

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF LOS ALAMOS UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos
P.O. Box 158, Los Alamos, NM 87544
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Calendar

June 15 Lunch with a Leader, Sen. Leo Jaramillo, Zoom, noon

June Lunch with a Leader: State Senator Leo Jaramillo

Lunch with a Leader will be held on Thursday, June 15, via Zoom from noon to 1 p.m. Our speaker will be State Senator Leo Jaramillo, who was unable to participate in May due to a death in the family.

Senator Jaramillo was elected in 2020 to represent District 5 in the New Mexico State Senate. The district includes only Los Alamos, not White Rock, but we know he works for all of Los Alamos County. He currently serves as the Vice Chairman of the Rules Committee and as a member of the Tax, Business and Transportation Committee in the New Mexico Senate.

Senator Jaramillo is a native son of the Española Valley and a proud alumnus of Española Valley High School. His passion for advocating for his community led him to an elected position on the Rio Arriba County Commission, where he served as chairman of the board prior to being elected to the New Mexico State Senate.

Senator Jaramillo earned his bachelor's degree in Mass Communication and Journalism from the University of New Mexico and went on to earn his master's degree in Curriculum Design and Instructional Leadership from the College of Santa Fe. He is a former educator, news writer/producer, and financial business analyst. He is currently the Staff Operations Manager for the Associate Laboratory Director of Facilities and Operations at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

Welcome, New Members!

It's a delight to be welcoming new members to our League. We are hoping to have an in-person event to welcome them properly, but these introductions will suffice for now.

Becky Shankland

Cynthia Biddlecomb writes:

After 30 years on the Deacon roster of the Lutheran Church (ELCA), I retired from full-time ministry two years ago. With a bit more time on my hands, I finally joined the League and AAUW, and started helping out at L.A. Cares. Most of the time I find I am busy enough at home enjoying several hobbies: reading, writing (occasionally for columns in the *Daily Post*), genealogy, travel, walking, and the like.

Early in 2002 I moved from the Minneapolis area to Los Alamos to serve Bethlehem Lutheran Church as Director of Lay Ministry. (My previous ministry calls were in San Francisco CA and Willmar MN.) In 2010, finally got married; my husband Paul Bradley and I met at Bethlehem. My next chapter was eleven years serving Trinity on the Hill Episcopal Church as Parish Administrator. Twenty-one years in Los Alamos has been the longest I've lived in one place. But I do love this community and our lifestyle here.

I've long admired the work of the League of Women Voters. As a new member, I look forward to learning more about the current concerns of local LWV members!

Reid Friedhorsky and **Erin Tatge** write:

Erin and Reid moved to Los Alamos in 2011 and have two children, ages 5 and 10. Erin was a theater major and Reid has training in computer science. We are interested in voting rights and accessibility, good government, equal and fair representation, and human rights (notably, queer issues).

Laura and **Roy Bohn** write:

We have been members of the community since the eighties. Laura is a native New

Mexican and Roy is an Air Force kid who went on to a career at LANL. Both are UNM graduates, outdoor aficionados, retirees, volunteers, and very active voters who greatly appreciate all that the League of Women Voters does.

Lyn Haval writes:

I grew up in California, San Francisco Bay area and Bakersfield; as an adult I lived in Moreno Valley, near Riverside, and San Diego. I attended several colleges: Mackinac College on Mackinac Island, MI, where I met my future husband; San Diego State College, and graduated in 1975 from Lake Superior State College in Sault Ste. Marie, MI, near the Air Force Base where my husband was stationed. In our 20 years in the Air Force, we lived in California, Michigan and England, and back to California, where he retired and later passed away.

I began my teaching career in 1985 after getting my 5th year California teaching certificate at University of California Riverside. A few years later I also earned my Master's Degree in Educational Administration there. For my 26 years of teaching, I taught first grade (loved it!) and acted as administrative designee in the absence of the principal.

I have one daughter and two granddaughters, who keep me busy here in Los Alamos. I followed my daughter and her husband to Los Alamos in 2007 just before my second granddaughter was born. I got to be full-time Gramma, using many of my first grade and preschool skills. Time flies, and now we are teaching that baby how to drive! My hobbies at this time include reading, sewing, quilting, visiting, and drinking coffee/wine with friends, walking my dog, and volunteer work with LA Cares, our local food pantry. LA Cares keeps me pretty busy, doing lots of the coordinating of volunteers and planning each monthly distribution. (Let me know if you would like to help out!!)

Nereida Ortiz-Moss writes:

I was born in Puerto Rico, raised and went to college at University of Puerto Rico. I went

to Marquette Dental School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, then came to Albuquerque, NM.

My husband is from Los Alamos, so I have been here for 31 years. We had a dental practice together and raised 4 children. I am retired now, enjoying hiking, reading, traveling, gardening, and sometimes volunteering. I'm interested in politics, but I'm quite shy, not a public speaker. Healthcare for all and preservation of the environment are some of the things I care about.

I love dancing (mostly by myself!).

Developing Questions for the Fall 2023 Voter Guide / Candidate Forums

Looking ahead: the LWV-Los Alamos board will be asking local League members if they would like to participate in developing questions for the fall 2023 Voter Guide and Candidate Forums. This fall's local elections will be for the Los Alamos Public Schools Board and for the UNM-LA Advisory Board (i.e., no County Council election). There are guidelines for developing the questions that will be provided to interested members - for example, questions must be non-partisan and unbiased. We will be sending out a request for participation in July with the work concluding by mid-August.

Jean Dewart

Observer Corps Report – County Council Regular Session – May 2

The hybrid session was attended by Council Chair Denise Derkacs and Councilors Theresa Cull, Melanee Hand, Suzie Havemann, David Reagor, and Randall Ryti. Councilor Keith Lepsch was absent. Our observer report is based upon discussion during the meeting and documentation provided in the full agenda package.

Public Hearing on Increasing Maximum Allowable Building Height along Los Alamos Canyon Rim

Council discussed an ordinance that increases the maximum building height south of Trinity Drive, along the rim of Los Alamos Canyon. The newly approved maximum height is 54 ft within 150 ft of a property line abutting the edge of Los Alamos Canyon, retaining the maximum height of 86 ft elsewhere in downtown Los Alamos. Previously, the Development Code specified a maximum height of 45 ft. south of Trinity Drive, regardless of distance from the canyon rim.

Following the public hearing on March 8, 2023, the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of this draft ordinance by Council (see our observer report for this meeting in the April *Update*).

Approving a friendly amendment by Councilor Ryti, Council also asked staff to ask the P&Z Commission for recommendations regarding setback requirements for the downtown Los Alamos zone along the Los Alamos Canyon edge “in the context of potential canyon protection standards.”

Support for increasing maximum building height

Support for the proposed increase in maximum building height was nearly unanimous, as evidenced not only by Council discussion but also by extensive public comments. All who spoke in favor envisioned that the increased maximum building height in

this area of downtown Los Alamos would directly lead to an increase in residential density and thereby help relieve the housing shortage in the County as well as providing more affordable housing options for lower-wage members of the Los Alamos workforce.

Rachel Adler, chair of the P&Z Commission, summarized the rationale for the Commission's unanimous recommendation that Council adopt the proposed ordinance. "These increases in building heights will hopefully make for more attractive opportunities for developers to come in and create the kinds of community amenities that we're looking for, including mixed-use structures that include restaurants and businesses, retail opportunities as well as dwelling units."

Canyon edge protection

Concern was expressed by the public and Council that the adopted ordinance did not include a specific setback requirement such that, at least hypothetically, development could occur on the canyon edge.

County staff expressed their opinion that requiring a setback was not necessary. County senior planner Sobia Sayeda explained that placement and alignment of connections along the extension of the Canyon Rim Trail can be accomplished by requirements for site plan review and approvals set forth in the County's current Development Code. When reviewing site applications, said Sayeda, CDD staff ensure that the proposed development plans are in conformance with all County policies and plans, which include the Bicycle Transportation Plan of which the Los Alamos Canyon Rim Trail is part. The County can then specify pedestrian and bike paths as a condition of site plan approval.

CDD Director Paul Andrus pointed out that requiring a specific setback could also be problematic. "Because of the lack of uniformity along the canyon edge, and the topography, and how one developed site ... relates to the contiguous sites. We feel that we would want to have some flexibility so the development itself wouldn't necessarily be constricted to

building within its building envelopes but still be able to accommodate that pedestrian and bike trail within the site plan development itself."

Councilor Havemann summarized that, "I think what I'm hearing you say is that you'd be amenable to stipulating that a developer on any of the parcels south of Trinity would have to provide for an easement for what you were calling a pedestrian or a bicycle trail — or we could call it an extension of the Canyon Rim Trail. ... But we maybe would not want to be so specific that we say it has to be within 30 feet of the canyon edge, even though it's called the Canyon Rim Trail, because maybe that trail needs to meander in a little bit, meander back out, to maybe leverage better views, or to bring people into gathering areas, and just try to leverage some of the investments that we're making, or that developers might be making, on that side of Trinity."

During public comment, P&Z Commissioner Stephanie Nakhleh (speaking as a private citizen) strongly advocated against adding a canyon-edge setback requirement to the proposed ordinance at this time. "This is not part of our recommendation; all of the setback talk is not part of our recommendation," she said, "and when you staple legislation on at the last minute, you wind up, I think, with problems. I think it's better if this was separated from the recommendation and sent back to P&Z for analysis."

Status of the Canyon Rim Trail

Councilor Ryti noted that the Canyon Rim Trail was based on the Bicycle Transportation Plan adopted seven years ago. At one point, he recalled, the trail was planned to extend to the Medical Center. He asked the current status of the County's plan for the Canyon Rim Trail.

Deputy Public Works Director Eric Martinez replied that the department is not currently considering any extension of the Canyon Rim Trail further west than 20th Street. He explained, "We did a feasibility study back in 2016 where we found that there are a lot of constraints for continuing the trail further west towards the Medical Center because of

property ownership, solid waste management units from DOE, terrain, and costs.”

The discussion about setbacks prompted Councilor Ryti to return the discussion to the intent of the “canyon edge protection standards” that he had requested staff to evaluate in the motion passed last December. His vision of what the Canyon Rim Trail in that area could look like would be an inviting area, not a trail lined with a fence and a large parking lot along one side blocking access to the other side. “I think we would be incentivizing various things, businesses on the ground floor, coffee shops, whatever, housing, other uses in that area. That is what I envisioned, and I think that that is what the Canyon Rim Trail could be viewed as,” he said. “We’re trying to incentivize various things and I think that’s what I would want to look at; that’s what I meant by canyon protection standards.”

Motion to adopt ordinance

Councilor Havemann advocated for adoption of the ordinance as written. “While I do appreciate the concern to avoid unintended consequences, ...and I do get it that developers can submit a better proposal to the County when they know definitively the rules of the road in advance, and I also share the values of our trails and the desire to extend the Canyon Rim Trail specifically, I have to say I place a higher value on the sense of urgency that I have to make progress in bringing economic, housing and placemaking opportunities to an area that currently offers none of these. So, I just really want to keep this as clean as possible.”

At the end of the public hearing, Council unanimously approved the building height ordinance and accepted Councilor Ryti’s friendly amendment to ask staff to ask the P&Z Commission for recommendations regarding setback requirements for the downtown Los Alamos zone along the Los Alamos Canyon edge “in the context of potential canyon protection standards.”

Public Hearing on Reducing On-site Parking Requirements in Downtown Los Alamos and White Rock

Following the P&Z Commission public hearing on March 8, 2023, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of this draft ordinance by Council (see our observer report for this meeting in the April *Update*).

Draft ordinance

The draft ordinance proposed changes to the County’s Development Code with regard to the minimum number of off-street parking spaces required for various land uses:

- Revise parking ratios (spaces per 1000 sq. ft.) to reduce the minimum off-street parking spaces required for specific uses (medical clinic, retail sales, restaurants).
- Clarify that off-street parking reduction allowances in downtown Los Alamos (up to 50% reduction allowance) and the White Rock Town Center (up to 25% reduction allowance) are not applicable to multi-family dwellings, which are required to provide at least 1 parking space per dwelling unit.

The draft ordinance was presented by Jessica Lawlis and Will Gleason, consultants with Dekker/Perich/Sabatini. Lawlis emphasized that parking reductions within mixed-use environments and downtowns is becoming a very common practice and a successful tool that would support the County’s goals to provide adequate parking while creating a walkable downtown district, and to support diverse housing options and higher density housing within the downtown.

Gleason stressed that the changes were being made to the minimum number of spaces required. “Any project that is proposed, they can build in more parking if they feel like they need to have more parking. It’s partly a way to let a little more of the market decide what is the appropriate amount of parking for a specific project.”

Public comments

Many members of the local public spoke in favor of the proposed ordinance, emphasizing how reduced parking requirements could facilitate a more vibrant downtown and increase the stock of affordable housing. Councilor Ryti reported that Council had received 49 emails about the two ordinances, of which seven were opposed. Some people expressed concern about changes to the character of the community, such as from spillover parking into adjacent neighborhoods.

Local resident George Chandler was skeptical of setting the minimum at one parking space per apartment. He expects that developers will be building apartments with more than one bedroom, and therefore many residents of multi-family housing will probably need more than one car.

Council discussion

Council was unanimous in its strong support of the amended ordinance as one mechanism to enhance the mix of housing types and affordability in the County and to stimulate downtown economic vitality. Councilor Hull pointed out that those attracted to living downtown would not be limited to people new to town but that a downtown location would also likely appeal to people with reduced mobility who are currently living in single-family housing. Having such residents down-size to a multi-family dwelling unit would free up single-family housing.

"I am in favor of the changes proposed by P&Z because we do need to have a vibrant downtown," said Councilor Ryti. "[But] if we are reducing parking and we want to be effective in reducing it further, the County needs to be providing better transit services and better facilities for walking and biking."

Council action

Council unanimously approved minor changes to wording in a draft ordinance that reduces off-street parking requirements in downtown Los Alamos and White Rock and in mixed-use and non-residential zone districts. The revised version was scheduled to be

returned to Council for another public hearing at Council's meeting on May 23.

(The revised ordinance was adopted at that meeting; see our observer report below).

Local news coverage of this meeting

Kirsten Laskey, *Los Alamos Daily Post*, May 4, 2023. <https://ladailypost.com/council-action-taken-may-2-2023/>

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Observer Corps Reports – County Council – Work Session, May 16, 2023

The hybrid session was attended by Council Chair Denise Derkacs and Councilors Theresa Cull, Melanee Hand, Suzie Havemann, Keith Lepsch, David Reagor, and Randall Ryti. Our observer report is based upon discussion during the meeting and documentation provided in the full agenda package.

Potential Ordinance to Prohibit Feeding of Wildlife

Councilor Ryti requested that this item be brought to Council to discuss the problems resulting from community members feeding deer and other wildlife and to consider possible solutions.

Complaints about feeding of wildlife in Los Alamos

District Officer Ariel Perraglio with the NM Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) described the magnitude of the wildlife feeding problem. "In the past year, I received over 70 emails and phone calls about negative wildlife and human interactions in Los Alamos. During that same time frame, I received less than 25 complaints from Abiquiu, Española, Jemez Springs, Ponderosa, and Cuba, combined. ...Please note that none of these numbers are calls about coyotes and raccoons. These are all focusing on mountain lion, bear, and deer, primarily."

Officer Perraglio proceeded to give examples of recent complaints “One that I received just last week was a mountain lion jumping from back yard to back yard in the Sioux Street area... That mountain lion did end up killing a dog. When I responded, I found the dog's body cached less than 15 yards from the back yard where it came from. That mountain lion was sitting on the dog when I found it, and that was about 10-15 yards from a well-traveled recreational trail that kids play on. That mountain lion was not afraid of me at all.” In a separate case, a mountain lion was observed killing goats and sheep at the Los Alamos stables and feeding on its prey inside a barn at 7 am despite people being around. Both lions had to be euthanized.

Officer Perraglio concluded, “So when I say that we’re getting complaints, it’s not just ‘there are deer in my yard.’ It’s ‘a mountain lion killed a deer in my yard and then cached it,’ which means the lion is coming back to regularly feed on it until they’re done with it, which obviously presents a human safety issue.”

Why is it bad to feed wildlife?

Two wildlife veterinarians listed numerous examples of the negative consequences of feeding wildlife.

Dr. Ellen Crockett, with NMDGF, said that the main reason to avoid feeding deer is to discourage them from congregating at unnatural densities. “When there are too many deer using the same feeding site, it creates the perfect breeding ground for disease spread,” she explained. She pointed out other negative consequences of feeding deer are much higher rates of roadkill, dependence on humans for vital resources, deer eating things that they shouldn’t, like ornamental plants in gardens, and habituation with people, or even aggression.

Dr. Kathleen Ramsey, a local veterinarian and wildlife rehabilitator, listed additional detrimental effects. “We have to look at the whole dynamics. We’re not just feeding the deer, we artificially create them having higher caloric intake and a higher reproduction, and then these fawns growing up and not knowing

they’re a deer. We have a circle that continues and continues. We also have food that is not good for them. It doesn’t have good calcium in it, it doesn’t have good vitamins in it” so we are seeing more deer with diseases such as rickets.

The problem, said Dr. Ramsey, is not limited to deer. She frequently receives calls about many coyotes in Los Alamos. “That’s because we have an abnormal horrible population up here of coyotes because people feed them too. And so, we see 6 pups born in a litter instead of 2 pups born in a litter.”



A bear enjoys a suet breakfast courtesy of the Keller bird feeder. Photo by Yvonne Keller.

Wildlife feeding ban in Ruidoso

Officer Perraglio reported that a couple of municipalities around the state have passed ordinances making it illegal to feed wildlife. The Village of Ruidoso adopted an ordinance, “Feeding of Certain Wildlife Prohibited,” on the basis that “feeding wildlife results in artificially high concentrations of animals, increases human-wildlife conflicts, and compromises the

health and safety of humans and wildlife.” The ordinance makes it unlawful to provide feed or other attractants to wildlife within the Village limits. Ornamental plants, vegetable gardens and properly hung bird feeders are expressly exempt. Perraglio said that Ruidoso saw a significant decrease in problems after the ordinance was passed in 2019.

Public education

Councilors universally expressed the opinion that public education was the preferred solution. Councilor Havemann pointed out that “an ordinance should not be our goal; solving the wildlife interface problem should be our goal.”

Councilor Cull asked Chief Sgambellone how the LA Police Department currently responds to complaints about feeding wildlife. The Chief said the department relies solely on education, “basically hoping for positive change in behavior. Sometimes it works. Other people have the attitude, ‘Where does it say I can’t do it? Who says it’s a nuisance?’ ...Whether it’s this ordinance or others,” he continued, “frankly there’s just some people that will not voluntarily comply.” He noted that “having an ordinance would provide a measure to address those egregious and ongoing problems.”

Councilor Ryti said, “I just want to make sure the public understands we’ve tried everything in our toolbox before implementing an ordinance to prohibit wildlife feeding.” He requested County staff to look into whether education about wildlife feeding could be included in the County’s current contract with PEEC.

Councilor Ryti suggested that the problem of wildlife feeding would be a good topic for a public forum, both to educate people as well as to hear ideas on what could be done.

20th Street Redevelopment Visioning Process

CDD staff and architects with the consulting firm Wilson and Company presented an overview of the process by which they planned

to engage the public regarding redevelopment concepts for the County’s 20th Street parcel.

The property consists of 12 to 13 acres south of Trinity Drive, bordered by Motel 6 to the west and Natural Grocers to the east. A contract for Marriott to build a hotel and conference center at this property fell through a few years ago, and the property has remained largely vacant. “Now it’s time to consider putting the property back up for solicitation for sale and development,” said Dan Ungerleider, County Economic Development Administrator. Sobia Sayeda, CDD Senior Planner, pointed out that recent adoption of the new Development Code has created new opportunities.

Noah Berke, an architect with Wilson and Company, said that the visioning process was guided by four adopted County documents: the Downtown Master Plan, Economic Vitality Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Plan, and Housing Market Needs Analysis. These documents were used to enumerate key goals and policies for this redevelopment, such as creating a pedestrian and family friendly area, increasing the density and affordability of housing, ensuring connectivity with other parts of town, and promoting downtown economic vitality.

The project team plans two town halls in mid-June and later in July, with a final report due by August 11, 2023.

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Observer Corps Reports – County Council – Regular Session, May 23, 2023

The hybrid session was attended by Council Chair Denise Derkacs and Councilors Theresa Cull, Melanee Hand, Suzie Havemann, Keith Lepsch, David Reagor, and Randall Ryti. Our observer report is based upon discussion during the meeting and documentation provided in the full agenda package.

Presentation on Raising the Minimum Hourly Wage in Los Alamos County

Two middle-school students proposed to Council that the minimum wage in Los Alamos County be raised to \$15 for regular employees and \$4 for tipped workers, with a possible sub-minimum wage of \$12 for teens. Under state law, the current minimum wage is \$12 for regular employees and \$3 for tipped workers. The teens also proposed that the minimum wage be indexed to inflation at an annual meeting. Council agreed that the concept was well worth exploring and requested County staff to schedule a Town Hall on the issue to obtain more input and recommendations from the public.

In support of their proposal, the students cited MIT's Living Wage Calculator, which showed that an adult living in Los Alamos County and working full-time would need an hourly wage of \$16.90 to support themselves.

Noting that the County had previously set a minimum hourly wage of \$15 for its own employees, Councilor Reagor asked if the students were aware of any business in town that pays less than that. The students responded that a couple of businesses pay \$14 and that one business pays \$12 to teens but \$20 to adults.

Public Hearing on Reducing Downtown Parking Requirements

Parking methodology

The proposed changes to the parking requirements in the Development Code were presented by Jessica Lawlis and Will Gleason, consultants with Dekker/Perich/Sabatini. Gleason noted that nothing new was being presented that had not already been discussed at the May 2 meeting. "I just want to start by acknowledging that the content of the parking and the methodology is not completely straightforward. We're really here tonight to just address any confusion, any misconceptions, that we may have unintentionally generated. We're here just to follow the direction that we get from Council

and from staff, so if there's the concern that this is too complex, we are open to simplifying this."

Council questions

Chair Derkacs expressed concern that the minimum parking requirement for multi-family developments could be reduced to one-half space per dwelling unit if the development plan met all criteria for reduction. She asked what other communities were doing. Gleason replied, "It's all over the map. All the way from no parking requirements at all to no difference whether you're downtown or on the outer rings of a suburb, in terms of parking ratios. But the tendency is towards lower parking ratios and letting the market figure out what to provide." Lawlis said this tendency was particularly true in mixed-use environments, like downtowns.

Councilor Ryti noted that the parking requirement methodology was fairly complicated even before the code revision, nor was it being simplified by the proposed changes. Gleason answered, "You could make it simpler but it would not achieve the desired effect."

Councilor Havemann asked whether there was a mechanism to make additional changes to the Code if the proposed changes were problematic. CDD Director Andrus said, "We have a number of items from a cleanup perspective for the chapter that we want to bring back in June and again in October of this year With respect to the general question, we can bring any piece back, particularly if it relates to simplifying the sections as needed or some aspect that needs to be edited or changed."

Public comments

Local resident Phil Gursky addressed the concern that a future development might provide less than one parking space per dwelling unit. "As a developer, we have no problem with requiring at least one space per dwelling unit. That's the reality of today, and that's how we plan."

Local resident Charlie Nakhleh made several points in support of the ordinance,

emphasizing the town's need for all types of housing, and affordable housing in particular.

Council action

Council unanimously (5–0, Hand and Lepsch absent) approved the ordinance as modified at its May 2 session. (see our observer report above).

Public Hearing on Ordinance Amending Refuse Recycling and Solid Waste Facility Fees

Proposed fee changes

Public Works Director, Juan Rael, sought to adjust user fee rates for the Environmental Services Division (ESD) in order to cover the increased costs of handling waste, disposal, and recycling services. These fees were last adjusted in September 2017. The proposal that residential and commercial rates be increased 8% each year through FY28 was approved by the Environmental Sustainability Board for the Council's consideration.

Council questions

Councilor Reagor asked whether the increased rates included the possible loss of the landfill currently used by Los Alamos County. Rael replied that there may be five years left in the Rio Rancho landfill. The proposed rate increase covers just five years, he said, so if the landfill does fill up sooner, ESD might need to revisit that earlier. "This just stresses [the importance of] all the programs that we've started, that anything we can divert from the landfill is tremendously helpful."

Councilor Ryti asked the reason for the change in the disposal cost for recycled cardboard. Currently, there is no user fee, but the proposed fee starts at \$57.25/ton in FY24. Joshua Levings, Business Manager of ESD, explained that "Historically we have been creating revenue when we sold the cardboard to a local paper mill. But when China stopped accepting a lot of paper recycling from the United States, they got inundated with a lot

more so they're no longer paying for that, so now it's pretty much for the transport."

Council action

Council unanimously (6–0, Councilor Hand absent) approved an ordinance that adjusts the recycling and solid waste facility fees. The new rates and fees will go into effect on July 1, 2023.

Councilor Havemann summarized the Council's rationale. "While fee increases are never something that we want to see, I understand the cost of doing business and the rationale behind it. I appreciate the due diligence done to help us all understand this."

Noting the financial impact to lower-income residents, Councilor Ryti suggested that Council consider a support program. He pointed out that these disposal costs are not shown on the customer's utility bill so the customer has no choice but to pay it. "I would like to encourage us to think about potential support for low- or moderate-income residents in some cases. This is something that we've never had any support for. There is a general Utility Assistance Program but there isn't any assistance for this part of the bill."

Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Study and Climate Action Plan

Council considered a services agreement with Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc., for \$280,195 to prepare a community greenhouse gas emissions study and climate action plan for Los Alamos County.

Implementation of LARES recommendations

County Sustainability Manager, Angelica Gurule, explained that the proposed scope of work is intended to implement two of the recommendations in the final report issued by the Los Alamos Resiliency, Energy, and Sustainability (LARES) Task Force in February 2022:

- Perform a comprehensive baseline greenhouse gas emissions study from which to set reduction targets (and other

goals) and against which to measure progress.

- Create and adopt a strategic climate action plan for the County that includes baseline data, greenhouse gas reduction targets, and climate mitigation strategies, to be utilized and updated regularly.

Gurule said that LANL and LA Public Schools will be invited to participate as partners but are not required to do so because the County has no jurisdiction over their activities.

Council action

Most councilors expressed enthusiasm for funding the greenhouse gas emissions study and climate action plan. Chair Derkacs said, “We’ve been anticipating this so we can move forward to achieve the goals that we adopted from LARES. I do also support having an earmark in our budget next year for anticipated implementation of this.”

In dissent, Councilor Reagor said, “I have to vote against this because I think carbon is our least important sustainability issue.”

Council approved (5–1, with Councilor Reagor in opposition).

Establishment of a Climate Investment Center for New Mexico

The establishment of a New Mexico Climate Investment Center has the purpose of assisting the State of New Mexico in meeting its climate goals through the receipt of appropriate federal funds earmarked for green banks to support clean energy and other climate and equity related investments.

Climate Investment Center as a Green Bank

The establishment of a Climate Investment Center for the state is a project of the Coalition of Sustainable Communities NM (CSCNM), which is a nonprofit membership organization representing local governments in New Mexico. Los Alamos has been a member for over a year, paying annual dues of \$5,000 and implementing another LARES recommendation. According to Beth Beloff, the

Coalition’s Founder and Executive Director, about half of the population of the state is represented by members of the Coalition.

The Climate Investment Center is a financial platform that uses public money to attract private sector money for investments in projects that boost equity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, typically where other sources of financing are not available. It is also known as a green bank, or green investment fund, with the opportunity to access some of the \$27 billion funding in the Inflation Reduction Act allocated for green banks. Green banks are a proven model with 23 similar funds in 17 states. With a cumulative investment in 2021 of \$2.6 billion of public funds, they created \$10 billion in total investments in hard-to-finance projects.

Establishing the Climate Investment Center is necessary to qualify for Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds earmarked for “green banks.” New Mexico does not currently have a financial institution that fits into EPA’s definitions for use of these funds. Creating the Climate Investment Center will unlock access to the IRA funds to maximize reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy costs for low-income, disadvantaged, and tribal communities, enhance green job creation, accelerate climate resiliency measures, and support economic growth.

Specific examples of the types of projects that could be funded through loans from a green bank include community solar projects, new housing contingent on “gold-standard” energy-efficient design, electric vehicle charging stations, electrification of public bus fleets, and aerobic digesters to create energy out of food waste.

Council decision

Council approved (5–1, with Councilor Reagor in opposition) supporting the establishment of a New Mexico Climate Investment Center. The Coalition plans to return to Council soon with a more specific request for action, such as a specific investment amount.

Expressing support, Councilor Havemann said, “I think it helps us achieve the goals that we set out with the LARES Task Force and will help us maybe accomplish some things defined through the Climate Action Plan over time. I think it helps us be good neighbors with the rest of our New Mexico communities and helps us leverage federal funds that are available for a very worthwhile purpose.”

Submission of Comments on Chromium Plume Interim Measures and Final Remedy

Council considered authorizing the Chair, with the co-signature of the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) Manager, to submit a letter to DOE-EM on the Environmental Assessment for the Chromium Plume Interim Measures and Final Remedy.

Chromium plume in local groundwater

The chromium plume is contaminated groundwater below Sandia and Mortandad canyons on DOE property that requires remediation to prevent its migration to adjacent properties and to the regional aquifer. The source of the chromium was a LANL power plant that periodically flushed water containing potassium dichromate from the plant’s cooling towers into Sandia Canyon from 1956-1972. The plume is currently estimated to be about 1 mile long by ½ mile wide.

The Department of Energy (DOE) EM-LA is evaluating the potential environmental impact of continuing operations of the Interim Measures it put in place to control plume migration and to achieve compliance with the NM chromium groundwater standard.

The general concept of the Interim Measures to-date has been to pump out contaminated groundwater, treat the water, and re-inject the cleaned groundwater ahead of and in the direction the plume is migrating toward, with the intent of creating a hydraulic barrier and keeping the plume on DOE-owned property. In April of this year, operations were ceased at the order of NMED due to data indicating the plume may be deeper than

originally believed and the injection activities may be pushing the plume deeper toward the regional aquifer. So far, DOE-EM and NMED have not reached agreement on the effectiveness of the existing Interim Measures or on what a Final Remedy will be.

DOE EM-LA is considering four options, or a combination of them, in an update of the Environmental Assessment:

- Option 1—Expanded pump and treatment with expanded injection
- Option 2—Expanded pump and treatment with land application
- Option 3—Expanded pump and treatment with injection and/or land application and in-situ treatment
- Option 4—Monitored natural attenuation

County concerns about the plume

Philo Shelton, the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) Manager, said that the major concern for the County is the location of Pajarito Well #3 within the vicinity of the plume. DPU shut down this high-production water well last year as a precautionary measure to prevent drawing the chromium plume closer to the well and risking the introduction of chromium into the water supply.

Shelton said that DPU’s preferred alternative among those listed by DOE-EM is Option 1, expanded pump and treat with expanded injection, for several reasons. Treatment with ion exchange will remove chromium from the groundwater to best maintain water quality for drinking water use. ReInjection has the least negative impact on the County’s water rights, whereas land application would consume most of the water rights that the County currently has available and would limit future county development.

Shelton added that Adaptive Site Management is mentioned in the Environmental Assessment as an alternative. This approach would create a framework of structured and continuous planning, implementation, and monitoring that accommodates new information, changing conditions, and public information. Because

the nature and vertical extent of the chromium plume are not completely understood, Adaptive Site Management to select and implement remedies seems logical. However, the Environmental Assessment needs to describe in more detail how this Adaptive Site Management process will be implemented.

Shelton stressed that any selected remedy needs to prioritize protecting the drinking water quality from contamination by containing the plume safely so as to assure no breakthrough of chromium into the municipal drinking water system at any concentration above natural background.

Council decision

Council voted unanimously to authorize the Chair, with the co-signature of the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) Manager, to submit a letter to DOE-EM on the Environmental Assessment for the Chromium Plume Interim Measures and Final Remedy.

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Observer Corps Reports – Planning & Zoning Commission – Public Hearing, April 26, 2023

The Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Commission hearing was attended by Chair Rachel Adler and Commissioners Karen Easton, David Hampton, Benjamin Hill, Charlene Hutchison, and Stephanie Nakhleh. Commissioner Neal Martin was absent. Our observer report is based upon discussion during the meeting and documentation provided in the full agenda packet.

Public Hearing on Mixed-use Development on Former Mari Mac Property

Voting unanimously, P&Z approved the Site Plan for a 104,671 sq. ft. mixed-use

development that proposes 322 residential units and 22,000 sq. ft. of commercial space on the former Mari Mac property. Bordered by Central Avenue to the north and Trinity Drive to the south, the property lies within the Downtown Los Alamos (DTLA) Zone District. The application was submitted by Greg Gonzales of Columbus Capital for the Kroger Co.

Karl Sommer, attorney for developer Columbus Capital, explained that Kroger's name was on the application because that company owns the property until the sales contract with Columbus Capital can be finalized, which is expected within 30-45 days.



Greg Gonzales of Columbus Capital, right, chats with attorney Karl Sommer following the April 26 Los Alamos County Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. Photo by Maire O'Neill, losalamosreporter.com.

Building

The site plan specifies an eight-story building with 16,000 sq. ft. of retail/restaurant space on the ground floor, three levels of parking, and 322 residential units. The residential units consist of 11 townhomes fronting on Central Avenue; on the upper five floors are 53 studio apartments, 196 one-bedroom apartments, and 62 two-bedroom apartments. About 4,000 sq. ft. inside the building is allocated to general-use community space. "This project is designed per requirements for step backs so it's not a giant monolithic structure," Gonzales said.

"This [project] addresses a site that has been vacant and deteriorating for approximately nine years," said Gonzales. "The driving force behind this [mixed-use] development is the Downtown Master Plan, which called for this type of development on this specific site. ...We believe this project will get the community one step closer to achieving the goals of the Downtown Master Plan."

Parking and transit

Primary access to the site will be from an existing signalized intersection at Trinity Drive. Access to parking will be provided by two secondary access driveways from Central Avenue. One driveway will lead to the second level of a three-level parking structure containing 386 residential parking spaces and 76 spaces for the public. The second access driveway will lead to on-site surface parking east of the retail portion of the project, for a total of 463 vehicular parking spaces. Included in the site plan are 94 bicycle spaces. The property is served by three public transit stops.

Traffic

Although the project will cause increased traffic, Gonzales stated that the traffic study for this project shows that the existing network of streets is adequate for the added traffic from the project. The study was done in concert with County staff, NM Department of Transportation, and the Department of Public Utilities.

Outdoor lighting

Gonzales noted that "This project will be one of the first projects initiated to be in accordance with the Dark Skies Los Alamos outdoor nighttime standards," which require fully shielded lighting and automatic dimming of outdoor lighting to 50% after business hours or after 11 pm, whichever is later.

Drainage

Estimated stormwater runoff will not increase after development because a portion of the existing impervious parking pavement will be converted to landscaping.

Project schedule

Gonzales said that this is a preliminary concept set of plans. The architects and engineering design firm estimate that final design work will take 9-10 months. Gonzales expected construction work would probably begin in about a year.

Adjacent parcel of the property

Columbus Capital currently has a Special Use Permit to operate a self-service storage facility in part of the former Smith's store on the parcel east of the property. No alterations are proposed for this building.

Rental rates for residential units

Upon learning that Columbus Capital would continue to own the building for the foreseeable future, Commissioner Hutchinson asked whether the company would make the apartment rental rates affordable. Gonzales replied that "These are market-rate apartments. We will have to price these so a person coming from Rio Rancho will say, 'I'd rather live in Los Alamos than pay less rent in Rio Rancho and drive every day.' I cannot say what those rents will be but, following simple supply and demand, ...the market will set those rates."

Demand for commercial retail space

Local resident Irene Powell expressed concern that the retail space might remain empty, based on the amount of vacant retail space in downtown Los Alamos. Following up on Powell's comment, Commissioner Nakhleh asked Lauren McDaniel, Executive Director of LA Commerce and Development Corporation (LACDC), "What are the chances of getting retail? How does the increased population affect retail availability?" McDaniel replied, "My organization has run the Los Alamos Business Accelerator for the past two years. We're seeing increased interest in move-in ready spaces that are smaller in size. So, we are seeing demand for the type of retail space that they're proposing in this site plan and we think it will enhance the overall desire for more retail to move into the corridor, especially with the addition of housing."

Local business support

Speaking on behalf of LACDC Board of Directors, McDaniel expressed enthusiastic support for the proposed project. "If built, this site will be a transformational area for redevelopment through mixed-use buildings that include retail and restaurant commercial space and multi-family residential housing. Mari Mac has been a derelict and largely vacant retail center for the past several years, leading to blight in our community and taking up a large surface parking area at a time when land is at a premium. The plan not only looks strategically at optimizing use of the land, provides parking for the apartments as well as additional parking for public use, but building in critical housing and retail spaces will help us attract more people to live and work in our downtown core and help maximize the potential of our Main Street boundaries on the east side of town."

McDaniel added that Columbus Capital has been "community-focused and community-driven from their first engagement on this project. After several ongoing meetings with community and business leaders, they thoughtfully incorporated the feedback into the site plan you can see today. ...Their vision is a vision we can get behind, and we look forward to seeing the exciting development for this parcel of land."

Site plan approval

The P&Z Commissioners approved the Site Plan as presented.

Local news coverage of this meeting

Maire O'Neill, *Los Alamos Reporter*, May 6, 2023,

<https://losalamosreporter.com/2023/05/06/planning-zoning-commission-gives-unanimous-approval-to-104671-sq-ft-downtown-mixed-use-development/>

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Minutes of the LWVLA Annual Meeting

Thursday, April 20, 2023

Fellowship Hall of the Unitarian Church

1738 North Sage Loop

Los Alamos, New Mexico

Call to Order

Barbara Calef called the meeting to order at 1:16 p.m. There was a quorum with 28 members attending. Barbara thanked the attendees and introduced the LWVLA board members.

Agenda

Becky Shankland made two motions to amend the agenda. First, she asked that the Treasurer's Report be stricken because Rosmarie Frederickson cannot be present today. This motion was seconded by Kyle Wheeler, and all voted in favor. Second, Becky asked that the Adoption of the Budget be moved to precede the President's Report because the presenter, Julie Williams-Hill, had another meeting to attend. This motion was seconded by Kyle, and all voted in favor.

Jody Benson then moved to amend the agenda to have the Adoption of Local Programs proceed immediately following the Adoption of the Budget. This was seconded by Amy Birnbaum, and all voted in favor.

Minutes

The 2022 Annual Meeting was held virtually on April 21. Kyle Wheeler and Lynn Jones were appointed to read the Annual Meeting minutes. The minutes were also reviewed by the Board and sent to League members via email on April 13, 2023.

Kyle Wheeler and Wendy Swanson have volunteered to be the readers for the minutes of this year's Annual Meeting. Rebecca Chaiken is our secretary.

Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget

Julie Williams-Hill

The committee which prepared the proposed 2024-2025 budget included Julie Williams-Hill, Rosmarie Frederickson, and Jeffrey Howell. This budget was published in the April 2023 *Update*. Our fiscal year runs from May 1 to April 30. The Fiscal Year 2024 budget was adopted at last year's annual meeting on April 21, 2022.

Julie explained that the budget spreadsheet is organized first by Expenses, followed by Income, and finally by Net Operating Income. Existing funds in our savings and checking accounts are then applied to arrive at the anticipated Total Cash Position at the end of the Fiscal Year.

This year, the Budget Committee proposed some adjustments to the previously adopted Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 budget based on actual income and expenses. Specifically, the proposed FY2024 budget includes an increase in expenses. This is based on the reintroduction of President's Funds (\$200); an increase in newsletter expenses, including postage (\$400); an anticipated increase in arrangements (\$500) and the filming of forums (\$500) because more in-person events are expected; and an increase in our PMP to LWVNM and LWVUS based on actual membership. Income for FY2024 was also adjusted based on actual dues received and the reduction in donations received

from local businesses. Furthermore, The LWVNM Convention will be held in Los Alamos this year and we expect to be reimbursed \$1,500 for our expenses.

Julie explained that the FY2025 budget largely mirrors the proposed FY2024 budget with two notable exceptions: an additional \$5,000 expense is anticipated for the expenses associated with the LWVUS Convention (e.g., airfare and lodging); and, because it will be a Presidential election year, it is expected that Program expenses (e.g., Voter Guide, advertising) will increase substantially. Our income is expected to remain the same.

In sum, our Net Operating Income for FY2024 is estimated to be (\$2,485.36) and our Net Operating Income for FY2025 is estimated to be (\$12,421.86). However, because we have substantial funds in our savings and checking accounts, our Total Cash Position is expected to be \$26,613.55 in FY2024 and \$14,191.69 in FY2025.

Rebecca Chaiken moved that we approve the FY2024 and FY2025 budgets as presented, and Jody Benson seconded this motion.

Galen Gisler noted that running a deficit such as this cannot go on forever. Julie replied that we have had a negative net operating income for the last ten years, but our strong cash position has allowed us to stay in the black. Barbara Calef noted that we need to increase our fundraising activities by appealing to local businesses and by applying to the Delle Foundation for funds, which have been promised once an application is received. Julie also suggested that we could increase our dues. Currently, we break even on single memberships and earn only \$1 per household membership. Furthermore, a budget is just a prediction.

All voted in favor to approve the FY2024 and FY2025 budgets.

Adoption of Local Programs

Barbara Calef

League bylaws require that, in addition to sharing Bylaws amendments, the Budget, and the Nominees with the membership one month before the annual meeting, the recommended local Program also be shared one month before the meeting. This should have occurred on March 20 but was not actually shared until April 1. Our Parliamentarian, Felicia Orth, recommended a threshold vote to proceed with consideration of the local Program notwithstanding the delay. A vote to proceed is not a vote to approve any part of the Program, only to consider it as recommended by the board.

Akkana Peck moved to proceed, and this was seconded by Jody Benson. All voted in favor.

Programs consist of 1) action to promote League's positions; 2) local government issues that are chosen for study and action; and 3) education of the public.

Our positions were published in the April *Update*, and they are as follows:

- Sustainability
- Public Transportation
- Environment
- Sustainable Water
- Affordable Housing
- Fuller Lodge
- Medically Indigent Fund
- Land Use and Transportation: Residential Neighborhoods
- Education
- Digital Privacy

During Program planning every year, we review our positions to see if any of them need to be updated or if we wish to undertake a new study. Our annual Program planning event took place at the home of Ellen Mills on January 30.

At this meeting, it was suggested that the *Environment* position should be updated to specify the policies we support rather than referring to the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and the Open Space Management Plan. The board subsequently approved this recommendation. Jody Benson, Akkana Peck, and Ann LePage agreed to help Barbara Calef with this task. At today's meeting, Wendy Swanson also volunteered.

At the Annual Meeting, we always readopt our positions. It has already been determined that the *Environment* positions need to be updated. Barbara read through our other League positions and asked for any comments. George Chandler moved to readopt these positions and the motion was seconded by Maire O'Neill. All voted in favor.

Wendy Swanson then asked how we use our positions to educate the public, including organizations such as the DPU, and asked if they are amended based on current events such as the chromium plume. There was a subsequent discussion on this issue. Barbara noted that our positions allow us to advocate, regardless of new events, but asked the membership to contact the board if they believe a position should be amended.

Also at the Program planning meeting, it was proposed that the League focus on the following issues during the next year:

- Composting
- The County's use of consultants
- Open space (finish rezoning, consideration of additional protections)
- Support for the recommendations of the Los Alamos Resiliency, Energy, and Sustainability Task Force (LARES)

These Actions were approved by the board. Maire O'Neill asked that the League also focus on Racial Equity and Inclusion (REI). She noted that despite racist issues which have recently occurred in our schools, the County Council voted not to continue the REI task force (only Councilor Ryti voted to continue).

Rebecca Chaiken moved that we adopt the Actions approved at the Program planning meeting, in addition to the Action proposed by Maire O'Neill, and George Chandler seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

Also, during the Program planning meeting this year, Jody Benson proposed that we undertake a study on pit production, and this was approved by the board. The study summary is as follows:

Should large scale pit production for nuclear weapons occur in Los Alamos?

Scope

1. Background information
 - a. Explain/define pits and how they are used for nuclear weapons.
 - b. Where were the former pit factories and why was the production discontinued there?
 - c. What is the current plan for pit production?
2. Does the county need to build new pits?
 - a. Evidence pro and con that the existing weapons are not viable.
 - b. Are they needed for new weapons?
 - c. Effect of production on national security – pro (deterrence) and con (increased tension).
3. If new pits are needed, why build them in Los Alamos?

- a. Why not build them at Pantex?
- b. Advantages (jobs, federal dollars) and disadvantages (safety and environmental issues) of building them in Los Alamos.

Jody provided a brief overview of her proposed study and a lively discussion followed. Carroll Thomas said that the Lab already has an issue with lack of space and facilities for such an undertaking, in addition to staffing and housing for workers. Eduardo Santiago asked Jody what the expected outcome of her study would be. Jody responded that the outcome of the study could provide us with a position which we could use to advocate. In response to a question by Karyl Ann Armbruster, Barbara Calef provided an overview of how a study is conducted. This includes consensus meetings. If there is no consensus, the study goes no further.

George Chandler said that he opposes such a study because, “the train has already left the station” and security clearance is required to answer the questions posed by the study. Jean Dewart advised the membership that the Department of Energy is already undertaking a sitewide Environmental Impact Statement which would include pit production. Cynthia Biddlecomb questioned the purpose of such a study because Los Alamos has already seen increases in federal dollars, housing, and transportation. Jody responded that because the Lab currently does not have the facility for pit production, it may not be a done deal for Los Alamos.

Galen Gisler noted that there have been numerous “train derailments” recently and there is much skepticism about the necessity of pit production in the physics world. He will vote “yes” on undertaking the study because we need to educate ourselves. Akkana Peck added that the County Council has been in favor of helping the Lab with housing, as an example, and the outcome of this study could affect how the County deals with these issues.

Ballots were passed out to those members present, and the ballots were counted by Felicia Orth and Eduardo Santiago. Those voting for the study to proceed totaled 18 and those voting for no such study totaled 6. The study will proceed.

Co-President's Report

Barbara Calef

We continued to hold our meetings on Zoom through 2022. The advantage of the virtual meetings is that they can be recorded and posted on our website. Also, we can invite speakers from outside of the region. The benefit of meeting in person is that there is more opportunity to chat informally with our neighbors and the speakers. We plan to alternate virtual and in person events in the coming months.

The League did not hold a candidate forum for the primary election in 2022 because none of the local candidates faced opposition at that time. We did produce a Voter Guide, which was distributed in the *LA Daily Post*.

In June, Becky set up a display with part of the League’s centennial exhibit at the Southside Branch of the Santa Fe Library.

Felicia, Rosmarie, and I attended the LWVUS Convention in Denver. While we were there, the Supreme Court reversed *Roe v. Wade*. In response, the delegates marched on the Capitol, joining hundreds of local residents, to express our disappointment and disapproval of the decision. During the convention, Felicia and I also toured the office of the Denver County Clerk. Denver County has more than 500,000 registered voters. We learned that in Colorado ballots are automatically mailed to all registered voters. Since the transition to all mailed ballots and vote centers, we were told that the state-wide cost of elections has dropped by 40 percent.

Work on the Voter Guide for the 2022 General Election began in July, when the board chose the questions for each office. Even though LWVUS has initiated a national voter guide called Vote411,

which enables all local voter guides to be accessed online by everyone with internet access, the printed Voter Guides remain very popular.

In August League members marched in the rodeo parade, wearing our suffragist garb. In September and October, we alternated with the County Clerk's Office to register voters at the farmers' market. On September 17 Voter Services Director Lynn Jones joined members of the County Clerk's office in Bandelier for the naturalization ceremony, helping to register the 14 new citizens to vote.

Also, in September we wrote to the County Council asking for their support for Constitutional Amendment 2 on the November ballot. The purpose of the amendment was to allow the expenditure of state funds to assist in the construction of utility lines or other infrastructure for energy, internet, water, wastewater, and similar services for primarily residential purposes. The amendment passed.

We held two candidate forums prior to the November election. For the first time the board decided to allow unopposed candidates to answer questions. Previously, they could only make a statement. As in the past, a student from the high school debate team served as timekeeper.

In January we conducted the traditional joint LWV/AAUW Legislative Preview with our three legislators and Kristina Fisher of Think New Mexico at Fuller Lodge. It was our first in person public event in three years and was very well-attended.

Los Alamos League members attended the state League's Legislative reception on February 15 where Senator Bingaman discussed his new book, "Breakdown: Lessons for a Congress in Crisis." The following day we set up the League's history exhibit on a table in the Roundhouse. There were also tables for the state League and Fair Districts New Mexico. At the State Land Office Stephanie Garcia Richard spoke about the legislation she was supporting. Jeremy Farris, Executive Director of the New Mexico Ethics Commission, explained the importance of an independent redistricting commission and Amber Wallin, Executive Director of New Mexico Voices for Children, discussed the budget. Fewer people than normal attended these events, partly because of poor weather.

Participation in the legislative process has become much easier now that the committee meetings are hybrid. Many League members were able to make public comment in the name of the League and the LWVNM Action Committee was larger and more active than ever before. Akkana is now the chair of the Action Committee.

During the legislative session we published an op-ed in the *Los Alamos Daily Post* and the *Los Alamos Reporter* advocating for passage of three joint resolutions, HJR1, HJR2, and HJR8. If they had passed, the state's voters would have been able to vote in 2024 for or against constitutional amendments to create an independent redistricting commission, to lengthen the legislative sessions, and to create a commission to establish salaries for New Mexico's legislators. Sadly, none of the resolutions passed.

On March 30 Becky and Jody presented "From Women's Suffrage to Local Governance: A Historical Perspective from the League of Women Voters" at SALA during a celebration of Women's Month.

Our other activities during the past year included:

- monthly Lunch with a Leader programs
- monitoring the meetings of the County Council and Planning and Zoning Commission
- speaking in support for the Zero Waste Team, improving access to high quality broadband, and open space protection in the new Development Code.

I would like to thank the whole board and the off-board directors for helping in all these efforts, especially: Becky for being an excellent co-president; Karyl Ann for the success of Lunch with a Leader; Jean Dewart for improving our membership records; Akkana Peck and Bob Williams for providing technical support for all of our meetings and Bob for producing our newsletters; Jody for

publicizing our forums; Helena Whyte and Madhavi Garimella, who have been in charge of the website and social media; Lynn Jones for producing the Voter Guides and Lynn and Akkana for posting the candidate responses on Vote411; and June Fabryka Martin and Craig Martin, who have done an amazing job of reporting on the County Council and the P&Z meetings.

Membership Report

Jean Dewart

Jean reported that we currently have 116 individual members. This consists of 43 single and 17 household memberships. We also have 15 sustaining single and 16 sustaining household memberships. Jean noted that the dues for single and household memberships go to LWVNM and LWVUS. The extra funds provided by sustaining memberships stay in Los Alamos to pay for our expenses. Jean provided membership forms for those who wished to renew their memberships.

Addie Jacobson asked the difference between members and donors. Jean explained that some individuals wish to donate but do not wish to be League members. Eduardo asked why the membership form does not make this distinction. Jean responded that the form has been revised and is now improved.

Proposed Amendments to Bylaws

Barbara Calef

Two amendments to the bylaws have been approved by the board and are submitted to the membership for adoption. The first amendment concerns Article V, Section 3, regarding vacancies on the board of directors. The current language reads, in part, "Any officer who misses three consecutive board meetings may be removed by a majority vote of the Board." The new language which is proposed reads, "Three consecutive absences from a board meeting without notification to the president or secretary and without a valid reason shall be deemed a resignation." Eduardo asked that the word "and" be replaced with the word "or."

Kyle Wheeler moved to accept the amendment and revised language, and this was seconded by Karyl Ann Armbruster. All voted in favor.

The second proposed amendment concerns Article VI, Section 1, regarding board Officers. It is proposed that the position of Past President be a new board officer to provide guidance and continuity to the board. Kyle Wheeler moved to accept this new board position and the motion was seconded by Akkana Peck.

Before a vote on this motion was taken, David North said that the proposed language suggests that the Past President *must* provide guidance and continuity to the board, and he asked if that was the intent. Leslie Wallstrom questioned the precedent for such a position and asked if LWVUS considers Past President to be a voting member of the board. Barbara and Felicia responded that LWVNM and many other nonprofit organizations have past President as a board position. Maire O'Neill then moved that the proposed language be accepted as presented and Kyle seconded this motion.

Akkana Peck then questioned the language, "...shall be elected for terms of one year at the annual meeting." Kyle Wheeler called the question.

All members, except Leslie Wallstrom, voted in favor of calling the question. All members, except Leslie Wallstrom, subsequently voted to accept the proposed change to the bylaws.

Election of Officers and Directors

The Nominations Committee, composed of Ellen Mills and Leslie Wallstrom, presented the following slate of nominees for the 2023-2024 LWVLA Board of Directors:

Officers

- President - Felicia Orth
- 1st Vice President - open
- 2nd Vice President - Ellen Mills
- Past President - Barbara Calef
- Secretary - Rebecca Chaiken
- Treasurer - Addie Jacobson

Directors

- Reservations - Amy Birnbaum
- Lunch with a Leader - Karyl Ann Armbruster
- Newsletter - Robert Williams
- Publicity - Jody Benson
- Director at Large - Akkana Peck
- Director at Large - Becky Shankland
- Voter Guide - *open*

Leslie asked for volunteers or nominations from the floor and there were none. Kyle Wheeler moved to adopt the nominations and the motion was seconded by Karyl Ann Armbruster. All voted in favor.

No vote is needed for Off-Board Directors, but they include Arrangements – Wendy Swanson; Nominating Committee – *open*; Fundraising – Ellen Mills, Leslie Wallstrom, and Tracy McFarland; Observer Corps – June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin; Membership – Jean Dewart; Website/Social Media - Helena Whyte and Madhavi Garimella; and Video Editing – Eduardo Santiago.

Announcements

The LWVNM Convention will be held in Los Alamos on April 29 and 30 at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Los Alamos. Los Alamos delegates will include Felicia Orth, Becky Shankland, Rosmarie Frederickson, Jean Dewart, Ellen Mills, and Karyl Ann Armbruster. State board delegates will include Barbara Calef, Rebecca Chaiken, Akkana Peck and Ann LePage. Felicia Orth will also serve as Parliamentarian. All members are invited to participate and need to register online.

On the evening of April 29, a banquet will be held at Pig and Fig in White Rock. The cost is \$50, and the details are provided in the recent edition of *La Palabra*.

Our new president, Felicia Orth, thanked Barbara Calef for her many years of service. Becky Shankland also honored Barbara, who was presented with a gift of flowers.

Barbara adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m.

Rebecca Chaiken, Secretary

Reviewed by Kyle Wheeler and Wendy Swanson

Tickler Report – Tentative Council Agenda Items

Tickler Report Tentative Council Agenda Items for April 2023

This is a partial list of tentative Council agenda items. All of the items are subject to change.

- Ordinance adopting a Municipal Gross Receipts Tax
 - Introduction of draft ordinance at 6/13/23 meeting
- New County public website
 - Presentation by Granicus Open Cities at 6/13/23 meeting
- Transit Study
 - ⇒Presentation at 6/13/23 meeting
- Trinity Road Diet
 - Presentation at 6/13/23 meeting
- North Mesa Housing Project
 - Presentation at 6/13/23 meeting
- Regional Planning Presentation on Transportation, Housing, and NCNMED
 - Presentation at 6/27/23 meeting
- LANL Strategic Planning Presentation
 - Presentation at 6/27/23 meeting

Tickler Report – County BCC Vacancies

County BCC Vacancies as of May 31, 2023

Los Alamos County has 12 standing Boards and Commissions (BCCs). Generally, the purpose of a board is to serve in an advisory capacity to the County Council, but some have statutory responsibilities as well.

All BCCs are listed below with their current vacancies. Upcoming vacancies (in the next 6 months) are in yellow.

• Art in Public Places Board	3
◦ No terms ending soon	
• Board of Public Utilities	0
◦ No terms ending soon	
• County Health Council	3
◦ No terms ending soon	
• Environmental Sustainability Board	0
◦ No terms ending soon	
• Historic Preservation Advisory Board	2
◦ 2 terms ending on October 1	
• Labor Management Relations Board	0
◦ No terms ending soon	
• Library Board	0
◦ 2 terms ending on August 31	
• Lodgers' Tax Advisory Board	0
◦ No terms ending soon	
• Parks and Recreation Board	1
◦ No terms ending soon	
• Personnel Board	1
◦ No terms ending soon	
• Planning and Zoning Commission	2
◦ No terms ending soon	
• Transportation Board	4
◦ No terms ending soon	

Interested Los Alamos County residents may submit an online application by visiting the County's Boards and Commissions webpage and selecting "apply."

https://www.losalamosnm.us/government/boards__commissions

LWVLA Board of Directors 2023-2024

Officers:

- President: Felicia Orth
- 1st Vice-President: [open]
- 2nd Vice-President: Ellen Mills
- Past President: Barbara Calef
- Secretary: Rebecca Chaiken
- Treasurer: Addie Jacobson

Directors:

- Reservations: Amy Birnbaum
- Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster
- Newsletter Editor: Robert Williams
- Publicity: Jody Benson
- Director at Large: Akkana Peck
- Director at Large: Rebecca Shankland
- Voter Services: Lynn Jones

Off-board Directors:

- Arrangements: Wendy Swanson
- Nominating Committee: [open]
- Fundraising: Ellen Mills, Leslie Wallstrom, and Tracy McFarland
- Observer Corps, County Council: June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin
- Membership: Jean Dewart
- Website/Social Media: Madhavi Garimella and Helena Whyte
- Video: Eduardo Santiago



MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

Date: _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone(s) _____

E-mail(s) _____

Membership Categories: All checks for memberships and contributions should be payable to LWV-Los Alamos and all are tax-deductible. Let us know if you'd like a tax-deduction statement. A substantial portion of Single and Household membership dues support state and national League of Women Voters work. The additional funds from sustaining single or household memberships support Los Alamos LWV initiatives such as the Voter Guide, candidate forums, etc.

_____ Single membership: \$45

_____ Household membership (two or more people at the same address): \$70

_____ Single Sustaining membership: \$75

_____ Household Sustaining membership (two or more people at the same address): \$95

_____ Student membership: Free (must be 16 or over)

_____ Additional donation to support the Los Alamos LWV work: \$_____

_____ Check here to receive our Newsletter *Update* as an electronic file, saving postage and paper

_____ **OR** Check here if you prefer to have a hard copy of the newsletter mailed to you.

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

Ways to help the League if you wish to be an active member (check as many as apply)

_____ Register voters at events such as the Farmers Market. Training by the County Clerk's office

_____ Organize/provide refreshments at forums when we meet in person.

_____ Observer Corps: Watch Council, DPU, P&Z meetings etc. and write a short summary to publish in our newsletter. (All meetings are recorded, so you can watch them later.)

_____ Write newsletter articles on a local issue or League activity.

_____ Assist in developing the Voter Guide: edit, develop questions, enter data onto League database, work with news publications to get the information printed, etc.

_____ Assist with Lunch with a Leader: order/deliver lunches when we meet in person, help set up tables.

_____ Website/social media: technical assistance and content development.

_____ Advocate for League positions: communicate with local, state, and federal leaders.

_____ Serve on the LWV-Los Alamos Board.

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