

LWW 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
www.LWVLosAlamos.org
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Calendar

October 5	Candidate Forum, UNM-LA, 7 p.m. (6:30 p.m. for refreshments)
October 10	Early Voting Begins
October 12	Legislative Council Service Presentation on the Budget and Taxes – 10 a.m. at State Capitol and Zoom
October 18	Deadline for Climate Action Plan Survey
October 19	Lunch with a Leader, Eric Peterson, Unitarian Church Fellowship Hall, noon
October 20	LWVLA Membership Party, 1577 Camino Medio, LA, 5:30 p.m.

October Lunch with a Leader: LAC Open Space Specialist Eric Peterson

Our October 19 Lunch with a Leader speaker at the Fellowship Hall in the Unitarian Church will be Eric Peterson, the Open Space Specialist for Los Alamos County. The program begins at noon and concludes around 1 p.m.

Peterson grew up in a military family. He attended high school in southern Ohio and later graduated from Bowling Green State University. It was during his time in college that he was introduced to the Southwest by a college professor who took college students on cultural immersion trips. After a two-week visit, he decided that New Mexico and Arizona is where he wanted to be. He spent the first year living and teaching on the Navajo Nation. Then he found employment working for the City of Albuquerque Open Space Division, which led him to his current position.

Peterson will talk about recent projects, what his position entails, implementation of the Open Space Management Plan (OSMP), trails maintenance by the new contractor, the plan to Consolidate the OSMP with the Trails Management Plan, Community Trail Plan, and the update on the LAC Trailhead Assessment. He will tell us his current priorities and ways to volunteer!

Karyl Ann Armbruster

President's Message: The Air Is Crisp and So Are the Ballots

Fall is here! Turtlenecks replace t-shirts, apples and plums replace peaches, the last of the migrating hummingbirds are seeking nectar in warmer places, and an election is around the corner. The Los Alamos County Clerk sent an informative mailer last week, with all relevant dates and deadlines, along with voting locations throughout the County.

Knowing that early voting begins October 10 this year, the LWVLA Board has been especially busy preparing the Voter Guide that will be tucked into the Los Alamos Daily Post paper on October 5 and preparing for the Candidate Forum in the evening of October 5. Pull that Voter Guide out and read the answers from all candidates to League questions. Join us for the Forum, where we will enjoy treats and socializing at 6:30, and then hear from the County Clerk, the LAPS Superintendent, and all or nearly all the candidates.

Besides the Voter Guide and Forum, we are delighted to be planning a membership party on October 20, which promises to be a lot of fun.

Felicia Orth

Los Alamos Climate Action Plan Survey

Please fill out the survey if you have not done so. It will be available until the end of the day on October 18. The results will indicate how the County's residents want to move forward to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to prepare for the impacts of climate change. It will take only a few minutes.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LosAlamosCAPSurvey>

LWVLA Membership Party

All League members are invited to gather at Ellen Mills's house (1577 Camino Medio) at 5:30 on Friday, October 20, for our first social gathering since the pandemic. Potluck contributions are welcome. Jody Benson will recount her experiences as a Donut Dollie in Korea. It will be fun! RSVP to Ellen Mills at efmillsnm@gmail.com or call (505) 660-2345.

Observer Corps Report – County Council – Regular Session – September 5, 2023

*Short Term Rental Program, Radiation
Exposure Compensation Act, Food Waste
Composting Project*

This hybrid session was attended by Chair Denise Derkacs, Vice Chair Theresa Cull, and Councilors 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.

Los Alamos County Short-term Rental Program

Paul Andrus, Community Development Director (CDD), and Sobia Sayeda, Planning Manager, updated Council on the status of the process to develop an ordinance for regulating short-term rentals (STRs) in the County. They requested guidance from Council regarding the next steps to be taken towards finalizing a draft ordinance.

What is a short-term rental?

STRs, which commonly use sites such as AirBnb, Vrbo, and FlipKey, are defined as: "any dwelling unit, or part thereof, where lodging is provided for no more than 30 days for compensation." STRs are popular with travelers seeking an authentic local experience. Nationwide, interest in hosting and operating STRs by property owners has increased in the last couple of years. Sayeda emphasized that STRs do not include bed and breakfast establishments or residents renting out part of their house, e.g., for summer students at the Lab or for interns while seeking a more permanent solution.

STRs in the County.

Currently, the County's Development Code does not include a mechanism for STRs to legally operate in the County, nor a way to manage their benefits and drawbacks. Sayeda

noted that CDD has received a dozen or more inquiries from the general public regarding turning property, such as a guest house, into a STR. "We don't have a mechanism to tell them, 'this is what you need to do,'" she said. "The biggest difference here is that we have had bed and breakfast in our code since the 1960s, but one of the big requirements for a bed and breakfast is that you have to be present on the premises as an owner or agent of owner. Short-term rentals are not required to do that."

STR drawbacks.

One concern about STRs is that they may limit the availability and drive up the costs of housing in communities when properties that would otherwise be available for housing local residents are used instead for lodging out-of-town visitors. STRs might also affect the availability of on-street parking. STRs may be used to host gatherings that generate nuisances such as noise or trash. Unregulated STRs potentially create a conflict with the County's goal to protect the residential character of existing neighborhoods.

Regulatory tools under consideration

These include annual safety inspections of STR properties, annual caps on the number of licenses, density restrictions, off-street parking regulations, public notice requirements, and review of permit applications by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Community input.

In considering the potential scope for STR regulations, CDD initially looked at issues nationally in comparable communities on East and West coasts. The list was then narrowed down to adjacent communities including Durango, Santa Fe, Ruidoso, and Albuquerque. "We compiled the list of common themes from these communities, and then we brought it forward to the public and the steering committee for their input." This committee includes a wide diversity of entities from private, public, and commercial sectors who are concerned with establishing, operating, and regulating STRs.

CDC staff recommendations.

Because some components of STR regulations are currently being challenged, both nationally and locally, staff recommended that they monitor the regulatory aspects being challenged and their outcomes before a final program is proposed. "We don't want to bring something forward that is not going to stand up, legally or otherwise," said Andrus.

Council discussion.

Councilors in general supported reasons to allow and even encourage STRs in the community. Councilor Cull summarized the opinions of several councilors. "I'm generally supportive of an ordinance for STRs," she said. "I just don't want us to get to the point where we're making it so onerous that we're not going to have any. We need housing. We need to make it easier to create more housing, if possible."

Councilor Havemann added that more lodging opportunities are needed in our community because we are very short on hotel capacity. According to Sayeda, local hotels are running at full capacity during the week although they are a bit low on weekends. "We've got a visitor and tourism mini-industry," said Councilor Havemann, "where we don't have enough accommodations, we have a lot of visitors to the Lab, a lot of student interns who need space. We have a lot of contractors who come in for very short periods of time to do various projects and jobs here, and when they have to consume a hotel space, then we don't have that for other people we want to accommodate."

Councilor views diverged widely on whether or not a yearly cap should be established on the number of STRs allowed in the County and, if so, what that number should be. The primary purpose of a cap would be to minimize the potential for STRs to reduce the availability of local housing. In her presentation to Council, Sayeda suggested a cap of 50 STRs. She said, "There was public that was interested in having no cap on short-term rentals, and there was also public who had input that, 'we don't want to have big

corporations to come in and scoop up 50 of our properties and turn those into short-term rentals, as they're seeing in other communities."

While acknowledging the need for a cap, Councilor Havemann felt that it should be set much higher, as did several other councilors. Using a back-of-the-envelope calculation, Councilor Havemann estimated that Santa Fe's cap of 1000 STRs [the cap was recently increased to 1200] might equate to allowing about 2.6% of the city's properties to be STRs. "If we applied that same ratio here," she said, "we would have about 200. One could argue that they're a big tourist destination and I would argue that, well, we are too, and we also have all the Lab interns and short-term contractors who are coming here, and we have a fraction, a miniscule fraction, of the hotel capacity they have. So, if the steering committee feels strongly about having a cap, I would suggest that it be much higher than 50."

Radiation Exposure Compensation Act

By unanimous vote, Council authorized Chair Derkacs to sign a letter of support to the County's federal delegation regarding the extension and expansion of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA), as amended within the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Proposed RECA amendment.

In the current version, only those who lived near the Nevada Test Site during a period of atomic weapons testing are eligible for compensation for their status as downwinders. The amendment would expand the downwinder eligibility to include residents of Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. It would also expand eligibility for individuals working in uranium mines, mills, or transporting uranium ore after 1971. Finally, it would increase the amount of compensation an individual may receive and extend the RECA program another 19 years following enactment.

Food Waste Composting Project

The County's new food composting project had been planned to occur in Bayo Canyon, but that location has proven to be relatively infeasible, reported County Manager Steven Lynne. The County is exploring options back at the current Eco Station, such as the landfill location. "Because that is DOE land," said Lynne, "we have started a conversation with them. ... Later, we'll probably have a more formal report to you."

Local News Coverage

Los Alamos Daily Post, September 7, 2023, Video: Councilor Randall Ryti Recaps Sept. 5 Meeting: <https://ladailypost.com/video-councilor-randall-ryti-recaps-sept-5-meeting>

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Observer Corps Report - County Council – Work Session – September 19, 2023

LANL Transit, Health Council, Community Health Plan, BPU Updates

This hybrid work session was attended by Chair Denise Derkacs, Vice Chair Theresa Cull, and Councilors 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.

LANL Transit Implementation Study

The LANL Transit Implementation Plan was presented by Suzie Birdsell of Nelson/Nygaard Consulting, which is currently under contract with the North Central Regional Transit District (NCRTD) and LANL. The plan lays out alternative transportation options for the growing workforce at LANL. Ultimately, LANL projects the need to transport about 4,500 LANL commuters on either public transit or LANL-run shuttles by 2028.

Why LANL needs a transit plan

Providing an idea of the scale of LANL's transit challenge, Birdsell reported that LANL projects that its staff will grow from ~15,000 to ~18,000 employees by 2028. Most employees (80%) are expected to be on site 4-5 days per week. Road capacities cannot accommodate so many new employees driving alone. In the Pajarito Corridor, 3,000 employees will not have parking and will need to arrive by other means. Many employees (1,000+) will want to commute by means other than driving alone for such reasons as cost savings, working/relaxing instead of concentrating on driving, environmental stewardship, and other LANL incentives.

Phased approach

Birdsell outlined LANL's multi-pronged strategy to increase employees' use of mass transit, which consists of four basic approaches:

- Increase ridership on existing public service by educating LANL employees about transit and incentivizing commuting by transit.
- Increase ridership on Los Alamos County's Atomic City Transit as it implements recommendations in its Short Range Transportation Plan [see observer report for Council work session on March 14 in the April 2023 *LWVLA Update*].
- Implement new services for employees living outside Los Alamos County. LANL has already initiated a pilot bus route from the Cities of Gold Casino in Pojoaque to the Los Alamos Transit Center at TA-3. Other long-distance shuttle options are being explored for Española, Santa Fe, Rio Rancho, and Albuquerque.
- Add trips to existing services. NCRTD is developing a new route that will connect Española riders to a LANL-run shuttle operating out of White Rock. LANL also seeks to increase trips on NMDOT Park and Ride routes.

Parking needs

Birdsell estimated that about 2500 parking spaces will be needed for the long-term

shuttles and buses operating out of the four main markets outside of the county. For each market, the plan identifies several potential lots that are either currently available or that could be developed.

Incentives

Birdsell listed programs that LANL is developing to address the five most popular approaches to encourage its employees to not drive alone:

- Pay employees directly for not driving alone to work;
- Allow employees to take a government vehicle overnight if they do not have their own on-site and an emergency arises;
- Use internal/hybrid shuttles, bikeshare, and government-owned vehicles to get around LANL;
- Provide NMDOT passes at a discount or free to employees.

Strategy to address transit operator shortage

One of the biggest obstacles to full implementation of the shuttle and bussing programs is a shortage of transit operators. Birdsell said that LANL is addressing the shortage using several strategies:

- Pay competitive salaries from the get-go, with opportunity for raises and other types of advancement;
- Offer work hours and scheduling to minimize split-shifts and mandated overtime;
- Focus on carpooling/vanpooling, which can relieve the need for LANL-run long distance shuttles.

Los Alamos County Health Council Update

Lori Padilla, Health Council Chair, and Jessica Strong, County Social Services Division Manager, provided an overview on the work that is underway by the Health Council to define the scope of health and social services needed in the County.

Padilla said that the vision of the Health Council is to enable all members of the

community to have access to health resources. The Council's work is driven primarily by available grant money and work plans. Four of the Council's current priority interest areas listed by Padilla are BabyNet; Older Adult Network; special needs of residents with disabilities; and youth resiliency, which focuses on the mental wellness and resiliency concerns of young people in the community.

Jessica Strong described each of the three primary activities in which the Health Council is engaged: completion of the Comprehensive Health Plan, participation in the Community Health Improvement Plan, and serving as an advocate for issues brought to the Health Council by community members.

Comprehensive Health Plan

This is a two-year investigation that identifies unmet health, wellness, and social service needs in the County and culminates in recommendations to address those needs. Progress on the plan is described below.

Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

This is capacity building led by the NM Department of Health to enhance issues of importance as determined by County Health Councils throughout the state. It is funded through traditional Health Council funding provided to each Health Council throughout the state. LA County's identified priorities include:

- completion of the Comprehensive Health Plan,
- improved data tracking, evaluation, and outcomes reporting,
- improved communications of health-related issues, such as through social media, websites, or resource guides and ultimately leading to
- improved health outcomes, particularly for low-income individuals.

Another activity in progress is implementation of closed-loop referral software. Strong described it as cloud-based software, accessible by lots of providers in the community to allow an entire network to help clients without the need to tell their story over

and over. The software is HIPAA-compliant, and information is only entered with the client's permission. "It shortens the amount of time to get somebody the help that they need," said Strong, "whether that is housing or utilities or anything in that network." Padilla added that the closed-loop referral software will also provide the data to measure the success of the program.

Health advocacy

A primary role for the Health Council is to act as an advocate for health and well-being issues brought by community members bringing proposals to the County Council. Strong said that the Health Council is working to improve this process. "We have noticed that the first part of that has been really good, and community members have reached out to the Health Council, brought presentations ... But we're now working on developing action steps to come out of these presentations." As an example, she recounted that, "Back in March, community member Bob Dryja gave a great presentation looking at the data highlighting older adults, in particular older adult women, who are on the cusp of living in poverty. What are their physical health, mental health, social service needs? And so we're working on coming up with a better process for creating some action steps to come out of these presentations" that can then be taken to County Council.

Padilla also commented on the four vacancies currently on the Health Council. "That is partly because of the distribution we have to have with the political affiliation. We're short on Republicans, so if people know of somebody that wants to do that, we would love to have additional people."

Councilor questions

Councilor Reagor asked about the continuing decline of medical specialists at the Los Alamos Medical Center. If this trend continues, he noted, the Medical Center will essentially become just a clinic. "Isn't that the biggest issue?" he asked. He wanted to know what the Health Council was doing to address it. Other councilors shared this concern.

Strong and others pointed out that the Medical Center is a private entity providing medical services to the community, and is not a contracted service provider. Consequently, the Health Council has no control over the Medical Center's decisions. Padilla added that "the problem with doctors is also a New Mexico problem. We've had a huge number of practitioners leave the state because of the [New Mexico medical] malpractice insurance."

Community Health Plan and General Social Services Update

Dr. Emily Piltch updated Council on progress being made on the development of the Comprehensive Health Plan for the County in coordination with the County Health Council. Piltch is the Health Equity & Comprehensive Health Plan Coordinator in the County's Social Services Division. She reported that planning efforts are in the data collection phase to investigate existing health, wellness, and social service strengths and unmet needs in the community. The project team is now focusing on hearing from individuals with unique health needs and first-hand experience navigating health and social services in the County.

Early in the process, scoping interviews were conducted to identify the social determinants of health and well-being in the County. Several themes emerged from interviews involving close to 200 key informants in various health professions, community agencies, and community groups. Piltch provided examples of what local providers shared about the declines in health and well-being that they have observed, much resulting from the pandemic:

- decrease in social skills, including speech of children;
- increased need to leave Los Alamos County for health services;
- increasing isolation of the elderly;
- worsening of mental health, substance misuse, and child neglect during the pandemic; and

- from an economic standpoint, the loss of pandemic relief funds pushing some families over the edge.

Piltch said that similar issues emerged in interviews with community members:

- difficulties in accessing primary care, specialists, and mental health services,
- need to improve accessible housing in the community,
- lack of opportunity for meaningful connections among county residents as well as between the county and its neighboring communities,
- economic challenges faced by non-LANL employees and by those on fixed incomes, and
- youth who are on the cusp of needing additional services but who do not qualify.

Piltch said that the Phase I summary report will be shared with County Council and the public in January 2024. In the first half of 2024, a community-wide health survey will be used to assess the extent to which the community is impacted by issues identified during interviews. Phase II, the implementation of strategies to address major health needs of the community, is expected to begin in FY25.

Board of Public Utilities Update

Steve Tobin, Chair of the Board of Public Utilities (BPU), provided a detailed picture of the County's electric, gas, and water utility assets. He listed some of the primary challenges to managing these assets to provide reliable and affordable delivery of these services:

- rising infrastructure costs due to increases for contract, materials, and salaries;
- staffing shortages and turnover caused in part by competition with LANL for skilled workers;
- reduced hydroelectric output due to drought, watershed management, and repairs; and

- entering a “wild west” of electric generation with insufficient transmission, spikes in gas cost, and a need for storage to manage intermittency.

Tobin said that the current focus areas for BPU and the Department of Public Utilities are implementing the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) [see observer report for 2/7/23 Council meeting in the March 2023 issue of *LWVLA Update*], making a decision regarding whether the County should continue participation in the Carbon Free Power Project (CFPP) [see observer report for 6/21/22 Council meeting in the August 2022 issue of *LWVLA Update*], and investigating possible changes to electric rate structures, such as time of use or residential demand billing.

Local news coverage:

Los Alamos Daily Post, September 21, 2023.
 “Video: Council Chair Denise Derkacs Highlights Meeting”: <https://ladailypost.com/video-council-chair-denise-derkacs-highlights-meeting/>

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Observer Corps Report – County Council – Regular Session – September 26, 2023

County Website, LARES

The hybrid session was attended by Chair Denise Derkacs, Vice Chair Theresa Cull, and Councilors 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.

New County Government Website

The County's new government website is scheduled to go live by the end of October, announced Public Information Officer Julie Williams-Hill. She emphasized that, in the

meantime, the new website is still a work in progress. It will be beta-tested by a community focus group before it replaces the current website.

The County contracted with Granicus OpenCities in September 2022 to redesign, replace, and host the county's government website over the next seven years. The County/Granicus project team has been working to create a new website that is services-oriented and web user-friendly. The team gave an overview of the changes.

The presentation emphasized improvements being made to address two areas identified by users of the existing website as being particularly difficult: finding information and navigating the site.

- *Improved Navigation:* The project team conducted a navigation test with citizen volunteers to understand how the county's web users expect to find information. Content on the new site is being organized and labeled according to this feedback to make information and content easier to find.
- *Services-Oriented:* Information on the website is organized by services rather than by county departments although users will still be able to navigate to the desired information through the department's home page.
- *Google Analytics:* Google Analytics data were examined to identify the content for which individuals searched most frequently. Links to information for the top 12 search topics are now highlighted by icons on the home page. Williams-Hill said that the topics and links selected for highlighting may be updated periodically to reflect changes in what is of current interest to users, such as links to information about seasonal events.
- *Searchable Tools:* The search tool is being improved to make it easier for users to locate the content they seek quickly.
- *Training for Web Administrators:* Web administrators will receive training on best practices and page design principles to improve navigation through visual cues on the web page.

One particularly intriguing feature on the new website is a tool called, "What's going on near me?" Using Google maps, the user can enter in an address to find out what County event, project, road construction activity, or meeting is happening nearby.

Council Working Group on LARES Recommendations

Chair Derkacs announced the establishment of a new Council Working Group to work with the Environmental Sustainability Manager on actions that Council can or should take now to facilitate implementation of Los Alamos Resilience, Energy and Sustainability (LARES) Task Force recommendations. The Working Group will bring back to Council any items that needed a decision to be made before they could move forward, such as policy or funding. Providing the rationale for this new working group, Chair Derkacs pointed out that responsibilities for several LARES recommendations were spread among different County entities. The Working Group will allow progress to be made now rather than waiting until completion of the Climate Action Plan in six months.

The Working Group will consist of three councilors, County staff, and a member of the Department or Board of Public Utilities. Councilors Cull, Havemann, and Ryti volunteered.

Local News Coverage:

Los Alamos Daily Post, September 27, 2023, "Video: Council Vice Chair Theresa Cull Shares Meeting Highlights":
<https://ladailypost.com/video-council-vice-chair-theresa-cull-shares-meeting-highlights/>

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Observer Corps Report – Planning & Zoning Commission – September 13

The Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Commission meeting was attended by Chair Rachel Adler, Vice Chair Stephanie Nakhleh, and Commissioners Katherine Bruell, Karen Easton, David Hampton, Benjamin Hill, and Rebecca White. Commissioners Charlene Hutchison and Neal Martin were absent.

Site Plan Approval for Cañada Bonita

The Commission approved the site plan (5–0, Commissioner Easton was absent for the vote and Commissioner Bruell withdrew) for Cañada Bonita, a mixed-use development on Canyon Road directly across the street from the Canyon Road tennis courts and overlooking Pueblo Canyon.

The site plan shows a 60,559 square-foot mixed-use development with 160 residential apartments and 7,192 square feet of commercial space housed in three four-story

buildings. The development is located on two adjacent properties addressed as 2100 and 2202 Canyon Road. These properties within the Mixed-Use (MU) zoning district are owned by Transcor Development Inc.

The residential rental apartments include 56 one-bedroom units, 80 two-bedroom units, and 24 three-bedroom units. Buildings 2 and 3 have multiple commercial retail lease spaces, each with an exterior plaza or elevated terraces for public and community use for outdoor dining and gathering. All proposed structures are within the 54 feet maximum allowable building height, with proposed building height at 53 feet 6 inches. There is no building setback from the canyon edge, nor is any setback required by the code.

In describing how the project advances Comprehensive Plan goals, Adam Thornton (Transcor Development Corporation's President) said, "Cañada Bonita will promote development of housing stock that would accommodate downsizing households."

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Voter Registration in Los Alamos

Message from the Asst. Public Information Officer, Leslie Bucklin:

"Big THANKS to our Los Alamos County Clerk's Office and League of Women Voters of Los Alamos for making registering to vote easy for all eligible Americans who want to participate in the democratic process. Last night, councilors proclaimed September is Voter Registration Month and

September 19th is Voter Registration Day in Los Alamos County."

September was a busy month for the League. Felicia Orth and Jody Benson joined County Clerk Naomi Maestas to accept the proclamation to honor National Voter Registration Month from the County Council. Lynn Jones and Barbara Calef attended the naturalization ceremony and voter registration for eight new U.S. citizens in Bandelier on September 17. Then, on September 19, Jody joined staff from the Clerk's office to register high school students. (She said the secret to their success was providing cupcakes.) Meanwhile, Lynn Jones, Charlie Sartor, and Barbara Calef



1 - Elections Manager Victoria Martinez assisting a voter.
Photo by Barbara Calef



2 - New citizen registering to vote. Photo by Barbara Calef



3 - A new citizen receives her certificate from Superintendent Suddath. Photo by Craig Martin

offered voter registration in front of the Coop. While nearly all eligible Los Alamos residents are registered, there are always a few who have moved and some who seek information about the election schedule.

Barbara Calef

September Lunch with a Leader: Karl Braithwaite

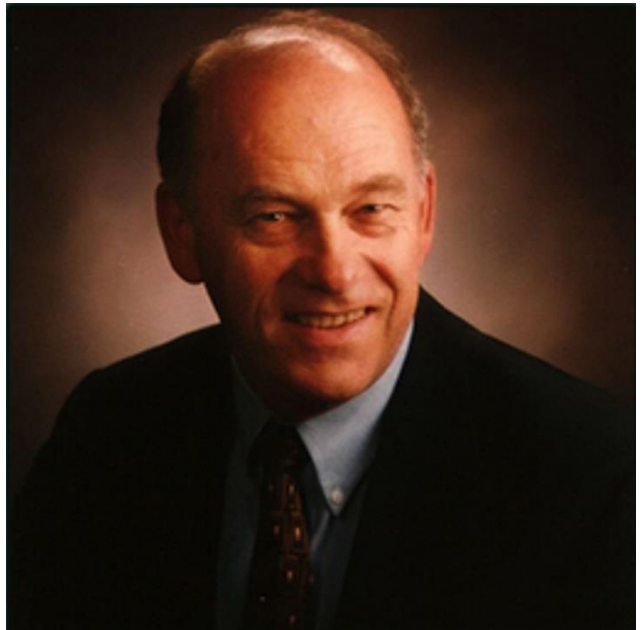
Karl Braithwaite chose to visit Los Alamos for Lunch with a Leader rather than speak on Zoom from his home in Albuquerque. After all, he had lived here for many years when he worked at LANL. His account of his life sounded like a long series of fortuitous events. As a high school student, he wanted to be a research scientist, but, with an interest in the relationship between science and government, he ended up receiving his Ph.D. in political science and accepting a position at Duke University.

After a few years at the university, feeling he needed first-hand experience in the government, he got a one-year fellowship to work in the office of NM Senator Joe Montoya. When he received an offer to be a permanent legislative assistant, he quit his job at Duke because it was “such fun” working in D.C. He ended up spending ten years in the Senate. As Staff Director of the Environment Subcommittee, he helped to write major environmental legislation: the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and Superfund.

Dr. Braithwaite commented that “back when the Senate worked” the system was very effective. For instance, the Clean Air staff members went to Detroit to learn about the auto industry technology; drafted legislation, participated in staff sessions held between the House and Senate, and had an opportunity to educate the legislators. He also remarked on the amount of money required to run for office. It used to take three months of campaigning; now it takes years.

When LANL Director Don Kerr offered him a job, saying he wanted to understand Washington, D.C. and how it was changing, Braithwaite accepted and came to LANL to oversee government relations. After 21 years at the Lab, he moved to Portland, Maine, to build the Muskie School of Public Service. But he returned to New Mexico to finish his career at Sandia Lab as Director of Government Relations.

Since his retirement, Braithwaite has focused on environmental issues, working with the Sierra Club. He said that climate change is the toughest issue since the Civil War, but “We don’t have enough dead bodies yet. It’s hard to go toe to toe with the oil and gas industry.”



Barbara Calef

Tickler Report – Tentative Council Agenda Items

Tickler Report

Tentative Council Agenda Items for October 2023

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

- MOU with Rio Arriba County to Cooperate in Economic and Community Development Projects
 - Presentation at 10/10/23 meeting
- Waste to Electric Production (WEP)
 - Presentation at 10/17/23 meeting
- Resolution of Support for a Bee City Certification
 - Briefing and possible action at 10/17/23 meeting
- Ted Wyka, NNSA Los Alamos Field Office Manager
 - Presentation at 10/24/23 meeting
- LANL: Regional Strategy for Meeting Operation Challenges
 - Presentation at 10/24/23 meeting

Tickler Report – County BCC Vacancies

County BCC Vacancies as of September 30, 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 and current vacancies are below.

Upcoming vacancies are in yellow text. Changes from last report have a magenta highlight.

- | | |
|--|----|
| • Art in Public Places Board | 1 |
| ○ No terms ending soon | |
| • Board of Public Utilities | 0 |
| ○ No terms ending soon | |
| • County Health Council | 4* |
| ○ 5 terms ending Jan 6, 2024 | |
| • Environmental Sustainability Board | 0 |
| ○ No terms ending soon | |
| • Historic Preservation Advisory Board | 0 |
| ○ 2 terms ending Sep 30, 2023 | |
| • Labor Management Relations Board | 0 |
| ○ No terms ending soon | |
| • Library Board | 0 |
| ○ No terms ending soon | |
| • Lodgers' Tax Advisory Board | 0 |
| ○ No terms ending soon | |
| • Parks and Recreation Board | 0 |
| ○ 3 terms ending Nov 30, 2023 | |
| • Personnel Board | 1 |
| ○ No terms ending soon | |
| • Planning and Zoning Commission | 0 |
| ○ No terms ending soon | |
| • Transportation Board | 1 |
| ○ 3 terms ending Feb 28, 2024 | |

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

* The Los Alamos County Code stipulates that "No board or commission shall have more than a simple majority of members registered in the same political party." Consequently, registered Democrats are ineligible for these vacancies. (Note: this qualification does not apply to the Board of Public Utilities.)

LWVLA Board of Directors 2023-2024



The new League board after our first in-person meeting, left to right: Rebecca Chaiken, Amy Birnbaum, Jean Dewart, Akkana Peck, Barbara Calef, Felicia Orth, Addie Jacobson, Lynn Jones, Ellen Mills, Becky Shankland, Karyl Ann Armbruster, Jody Benson. Missing from photo: Bob Williams. Photo by Susanna Marshland.

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: June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin
- Membership: Jean Dewart
- Website/Social Media: Madhavi Garimella and Helena Whyte
- Video: Eduardo Santiago



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

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

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ Date: _____

_____ ZIP: _____

Phone 1: _____ E-mail 1: _____

Phone 2: _____ E-mail 2: _____

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 Single Sustaining or Household Sustaining 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: \$ _____

_____ **Newsletter Update** – Check here to receive it 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)

Name1 Name2

_____ _____ Voter Registration 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: assist in inviting leaders to give presentations; order/deliver lunches when we meet in person, help set up tables, etc.

_____ _____ 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.

_____ _____ Other: _____

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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League of Women Voters of Los Alamos
P.O. Box 158
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