



UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

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www.lwvlosalamos.org

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Calendar

November 17 Lunch with a Leader, Racial Justice Los Alamos, Zoom, noon
December 1 Board Meeting, Zoom, noon
December 5 LWVNM Advocacy Workshop, Zoom, 10 a.m. to noon

Lunch with a Leader: Racial Justice Los Alamos

On Tuesday, November 17, at NOON, Mike Adams, Erin Green, Tina DeYoe, and Andrea Determan will speak about the newly formed Racial Justice Los Alamos group, which was formed in the spring of 2020. It is a group composed of local black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), as well as white allies. They have supported the youth organized Black Lives Matter demonstrations and have organized a demonstration of civic engagement at which people were invited to write letters to elected officials about issues related to race. The mission statement of the group is “Racial Justice Los Alamos disrupts systems of racism in the community of Los Alamos and creates opportunities for equity.”

The Zoom link will be sent out (and posted at lwvlosalamos.org) with additional information next week.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

Co-president's Message: Partisanship: Remember the League Values

It has been painful for all of us to observe the intense and poisonous partisanship that characterizes our current political world. Of course, a two-party system has been with us for a long time and of course it is human nature to argue vigorously for one's values. But if our present-day politics seem more divisive than earlier years, we wonder why.

Is it the prevalence of social media?

Is it related to a more divided social structure, where people of different social classes or jobs have less opportunity to meet and talk with each other?

Is it due to the huge amount of money poured into political campaigns, with repeated advertisements using exaggerated depictions of the “evil” other side?

Is it a reflection of the hostile, abrasive language prevalent in popular culture?

Whatever the cause, we’re looking for a solution. As we listen to political arguments, let’s try to apply the nonpartisan principles of the League, to investigate the arguments on both sides of an issue, discuss them, and finally come to consensus. Then we are prepared to debate rather than shout.

The League of Women Voters was founded 100 years ago specifically as a non-partisan group to study issues rather than support partisan candidates. Of course, it is challenging to separate issues and candidates, but the harder we try, the more open and civil and the less closed and bitter our political discourse will be.

Becky Shankland



Observer Corps Reports

(All of the meetings are now being conducted virtually.)

County Council

September 29

The County Council met the evening of September 29, 2020. All County Councilors were present, as was Harry Burgess, County Manager, and several other county staff. The bulk of the meeting was spent discussing a report from the Art in Public Places Board, presented by Jennifer Baker, discussing three recommendations for art work to be purchased. The first was a painting of boys from the Los Alamos Ranch School dressed in historically accurate Boy Scout uniforms of the time (1920’s). It was to be placed over the fireplace in the Pajarito Room of Fuller Lodge, but the Councilors decided they liked the painting, but not the location. The painting will be purchased but placed in a different spot.

The second piece of artwork was a mural to be situated by the Splash Pad, which is being constructed in White Rock. This was accepted. The third piece of artwork is a sculpture in the shape of sunflower petals, created from scraps assembled by Ed Grothus, the former owner of the “Black Hole” scrap yard. This was accepted and will be placed on the wall of the Eco Station.

Other business included naming a softball field in White Rock after Hope Jaramillo, a Los Alamos resident devoted to softball who recently passed away. The field will be called “Hope Field.”

Various councilors reported on commissions and boards upon which they sit. The Environmental Sustainability Board continues to research the

reduction of food waste in the County, according to Councilor Izraelevitz.

Harry Burgess reported that applications had come in for funding provided by the state-wide CARES Act, which is designed to alleviate the financial burdens caused by the pandemic. The County received 53 applications from individuals and 62 applications from businesses.

Ramiro Pereyra was appointed to the Parks and Recreation Board. The Route 6 Bus will resume service. The County paid for several shade structures for the Los Alamos School System so that students can learn outside. And Councilor Maggiore is quite upset at the lack of information from DOE, LANL, and the NNSA to sustain a viable partnership with the County.

Leslie Wallstrom

October 6

The primary agenda item was County Engineer Eric Martinez's briefing on current and future roadwork and infrastructure plans. Current roadwork plans include:

- a pavement-conditions survey;
- the Barranca Mesa 3 Subdivision Project (Camino Encantado and side streets) to replace the surface asphalt, and to make sidewalks, curbs, and gutters ADA accessible;
- reprocessing the surface asphalt removed from the Camino Encantado into base material for other road projects, over which a new layer of asphalt is placed;
- the ADA and bicycle redesign of Trinity Drive from Diamond to Oppenheimer:
 1. reducing the road from four lanes to two, adding a bike lane plus a turn lane,

2. improving the sidewalk and buffer areas to make them more ADA accessible;

- Phase 2 of the DP Rd. and utilities improvements; and
- the NM 502 redesign that should be substantially completed by November/December and totally completed by February.

Future plans for which the County is seeking to secure funding, primarily from NM Department of Transportation (DOT), include:

- drainage and roadway improvements in White Rock;
- improvements on North Mesa Rd.;
- Deacon St. (design is pending the results of the current Downtown Master Plan); and
- a 33rd and 34th St. paving and utilities project.

The County is also working to secure funding from NMDOT to design, build, and improve access to trails, including:

- the Canyon Rim Trail underpass by the Coop;
- the connection between 35th St. and LAMC; and
- ADA and safety accessibility on Trinity from Oppenheimer to Knecht St.

Plans for other construction projects include the Mirador subdivision, the many new apartments proposed for White Rock and Los Alamos, Ponderosa Estates Phase 3, Natural Grocers, and the new condos on Arkansas Ave.

Jody Benson

October 20

Not available for viewing

October 27

The County Council meeting began with a report by the Lodgers Tax Advisory Board, which said that since March 2020 tourism statewide is down 50% from last year, and Los Alamos Lodgers Tax Revenues are down about the same amount. The board is preparing for the day when the public health orders allow them to once again advertise and promote the attractions in Los Alamos.

Next came the report on the status of the Downtown Master Plan effort. The contractor Dekker/Perich/Sabbatini gave a full report on the meetings with the public and the feedback they have received to date. See extensive details of the feedback in the agenda report.

Last came the broadband discussion. Deputy County Manager Steven Lynne gave a history of the discussions, plans, and roadblocks encountered in the past. He listed the current providers as RediNet, Comcast/Xfinity, LA Net, and CenturyLink. There are ongoing talks with CenturyLink for county access to the fiber path being planned by CenturyLink for LANL. The county has long wanted a redundant fiber path off the hill. (RediNet currently uses microwave transmission for the “middle mile.”) Past efforts have been stymied by the need to access both federal and tribal lands with a reasonable pathway and at a reasonable cost. The CenturyLink fiber access in the near future would be great, but it is not a certainty.

Lynn Jones

Board of Public Utilities

The Board of Public Utilities held two meetings in October.

The October 9 meeting was scheduled as the annual strategic planning meeting with the Department of Public Utilities staff. The focus was to review and suggest revisions to the department's mission, vision, values, strategic goals and objectives. BPU members also prioritized the department's goals and objectives to be approved at the next meeting.

The second meeting, held on October 21, was the regularly scheduled monthly meeting. The board members approved the department's mission, vision, values, strategic goals and objectives and their prioritization. Included were three new conservation goals, specifically:

- Increase local solar peak production to 6 MW by 2040;
- Reduce potable water use by 12 percent per capita per day by 2030 using a 2020 calendar year-end baseline; and
- Reduce natural gas usage by 5 percent per capita per heating degree day by 2030 using a 2020 calendar year-end baseline and support elimination of natural gas usage by 2070.

The BPU also requested that DPU survey the community regarding support for these goals.

Richard Nebel, a citizen, presented to the BPU a grant proposal that he plans to submit to the New Mexico Energy Transition Act program. He explained that he hopes to demonstrate how energy stored in electric vehicle batteries can assist in shaving electric loads during peak electric demand periods. The BPU approved his request for a letter of support and the use of two county-owned Nissan Leaf batteries that were included as part of the U.S.-Japan smart-grid demonstration project.

Lastly, the department staff presented employee survey engagement results to the BPU. In 2020 the department realized its goals for employee satisfaction and engagement.

Julie Williams-Hill

Planning and Zoning Commission

The Planning and Zoning Commission met on Sept. 23 to hear the case of a site plan for the multi-family senior affordable housing located at 135 DP Road, known as The Bluffs. The site is 3.13 acres and is zoned mixed use. Members of the Commission voted 4-2 Wednesday evening to approve the site plan for The Bluffs. The Commission did obtain a commitment from the Bethel Development to add about 7 parking spaces. One of the concerns raised by the Commission was that the proposed number of 49 parking spaces was not adequate for a building with 64 units and expected guests and caretakers possibly also needing parking spaces.

The main issue raised by the Commission and the reason the site plan was not approved unanimously is the health and safety concern raised by what is known as the Middle DP Road Site. The Middle DP Road Site is directly adjacent to the Bluffs property on the east. Radioactive contamination was discovered on Feb. 14, 2020, during trenching for the sewer line for the Bluffs, the Canyon Walk apartments on the north side of DP Road, and other locations on DP Road. Some information was presented by DOE Environmental Management on the investigative work on the Middle DP Road Site and the Bluffs property. This work is ongoing and a plan is in preparation to characterize and ultimately address radioactive contamination at the Middle DP Road Site.

Coming to the Nov. 18, 2020, Planning and Zoning Commission meeting is the site plan for

the Marriott Hotel and Conference Center on 20th Street between Ashley Pond and Los Alamos Canyon.

Randy Ryti

October Lunch with a Leader: Liddie Martinez

Liddie Martinez was appointed to the NM Economic Recovery Council in April by Governor Lujan Grisham. The bi-partisan 15-person council is composed of business leaders drawn from across the state to discuss how to meet the challenges of the pandemic. Martinez explained that the governor's inner circle drew up a list of candidates for the council and she received a call from the governor's chief of staff inviting her to join the group.

Martinez worked for 20 years at SOC, the former security contractor for LANL, doing largely philanthropic work as part of the laboratory contract. For the last four years she has been at Los Alamos National Bank, now Enterprise Bank and Trust, where she is the Los Alamos Market President. She also serves on four boards in and around Los Alamos, doing community development work, and she contributes a monthly food column to the *Los Alamos Daily Post*. Last year her cookbook, *The Chile Line, Historic Northern New Mexico Recipes*, was published by Pajarito Press.

Martinez explained that the members of the NM Economic Council figured out their duties only after the council was created. They learned how to gather data, assisted by subject matter experts, and agreed to make decisions based on the data. She noted that the LANL team modelling has been critical to their decisions. They also depend on guidance by the CDC and the Hopkins Medical Advisory Team.



Liddy Martinez (courtesy photo).

The task was overwhelming at the beginning, chaotic due to disruptions in the supply chain for food and medicine. At first the whole council met three times a week. Later they formed committees; now the whole council meets only once a week, but the committees are also meeting. “It’s been a ton of work,” she said, but also one of the most rewarding non-paying jobs she has held. She enjoys working with others, finding the middle ground, and making concessions.

Originally the council considered treating the regions of the state differently since some areas were barely affected by the virus, but Governor Lujan Grisham disagreed. Later Martinez realized that the governor was right; if they imposed milder sanctions in some areas, people would travel there to enjoy the amenities.

Still, the recovery is not going as planned. The major problem has been the “bad players” engaging in high risk activities, leading to spikes, especially around long weekends. As a result, the

council has decided that enforcement is needed; in fact, it should have been implemented sooner. There will be \$5,000 fines for non-compliant businesses and \$100 fines for individuals. Martinez is especially concerned about the hospital situation, remarking that “we don’t have the right talent” for our health care system. There is a need to provide health care connectivity; they are trying to share resources among hospitals in different states.

Looking ahead, Martinez says there is hope for vaccinations by April, but that is based on an “aggressive time-line.” It is important to make sure that the vaccine is safe and effective; most likely that will not happen before next summer. Currently the council is working on the final draft of their roadmap for recovery. When it has been approved by the governor, Martinez looks forward to receiving feedback from the public. After all, she sees her role as that of an advocate for the community.

Barbara Calef

LWVNM Advocacy Workshop

The annual advocacy workshop will be held via Zoom this year on Saturday, December 5 from 10 a.m. to noon. The public is invited to learn tips from legislators and a professional citizen lobbyist on how to interact with legislators, speak at hearings, and advocate for a cause. This workshop is about the legislative process, not specific issues. The speakers will be Senator Nancy Rodriguez (D-Santa Fe), Representative Rebecca Dow (R-Grant, Hidalgo, and Sierra Counties), and Jim Jackson, former Chief Executive Officer of Disability Rights New Mexico.



Suffragists from left to right: Cas Mason, Becky Shankland, Hedy Dunn, and Addie Jacobson. (Photo by Lisa Larson.)

Suffragists Urge Seniors to Vote

As the election season intensified, two groups from the League of Women Voters took up a suggestion from Bernadette Lauritzen. On October 8, dressed as suffragists with their green, white, and purple striped sashes (socially distanced, of course) they surprised the seniors who were collecting their meals at the two senior centers. In White Rock, they also helped Lisa Larson to distribute sample ballots for the coming election.

Greeting seniors on the Hill were Jody Benson, Leslie Wallstrom, and Bernadette Lauritzen. The

White Rock suffragists were Cas Mason, Becky Shankland, Hedy Dunn, and Addie Jacobson. Both groups got cheerful thumbs-ups and assurances that of course everyone would be voting.

All year the League has been celebrating the 100th year of its founding and of women's right to vote. In the midst of difficult social times, it was lovely to have a chance to gather, remember our suffragist foremothers, and celebrate the right to vote with our community friends.

Becky Shankland

LWVLA Board of Directors 2020-2021

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:

- Reservations: Amy Birnbaum
- Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster
- Voter Services: Lynn Jones
- BPU Observer: Julie Williams-Hill
- Publicity: Jody Benson and Leslie Wallstrom
- Director at Large: Akkana Peck
- Fundraising: Rosmarie Frederickson

Off-board Directors:

- Arrangements: Wendy Swanson
- Membership: Rebecca Shankland
- Webmaster: Julie Williams-Hill
- Special Projects: Addie Jacobson
- Newsletter Editor: JoAnn Lysne
- County Council Observers: LWVLA Board
- Nominations: Ellen Mills, Leslie Wallstrom, and JoAnn Lysne

If you would like to join the League, fill out and submit the membership form on page 9 or visit www.lwvlosalamos.org.



The LWVLA Board of Directors for 2020-2021.

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.

____ 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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