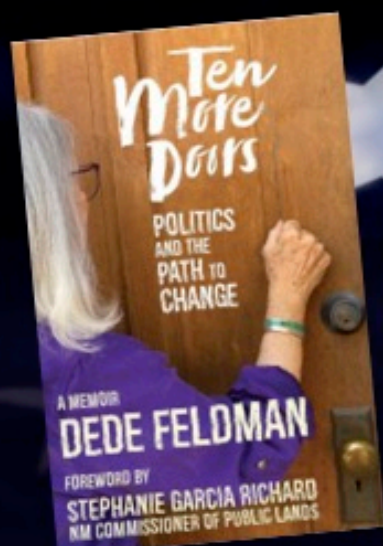
- Arrangements: Wendy Swanson
- County Council Observers: LWVLA Board & League Members
- Membership: Jean Dewart & Dotty Reilly
- Newsletter Editor: JoAnn Lysne
- Nominations: Ellen Mills & Leslie Wallstrom
- Special Projects: Maxine McReynolds
- Webmaster: Julie Williams-Hill

If you would like to join the League, fill out and submit the membership form on page 10, or visit www.lwvlosalamos.org.

TEN MORE DOORS: POLITICS AND THE PATH TO CHANGE

with Former State Senator Dede Feldman

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27
7 TO 8 PM | LIVE ON ZOOM



Mesa Public Library will host a lively author talk with former New Mexico State Senator Dede Feldman based on her new memoir *Ten More Doors: Politics and the Path to Change*. The book charts an inspirational path for anyone who wants to make a difference, start a campaign, advance a cause, or just stay in the fight. This timely program coincides with the 2022 New Mexico Legislative Session.

LOS ALAMOS
Public Library System

This program is free to the public and is made possible by New Mexico Humanities Council. Registration is required. To register, scan the QR code, visit the event calendar at LosAlamosLibrary.org, or call (505) 662-8257.



Mesa Public Library • 2400 Central Ave., Los Alamos, NM 87544

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LOS ALAMOS

MEMBERSHIP FORM



Mail to: LWV Los Alamos
P.O. Box 158
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): _____ E-mail _____

____ Check here to receive our local newsletter Update as an electronic file, saving us postage.

____ OR Check here if you prefer the newsletter mailed in hard copy.

____ Check here to receive occasional friendly reminders of upcoming events by e-mail.

Membership Categories: all checks for memberships and contributions should be payable to LWV-Los Alamos and all are now tax-deductible. Let us know if you'd like a tax-deductible statement. If you prefer to pay via Paypal, visit www.lwvlosalamos.org.

____ Single membership: \$45

____ Household membership (two+ people at the same address): \$70

____ Single Sustaining membership: \$75

____ Household Sustaining membership (two+ people at the same address): \$95

____ Student membership: \$0 (must be 16 or over)

____ Contribution to support League work: \$_____

Interests and Ways to Help the League (check as many as apply)

Topics of Interest

- ____ Affordable Housing
- ____ Local Government
- ____ Education
- ____ Elections, Voting Rights
- ____ Water Issues
- ____ Land Use
- ____ Health Care
- ____ Money in Politics
- ____ Sustainability
- ____ Living Wage
- ____ Public Transportation
- ____ Environment
- ____ Other topics (please suggest):

Ways to Help with League Activities

- ____ Set up Refreshments at Forums
- ____ Observer Corps (County Council, BPU, etc.)
- ____ Nominating Committee
- ____ Voter Guides Committee
- ____ Voter Registration
- ____ Publicity
- ____ Website, Social Media
- ____ Newsletter
- ____ Membership
- ____ Fund-raising
- ____ Budget Committee for LWV
- ____ Lunch with a Leader (assistance)
- ____ Fund-raising Committee for LWV
- ____ Participate in board meetings or join board

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy

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