



# UPDATE

**League of Women Voters of Los Alamos**

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

**Website: [www.lwvlosalamos.org](http://www.lwvlosalamos.org)**

Volume 66, Number 3  
September 2013

President: Barbara Calef *bfcalf(AT)yahoo(DOT)com*  
Newsletter Editor: Kathy Taylor *kathytaylor100(AT)msn(DOT)com*

## ***Calendar***

- October 3 Land Use Consensus Meeting, 253 Rio Bravo, White Rock, 7 p.m.
- October 15 Lunch with a Leader, Susan O'Leary, Mesa Public Library, 11:40 a.m.
- October 18 Alcohol Consensus Meeting, PEEC, 11:45 a.m.
- October 24 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon
- November 19 Lunch with a Leader, Gene Schmidt & Gerry Washburn, Mesa Library, 11:40 a.m.

## ***Lunch with a Leader, October 15: Susan O'Leary***

YEA! There is now adequate parking for Lunch with a Leader since we changed our day to the third Tuesday. On October 15, our leader will be Susan O'Leary, who was chair of the Department of Public Utilities Charter Review Committee (CRC) that met this year to consider the relationship between the County and the Department of Public Utilities. The other members of the committee were Ed Birnbaum, Kirk Christensen, Councilor Steve Girrens, and Board of Public Utilities Chair David Powell. O'Leary spent most of her career working at The Washington Post and was Vice President of Advertising from 2000-2004. She has an MBA from New York University and a B.A. in Spanish from Georgetown University.

O'Leary will discuss the salient points from the CRC, share how the process went and what has occurred since the committee presented their report to the County Council. More information on this luncheon will be e-mailed to you. If you do not have e-mail, I will call you regarding your Co-op order.

On November 19, Superintendent Gene Schmidt and Assistant Superintendent Gerry Washburn will present a program on the Common Core State Standards. This curriculum is now being taught in 45 states and here in Los Alamos.

Dr. Schmidt has explained that Common Core is a state-led initiative to get every school system in the U.S. onto one common, standard level of competence in the basics: math, reading, writing and the arts. Its creators want children to gain a deeper and more thorough understanding of each subject they study.

*Karyl Ann Armbruster*

# Land Use & Transportation Consensus Meeting

As we reported in the August Update, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 3, we'll hold a consensus meeting on the next part of the Land Use and Transportation Study, residential neighborhoods. The meeting will be held at the home of Janie O'Rourke, who has just moved. Janie's new address is 253 Rio Bravo, in White Rock. To reach Rio Bravo, take Rte. 4 to Monte Rey Drive South. Turn left and follow to Potrillo Drive. Turn right on Potrillo and Rio Bravo will be the first left turn. All League members are invited to participate. The background and consensus questions were published in the August Update, [http://lwwlosalamos.org/files/August\\_2013.pdf](http://lwwlosalamos.org/files/August_2013.pdf), but below are the consensus questions again. **Please bring them to the meeting.**

## 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)

- Locate neighborhood development near daily activities (jobs, shopping, schools)
- Neighborhoods farther from the community/commercial center should be larger in 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*

## **Observer Corps Report – September 2013**

At the August 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of the County Council, there were three presentations of interest. The Environmental Sustainability Board reported on their achievements over the past year. Surprisingly, it turns out that Los Alamos recycles 22% of its waste, below the national average, which is 33%. When the new composting facility is opened, more waste will be captured and reused. The county is working on encouraging commercial recycling and improved citizen recycling.

Another important presentation was made by the Ski Club. They have been unable to use their new snow-making system because there has not been sufficient precipitation to fill the reservoir at the top of Pajarito Mountain. Simply stated, the mountain needs water. Two options were discussed. One option, perhaps the simplest and cheapest, is to drill a well at the bottom of Pajarito Mountain and pipe the water up to the ski hill. The second option is to make use of the non-potable water system that Los Alamos

County is currently designing and expanding. No decision was made; the Ski Club will continue to consider options in cooperation with the County.

The third presentation concerned the county's design of the expanded non-potable water system referred to above. Implementation is planned to occur over a 20-year period, with pre-established units being developed at intervals. The first piece of the plan involves a grant request to the New Mexico Water Trust Board to provide financing for the first capital project in the design. The ultimate goal is to reduce potable water usage and costs for Los Alamos County. At the September 10<sup>th</sup> County Council Meeting, the Charter Review Committee (CRC) focusing on the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) gave its final report to Council. The CRC recommended changes to Article V of the Los Alamos County Charter concerning the DPU.

You can read their recommendations at:

[http://www.losalamosnm.us/news/Documents/2013.8.30\\_NON\\_CRC\\_DPU%20CRC%20Final%20Recc%20to%20Council\\_S.OLeary\\_J.Habiger.pdf](http://www.losalamosnm.us/news/Documents/2013.8.30_NON_CRC_DPU%20CRC%20Final%20Recc%20to%20Council_S.OLeary_J.Habiger.pdf)

The Council voted to accept the report, but will take no action until they receive the recommendations from the Board of Public Utilities (BPU).

The Council has some hard choices ahead because there are strong differences of opinion about how to go about replacing a BPU member, how to improve communication between BPU and Council, how to handle dispute resolution, how to add or remove a utility, and who should have ultimate decision-making authority. Once Council has made its decision, any proposed Charter changes will be placed on a ballot to be voted on by the Los Alamos electorate.

Attend Lunch with a Leader on October 15<sup>th</sup> to hear Susan O'Leary, Chair of this Charter Review Committee, talk about the CRC recommendations.

## **STUDY OF ALCOHOL Consensus Meeting October 18 at PEEC (lunch provided)**

A committee of League members in Central New Mexico has been conducting a state study since 2011 on ways to reduce alcohol-related deaths and damage in New Mexico. They are now traveling around the state to lead consensus meetings. Due to time constraints, we will hold the meeting for the Los Alamos League on Friday, October 18, only two weeks after the land use consensus meeting.

However, we are trying something different! The October 18 meeting will take place at lunch-time at PEEC. And if you let us know you are coming, we will provide lunch from the Co-op. If you choose not to respond but wish to come anyway, that is fine. You can bring your own food or eat later. Please come about 11:45; the meeting will end at 1:30. Below are the consensus questions. For the reports from the Study Committee, see the Winter 2013 and Summer 2013 issues of La Palabra, available online at: <http://www.lwvnm.org/newsletters.html>.

### **CONSENSUS QUESTIONS**

- 1. Is alcohol abuse a public health Issue?  
Explain your answer.**
- 2. If you do believe alcohol abuse is a public health issue, what policy changes are needed to alleviate the problem in New Mexico?**
- 3. Would any of these changes cause undesirable outcomes?**
- 4. How should the League prioritize any proposed changes?**

## **The LWVNM Mental Health Care Services Study Committee**

The Mental Health Care Services Study Committee began meeting monthly in July. There are currently 20 members on the Committee; however, most of the members are from the LWVCNM. Jan Bray and I are looking for ways to involve LWV members outside of central New Mexico, possibly using communication methods such as teleconferencing, e-mail, and Dropbox. If you have any suggestion, please let Jan or me know.

The committee has been busy gathering news articles and publications, and attending meetings and conferences regarding mental health care services in New Mexico. There has been a great deal of focus on mental health this past month due to the Human Services Department audit. Jan Bray and other League members attended Legislative Finance Committee meetings dealing with behavioral health, hoping to learn about opportunities to improve services and address service gaps.

In July I attended a Creating Community Solutions (CCS) conference. Albuquerque was one of less than a dozen cities selected by President Obama's call in January for conversations to be held about Mental Health. The first two cities to host community conversations were Albuquerque and Sacramento, CA; both were held on July 20<sup>th</sup>. I recently received a report on our Albuquerque conference from CCS. There were 300 attendees, including 225 dialogue participants. Community leaders including Mayor Richard Berry and Senator Pete Domenici spoke, and the Mayor joined the dialogue. This is what the participants said:

- Problems: Lack of resources and training, fragmented services, high cost of care, and the stigma effect.
- Strategies: Augment awareness. Strengthen existing effective resources.

Improve preventive services. Improve continuity of care.

- Strategies for youth: Teach mental health education in schools. Bring services to young people. Strengthen peer-to-peer support. Use multi-channel media.
- Action ideas: Implement a media campaign to raise awareness. Make mental health providers more accessible to young people. Spearhead an initiative to secure funding.

The NM Mental Health Care Services Study Committee intends to explore some of these and other areas, as well as exploring what services are available or lacking in all counties in New Mexico. The New Mexico Mental Health Care Services Study Committee plans to meet the fourth Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m. New members are welcome. To join, call Jan at (505) 292-7270 or Shelly at (505) 296-1238. You can e-mail us at [ohbray@nmia.com](mailto:ohbray@nmia.com) or [shelly@shepdesignassoc.com](mailto:shelly@shepdesignassoc.com) if you prefer.

*Shelly Shepherd, Co-Chair*

## **LWVLA-UNM/LA Town Hall Meeting**

The Town Hall Meeting about the mil levy election proved to be very entertaining. Members of the Los Alamos High School Hilltalkers debate team did an excellent job of debating the pros and cons of providing additional financial support to the college by way of additional property taxes.

Their lively debate was followed by a presentation by Dr. Cindy Rooney, the new Dean of Instruction for UNM-LA, and a question and answer session moderated by the League. Other representatives of UNMLA attempted to dispel some common misunderstandings. For example, the University of New Mexico provides no funding to the LA branch. In fact, the LA campus pays UNM for computer and other services. Also, LANL supports students in various engineering, fire science, and other programs, but students do not pay all of the cost of these courses. Additional funding must be obtained. Last year some of these programs were supported by limited-term grants and there is no guarantee that these will be renewed.

Despite all the efforts to inform the electorate, many people remained confused about how the levy would have affected their property taxes. As a result, the ballot was defeated by the voters.

The LA Co-op provided a delicious cold buffet of sandwiches and fruit.

## **Report of September LWL: Kim Gabaldon**

At the last two Annual Meetings League members have asked questions about the performance of the County's Indigent Health Care Program, which is endorsed by our position on the medically indigent fund. In July Ellen Morris Bond, Director of Self Help, advised us to meet with Kim Gabaldon, Los Alamos County's new Social Services Manager.

So, in September Gabaldon spoke at Lunch with a Leader. She began by telling the group that she was born in Montreal, but grew up in the Toronto area, where she worked for a while in banking. Dissatisfied with that career, she traveled to Massachusetts for training as an art therapist, earning a master's degree in counseling from Lesley University as well as a master's in Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.

Returning to Canada, Gabaldon served as a policy analyst for the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care in Ontario and as a consultant on health-related issues to the Union of Ontario Indians. In 2006 she moved to New Mexico to serve as the Native American Liaison for the NM Behavioral Health Services Division, a job she held until coming to work in Los Alamos in March in a newly created position. (Gabaldon is half-Indian and is married to a member of Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo.)

Gabaldon is engaged in a gargantuan task, coordinating the County's social service programs, which were previously overseen by various county departments and outside organizations, and working to administer them from a single location. She is responsible for the Healthcare Assistance Program, which has nearly 400 clients and was previously managed by the Office of Management and Budget. That program will be changing with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. She also coordinates the Community Health Council, a group comprised of more than two-

dozen agencies including the Los Alamos Medical Center, Los Alamos Public Schools, the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board, and the Los Alamos Family Council. The County has contracts with several service providers that Gabaldon now oversees, including the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board, the youth activity centers, senior centers, and the Family Strengths Network.

She may also assist the Los Alamos County DWI Planning Council, which is currently administered by the Los Alamos Police Department. One of her most important responsibilities will be evaluating current services, avoiding duplication, and setting priorities for additional social services to meet community needs.

Gabaldon told the group that "there are many doorways to social services, including doctors, jails, providers who cannot treat the patient." Clients are invited to visit the Social Services office at 1505 15<sup>th</sup> Street. A new client is interviewed about problems, income, and available insurance. Any person who has resided in the county for ninety days is eligible.

The office is funded by the County through the second 1/8% of the gross receipts tax, designated by statute as the Indigent Health Care Fund. This fund is threatened by NM Department of Human Services, which wants to intercept it to fund Medicaid expansion. The Association of Counties is fighting the take-over, which must be approved by the legislature.

There is a significant shortage of health care providers in New Mexico. The problem has been exacerbated by the recent actions of the Department of Human Services, which led to the fifteen biggest providers of behavioral care in the state being defunded. Fortunately, Los Alamos was not affected because Presbyterian Medical Services, which is best equipped to deal with serious illness, had a wider base than the other companies and is still active.

*Barbara Calef*



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.*

**IN THIS ISSUE**

**Page**

Calendar	1
Lunch with a Leader, Oct 15, Susan O’Leary	1
Land Use & Transportation Consensus Meeting	2
Observer Corps Report, September 2013	3
Alcohol Study Consensus Meeting, October 18	4
LWVNM Mental Health Care Services Study	4
LWVLA-UNM/LA Town Hall Meeting	5
Report of September LWL: Kim Gabaldon	6
Membership Form	7