



UPDATE

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

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

Website: www.lwvlosalamos.org

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Calendar

- August 22 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon
- August 29 Town Hall Meeting: Exploration of UNM/LA's Need for Funds, UNMLA Bldg. 2, 7 p.m.
- September 17 Lunch with a Leader, Kim Gabaldon, Mesa Public Library, 11:40 a.m.
- September 17 UNM/LA mil levy ballots due at County Clerk's office, 5 p.m.
- October 3 Land Use Consensus Meeting, location to be announced, 7 p.m.

Lunch with a Leader, September 17: Kimberly Gabaldon

There will be no Lunch with a Leader in August because the rooms were not available. Beginning in September, the week and day of the week will change to the THIRD TUESDAY of the month, rather than the second Thursday. This should certainly end the problem of trying to find a parking place when the Farmer's Market is in season. Hopefully some folks who were not able to attend on Thursday will be able to come on Tuesday!

On September 17, our leader will be Kimberly Gabaldon, LA County's new Social Services Manager. Gabaldon, a native of Ontario, Canada, has a master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, and a master's in Counseling from Lesley University. For the last five years she worked for the State of New Mexico as the Native American Liaison for the Behavioral Health Services Division. During the Annual Meeting, League members asked many questions about how the County is handling indigent health care and related issues. Come and find out the answers on September 17!

Karyl Ann Armbruster

President's Message

Last month Lynn Jones and I drove to Albuquerque to participate in a two-day workshop on Membership and Leadership Development organized by LWVUS. For years, membership in our venerable organization has been falling. We still have an important role to play in the 21st century, but the reservoir of educated women who formed the backbone of the League has dwindled with the rise of employment opportunities and the growth of non-profit organizations. For several years now LWVUS has been training local leaders state by state to recruit new members and turn them into activists. The effort has been successful in many states, resulting in a modest increase in membership.

This year the trainers came to New Mexico. We listened to a power point presentation with a great deal of explanation, and we held practice sessions. It is always a pleasure to interact with the leaders of the other local leagues in New Mexico and share ideas. Now we must try out what we learned. I hope it helps. We desperately need new board members.

Barbara Calef

San Juan Chama Update

Despite the drought, the County has suspended plans to drill water wells along the rim of White Rock Canyon. Following the May 23 tour of the well sites, the Council responded to the vociferous objections of homeowners in the area by requesting a second legal opinion regarding the likelihood that the water right will be lost if the County does not "use it" immediately. Staff is also investigating the possibility of drilling on DOE land instead of in the residential area.

Barbara Calef

Mil Levy Election for UNM/LA

The week of August 27 ballots will be mailed to all registered voters in the County asking them to vote for or against a two mil increase in the operational mil levy to support programs and services for students and the community at large taking courses at the college.

To educate voters about the purpose of the election, our League is organizing a Town Hall Meeting to be held in the Lecture Hall, Building 2, at UNM/LA on Thursday, August 29, beginning at 7 p.m. The format has not yet been determined, but it will be interesting and enlightening and there will be refreshments. Save the date and watch for the Friendly Reminder!

Report of July 11 LWL: Ellen Morris Bond, Director of Self Help

Ellen Morris Bond, Executive Director of Self Help, Inc, was the LWL speaker for July. Self Help is a non-profit organization started in 1969 by Bethlehem Lutheran Church with the goal of enhancing life skills and empowering individuals by providing programs and services that focus on developing self-reliance. It now has a budget of \$280,000 and serves six counties, helping the “near poor” as well as the poor and the homeless. The organization offers funds to provide food, help with the cost of immigration papers, pay electric bills. There is also a fund that provides seed money to help develop a business.

Self Help is responsible for answering 211 calls in the counties of Los Alamos, Taos, Mora, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe and San Miguel and will serve as part of the health care exchange when the Affordable Care Act goes into effect. It is needed: In Rio Arriba 20% of the population is below the poverty line and the state is last in the welfare of children.

The discussion was timely for Los Alamos because the County Council, in order to reduce expenditures, recently reduced the level of service offered by the County’s Health Care Assistance Program, which helps support health care for the needy in our community.

Barbara Calef

Observer Corps Report – July 2013

On June 28th there was a ribbon-cutting and dedication of the new County Municipal Building. Hopefully many of you joined the ceremony celebrating the completion of this facility. The majority of the county staff is finally together in one building, and staffers are already finding a greater sense of improved communications and efficiency with the increased closeness to one another. Even the old modular buildings near the Justice Center that previously housed many staff members have been removed. There is a standing invitation to community members to come and visit the Municipal Building, walk around, and see the new layout. Better yet, attend a County Council meeting in the new council chambers in the near future.

Ellen Hong, our Probate Judge, recently resigned. The County Council chose to replace her by soliciting letters of interest from community members who would like to hold this position through the end of her term, which is December 31, 2014. There are two highly qualified applicants for this position, Christine Chandler and Sharon Marinuzzi, both local attorneys. The County Council will interview both candidates at the August 13th County Council meeting and make a decision at that time.

The groundbreaking for the new Smith’s Marketplace took place on Tuesday, July 23. The retail store on the Trinity Revitalization Site has been a long time in coming, and many residents are pleased that it is finally happening. This state-of-the-art store is apparently unique even to Kroger, so hopefully they will be putting their best foot forward in an effort to make the investment a success. Completion of construction is scheduled for the fall of 2014.

Lynn Jones

Land Use and Transportation Meeting

The Land Use and Transportation Committee submitted its proposed consensus questions to the board last week and they have been approved. All League members are invited to participate in the consensus meeting at 7 p.m. on October 3 in White Rock. We will send out a reminder and directions to the meeting in mid-September.

Land Use Study: Residential Neighborhoods

The Land Use and Transportation study group of the Los Alamos League of Women Voters has met over the past several months to look specifically at the relationship of land use and the sustainability and livability of neighborhoods. Sustainability and livability are distinct concepts, although there is considerable overlap. The 1987 United Nations Brundtland Commission report sets out the classic definition of sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs." Sustainability is focused on the future as well as the present, and in particular the ability to sustain human society within the contexts of the natural environment. It is also broad enough to serve as an umbrella concept for a variety of goals, including livability.

Livability is most often used to describe the diverse aspects of society, surroundings, and shared experiences that shape a community or neighborhood. Livability is focused on the human experience of place, and is specific to the place and time in question. Many organizations active in various aspects of community and regional planning have developed definitions describing what livability means to them.

American Institute of Architects:

Livability is best defined at the local level. Broadly speaking, a livable community recognizes its own unique identity and places a high value on the planning

processes that help manage growth and change to maintain and enhance its community character.

Victoria Transportation Policy

Institute: Community Livability refers to the environmental and social quality of an area as perceived by residents, employees, customers, and visitors. This includes safety and health (traffic safety, personal security, public health), local environmental conditions (cleanliness, noise, dust, air quality, water quality), the quality of social interactions (neighborliness, fairness, respect, community identity and pride), opportunities for recreation and entertainment, aesthetics, and existence of unique cultural and environmental resources (historic structures, mature trees, traditional architectural styles).

The LWV-LA study group began its exploration of the topic of sustainable and livable neighborhoods by first just thinking about their own neighborhood. What were the things they like or don't like about living there? And then, what about other neighborhoods they have experienced? The study group discussed land use issues such as where a neighborhood should be located within the landscape/community, the conservation of resources and natural habitat within and around a neighborhood, and access to nature. The group also considered the planning and design issues such as the mix of types and sizes of homes, mobility and access for all ages and modes of travel within the neighborhoods as well as to important activities outside the neighborhood, the sense of unique place, and the social opportunities.

Janie O'Rourke

Consensus Questions

The following list includes many of the neighborhood design and land use planning attributes that the study group identified as supporting sustainable/livable neighborhoods. Which of these should be considered when developing new neighborhoods or redeveloping existing neighborhoods? Indicate how important, in your opinion, each identified attribute is by selecting *very*, *somewhat* or *not at all*.

1. Where to build (Efficient use of land that minimizes sprawl)

- Site neighborhood development near daily activities (jobs, shopping, schools)
- Neighborhoods farther from the community/commercial center should be larger acreage
- Avoid neighborhood development on steep slopes
- New development should not consume or fragment important natural habitats or wildlife corridors
- Redevelopment of “brownfields” is preferred over new development in pristine landscapes
- Neighborhoods should be along available public transit lines

2. What to build (Neighborhood pattern/design)

- Cluster homes to make transit more viable
- Design recognizable neighborhoods with defined edges and center
- Distance across the neighborhood should be easily walkable
- Streets and pathways should be arranged efficiently and with direct connections
- Design streets and pathways for safe and pleasant walking/biking within neighborhood

- Include a range of housing types/sizes to support diverse neighborhood population; include a mix of affordable housing within each neighborhood
- Incorporate ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) designs in individual homes to accommodate all ages and abilities
- Preserve and promote the positive character/architecture unique to each neighborhood
- Include quality parks, trails and public space within each neighborhood

3. How to build (How to manage environmental impacts)

Reduce stormwater runoff and eliminate pollution sources

- Emphasize energy and water efficiency and solar orientation of streets and buildings
- Reuse older buildings to reduce energy and resource use
- Encourage building materials that support high indoor air quality and are sourced sustainably
- Encourage appropriate landscaping and use of street trees based on native and xeric plants
- Reduce light pollution

What actions or policies do we favor to ensure that these values are considered as we plan for new development, redevelopment, or reinvestment in existing neighborhoods?

Should the County adopt some form of certification or point system that rewards developments that achieve sustainable/livable neighborhood objectives?

Should the County include some sort of guidelines/requirements in the development code/approval process?

Janie O'Rourke



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LOS ALAMOS
MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail _____

_____ Check here if you are willing to receive our local newsletter Update as an electronic file, saving us postage.

_____ Check here if you wish to receive friendly reminders of upcoming events by e-mail.

Membership Categories

_____ Single membership: \$45

_____ Household membership (two+ people at the same address): \$65

_____ Single Sustaining membership: \$75

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

Note: Membership checks should be payable to LWV-Los Alamos

Additional ways to support the local League

Unrestricted contribution (not tax deductible): \$ _____

LWV Education Fund (tax deductible): \$ _____

Note: Checks for tax-deductible contributions must be payable to LWVLA Ed. Fund and not combined with any other payments.

Interests (check as many as apply)

- _____ One-time activities (unit meetings, fund-drive mailings, etc.)
_____ Affordable Housing
_____ Election Reform
_____ Fuller Lodge
_____ Land Use
_____ Local Government
_____ Medically Indigent Fund
_____ Public Transportation
_____ Sustainability
_____ Water Issues
_____ Not sure (I just support LWV)

_____ Other (please suggest) _____

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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