350 Santa Fe Monthly Public Meeting Notes

Accelerating the transition away from fossil fuels as we collaborate, cooperate and coordinate with climate crisis fighters in and around Santa Fe

Meeting Agenda

Saturday May 8, 10 am – 12:20 pm
Location: Zoom

Facilitators: Robert Cordingley/Paul Biderman
Note taker: Robert Cordingley

Attendees:

1. Adam Wasserman
2. Ariel Plotek
3. Elain Germano
4. Greg Sonnefeld
5. Jean Darling
6. Jim Eagle
7. Maj_Britt Eagle
8. Paul Biderman
9. Reed Eckhardt
10. Ricann Bock
11. Robert Cordingley

Guests:

1. Emily Syal, NMIPL
2. Rocky Cordova

10:00 am Welcome

10:02 am Agenda Review and Timing

10:05 am Teams Reporting Progress

- Climate Action Simulations – Jim Eagle
  - There are two simulators, En-ROADS and C-ROADS. C-ROADS simulates a UN Climate Conference model and determines the impact on the environment. Either might be relevant for schools to stimulate the talking points. During the
pandemic we’ve not yet been able to get a school to do something but expect post COVID to see some progress.

- Climate TRAC – Greg/Jean
  - Greg: We’re looking at new technologies or existing tech to speed the transition from fossil-fuels. I’ve looked at storage on the Community Solar Bill. We formed a collaborative Regenerative Foodshed Santa Fe group which has spun off [Ed: group with its new name is still sponsored by the XR Santa Fe and 350 Santa Fe]. I’m moving forward on a PRC intervention work group and how to facilitate new technology. Another project I’m pursuing is to bring in a solar manufacturing facility with say CHIRP Solar works. I was elected DPNM Vice Chair for CD 3. Hope to see it take off needs lots of discussion. Another project on hold due to COVID is to bring gravity based storage to the San Juan area.
  - Jean: Regenerative Foodshed Santa Fe now meets 2x a month by Zoom. The focus has been on tree planting and natural carbon sequestration. One project is to put a mini-forest on the Santa Fe River but appears to have hit some snags. Other initiatives include urban farming project with Greg P. on his land near Pojoaque, and testing a composting ‘reactor’. Next meeting is next Monday.

- Communications – Robert
  - Over the past 12 months, we have;
    - Produced 43 Weekly News Digests distributed since the first issue on July 4, 2020
    - Produced 4 Quarterly Newsletters since the first issue on Aug 1 2020
    - Grown the Wiki to 57 Pages, with 7 editors
    - Sent out 12 Monthly Public Meetings Announcements for a total of 16
    - Grown the Website to 33 pages, with 158 Events on the calendar
    - Tracked our 2021 Priority legislation activities and LAT changing priorities

- Legislative Action – Chris
  - Chris summarized the team’s accomplishments, reviewed our successful support for SB112 and Peter Wirth’s legislation on SB 8 that repealed the provisions so that the state can now exceed federal standards.
  - We didn’t get Melanie Stansbury’s bill on statewide emission levels passed unfortunately.
  - We are moving forward to assess how we can work on national legislation and Carbon Fee & Dividend in Congress, and the orphan gas wells in NM.
  - We have to see what’s in the big infrastructure bills that will benefit GHG emissions and what’s applicable to NM.
  - We will have to see what the future of federal O&G rules, and how the reinstating Obama rules will dovetail with what the state is doing on Methane emissions and will have to study the NMED rules that just came out. It looks like a win for the Environmental Community and will get rid of overly broad exemptions. We expect to look at other ways to come up with meaningful emissions reductions not yet acted on.

- Positive Public Education – Adam
Hopefully we are at the point (in the pandemic) where we can do more and hope to work with community groups and schools to share our message. COVID-19 derailed much of what we hoped to do so we are now looking to getting back in the game to engage with schools and students. We now have more to offer with a year of tracking issues and lobbying. So we are looking at ramping that up.

Next speaker Dr. Jane Lehr, UNM Center for Engineered Resilience and Ecological Sustainability will talk about the work they do.

Thanks to everyone who has facilitated and volunteered their times to these programs.

10:25 am Guest Organization – Interfaith Power & Light
Emily Say-all (Syal) is standing in for Sister Joan Brown who couldn’t be with us today.

Emily coordinates the Cool Congregations program and Young Adult engagement with NMIPL. She holds a Masters of Divinity from Pacific School of Religion where her focus had been on ecology and religion.

ES: I began work with NMIPL in Aug 2020 and have been working mostly remotely. I am familiar with Cool Congregations and Young Adults programs where the mission is to motivate people of faith to work on climate change. We see it as integral to the spiritual traditions. When doing the work just sharing the facts doesn’t necessarily get people to act. Grounding in spirit helps people change their hearts. We do lots of policy engagement about allowing Faith and Spirit to lead.

The Cool Congregations Program is a national program and empowers faith communities of all colors to become more energy efficient. I coordinate and organize our green teams around NM with any justice team to help them reduce their energy usage, to help with gardening and composting programs. We get congregations connected to solar panel suppliers and we get access to financing for solar and arrange professional energy audits free to congregations. We also are beginning to get the green teams to network.

According to our website there are 83 congregation (covenant) partnerships in NM. We have been doing work in the Permian Basin with Citizens Caring for the Future in the Carlsbad and Hobbs area. We have just hired 2 part timers and are working on their next steps as we emerge from the pandemic. Sister Joan visited and reported on the devastation in the area, it is dry with gas flaring and constant noise and construction. Eventually it will affect us all.

Additionally, we have an advocacy volunteer committee that focused on legislative issues. The team is ready to launch into the next thing like the methane rules hearings. Let me know if you want to be added to their list.

Another of our campaigns is the Forest of Bliss that focuses on tree planting in Albuquerque. This is an initiative from the Albuquerque Sikh Gurdwara which then became an interfaith program in Albuquerque.
Questions?
Maj-Britt:
Q1. Regarding youth training access – how could we get youths motivated to see En-ROADS?
ES: I’m no longer part of United [Church of Christ] and am more working with young adults but the work is open to everyone who is experiencing (climate) grief.

Q2. You mentioned having a way to motivate via spirit, what’s been most effective?
ES: Grounding them in love and wonder of our beautiful surroundings. We held groups focused on this, it sparks action for protecting just a tree, or the land or the soil. We hosted an 8 week session on farming and being in love with the natural work. Everyone left with a firm conviction on action and some even changed their farming practices.

Adam:
Q1 Do you have any relationship with your fellow groups in the Southwest, e.g.in CO and AZ due to shared issues— it’s a TX problem as well as ours.
ES: We do work with AZ IPL – there used to be a CO IPL but no more. The National IPL has begun talking about splitting into regional coalitions, e.g. a Mountain Region.

10:40 am Group Discussion: Now What?
Following the lessons learned from the recent NM Legislative Session and the proclamations from the Biden Administration, 350 Santa Fe co-facilitator, Paul Biderman will lead a discussion to identify ideas and possible directions for our chapter to take over the next 12 months.

Paul asked newcomers to introduce themselves:

Elaine Germano has worked with NM Climate Reality Project and is a retired nurse-midwife and interested in doing more than her own individual actions. She has completed the Al Gore Training with the Climate Reality Project.

Ariel Plotek is new to NM and moved to Santa Fe three years ago. He is a curator at the Georgia O’Keefe museum. He is from Canada and is currently a green card holder and wants to get more involved.

Ricann Bock moved from New York to Sant Fe. In NY she helped found sustainable groups working on micro ideas. Completed a course on local extension: Energy Navigators for home energy use. She has attended several meetings and is trying to see where to fit in.

Paul: We want to discuss, starting with our team reports and building on them, how do we want to develop them, what might we want stop doing, how does that fit in with our purpose and with National’s? This isn’t a planning session but an effort to elicit your ideas and what can you do and what should the chapter do, who should we do it with, do we need more members, paid staff, more money, or any internal structures and changes we should be looking at?
As food for thought, how should we review our LAT activity in conjunction with our other initiatives; educational, monthly speakers, going to schools, technical work, and regenerative soils project.

How do we define our purpose? Here (https://350.org/about/) are the national three priorities along with their values statements.

Here are our 8 points of our Purpose (https://350santafe.org/about/). What could be different about what we’re doing; dream big. Our budget [Ed: total funds] is about $800. We do have totally hard working volunteers. What would we do this year (next 12 months) keeping these priorities in mind?

Maj-Britt: noticing – when studying complexity theory, living by chance, everything is taken care of but the input of chance knowledge seems to be missing. Can we have space for new findings in our smooth agendas?

Paul: We expect to work over ideas suggested as a core group to polish them and later bring them back to the group to discuss.

Reed: We need to put some priority on fund raising and grant writing. Many granting organizations take fees too. Can we support legislators with our non-profit status?

Paul: We are in the process of becoming a 501(c)4 with a facilitator. NMFoundation has non-profit status as a 501(c)3 and holds education funds on our behalf, which we can draw on. We probably would set up a bank account when a 501(c)4.

Reed: We perhaps should expect to incur costs as we come out of the COVID pandemic.

Greg: There’s no way to transition off fossil-fuels without replacing the income from Oil & Gas industries. This could be primary. I want to echo people’s interest on grants and moving in that direction might be a good thing.

Adam: A very general question, if I was new here and heard what we are doing especially around the legislature, I’d notice we talk about the NM issues a lot. But we are 350 Santa Fe so should we get more connections with other Santa Fe local agencies and develop expertise to weigh in with our City Councilors and County Commissioners?

Paul: A possible route might be via Gary Payton who is on staff at the Coalition of Sustainable Communities NM. They just added Los Alamos county to work together on projects. Beth Beloff (ED) is also a driving force which may be something to build on.

Robert: One of the areas we have not made much progress on is our Social Media presence.
Paul: Let’s look at first, what do we need organizationally, are we in agreement to get more members?

Ariel: I could help with Social Media but I’d need to learn the skills as we go along.

Jean: XR eventually would also like to apply for grants but will need some legal status such as the planned 501(c)4.

Reed: Is it just time that’s holding us up?

Paul: We are basically driven by our volunteers’ preferences which is always a limitation.

Reed. If you need help with grant applications, I can help with costs.

Greg: We need a more diverse core group (I’m the only person under 60) and a richer cultural representation. The NM Democratic Party had a similar problem, now fixed, with improved participation of traditional Hispanics and younger people.

Robert: 501(c)4 is being worked on and we have scheduled time with a volunteer lawyer for whom this is a specialty.

Jean: People will be attracted to what they can do. For example, education may be an area where more people might get involved in. Could we offer workshops that help people get grounded – they could be inspired by nature and how do we do something about it to get them motivated and a sense of meaning on why they should care.

Greg: Is excited about 501(c)4 but thinks there should be more involvement in developing the documents.

Jim: We have five teams and are under staffed, except for the LAT we’ve sort of stalled with COVID-19 and one way to proceed might be to get the core team to pull together on just one thing, then address another next thing. We need to get something done, anything!

Paul: People have preferences on what to work on but should not have to wait on our becoming a 501(c)4. When’s the next opportunity to get involved with the legislature, 2022? The next session is focused on the state budget and any constitutional issues, so may be we don’t have legislature to focus on for 2 years. We could look at rule making, given the NMED methane rules as a priority and pile-on with others e.g. WELC. May be there’s an opportunity in Congress on carbon pricing especially with the connections with CCL. These are examples of possible focus areas.

Jean: How would we participate with WELC as ordinary citizens?
Paul: The point is to put our name on the dotted line. We could show up at the hearings but in name since we’re not lawyers or experts.

Jean: We need to find a project that could get more people involved.

Paul: In the past, CCL hosted film showings at CCA who obtained the films and arranged the event. The biggest turnout was 80. We arranged for a speaker to come with each film. CCL also tried a TV series that CCL presented at churches who were interested and typically got 20-30 people at each church event.

Maj-Britt: The attraction of those events was the Q&A following.

Paul: What areas would people like to pick up on and starting work on?

Ricann: Part of the (350 Santa Fe) core (mission) is to collaborate with other groups, but there are groups that also work tangentially. We need to network between groups especially where there’s some overlap. I’m the climate representative of Indivisible SOS (Aldea) for example.

Jean: The XR group has made contact with SF Watershed Association who have a tree program and the City of SF. They are also doing tree planning projects (e.g. the Canopy Project), if we had something to bring to the other groups as a kind of offering. ‘We want to work with you and ... “ not sure what it would be but could be useful way to connect.

Paul: We could offer some services?

Jean: In order to be visible we need to make ourselves known.

Reed: I like the idea of film events to get our name out to the public. I stumbled into this group. We need more publicity. Joining with NM Climate Reality for example makes sense, makes sense to collaborate with them.

Paul: With Barbara stepping back there’s an opening on the core team.

Maj-Britt: what’s the understanding on COVID restrictions and our future meetings.

Paul: If we want to think big and we could consider movie theatres that are opening.

Maj-Britt: [CDNM] ran two meaningful events (conferences), one in a school and I found the breakout sessions according to topic to be very useful.

Paul: We had 400 attendees at the conference – it was a logistical night mare but worked well. Speakers included legislators and national speakers.

Greg: Possible people we could contact to regarding diversification are [details added]:
Paul: Perhaps Andrea Romero might be interested?

Paul: Bosque school in Albuquerque might be good venue for special events, and the Monte Del Sol and Mandella Schools might be approachable for En-ROADS workshops?

Robert: In responding to Reed earlier, we have 227 subscribers but we do need help managing publicity and our social media.

11:50 am Special Guest: Melanie Stansbury.

[Paul introduced Melanie, her background and strengths]

Paul: Can you speak to your plans for Congress on how to address the climate crisis.

Melanie:
I don’t have any formal remarks today being very busy on the campaign. My background: I’m a water resources professional and science translator on water policies. I’m currently involved in a big NSF project on watersheds in the Americas. I have worked with non-profits, worked in DC in the Obama administration on climate policies. I have a broad background on national and local issues and very much aware on what’s needed to make the [energy] transition.

I sponsored the NM Climate Solutions Act that addressed three policy issues:
  a) How to get GHG emissions across the economy to net zero
  b) The Climate Crisis with droughts and fires is already here. The drought shows up in the hydrology and has blown out acequia infrastructure. Lots of work to do since mitigation and adaptation seen as opposing efforts when they’re not.
  c) How do we transition our NM economy and effect a major revamping of industry.

Once in Congress, I’d like to pick up and work on Biden’s climate issues, correcting and rolling-back the decisions from the previous administration. We’ve seen more GHG in the atmosphere over last 4 years. Biden has some of the best climate policy people in the world working for him. So we can expect more big moves. Congress needs to set a framework for this work and to fully fund it. In my job at OMB as a budget analyst, the #1 challenge was getting the funding and leadership from Congress. Congress needs to appropriate dollars to do rule making, provide resources, the tools and tax breaks to get industry and technology to move.

The American Jobs Plan is the next priority. The Infrastructure Plan will be important and needs to pass. We need to expand-the Senate Democratic majority in 2022. It all goes hand in hand.
The next big thing will probably use the budget and the reconciliation process where we hope to cut some deals. Asked Steny Hoyer, House Majority Leader about the top three priorities and was excited to find Climate is in the top three.

I worked in the Senate as a staffer and that experience helped me get the grid modernization act passed in NM, with unanimous support. There’s a problem in that Republicans have fought climate action and made it a 3rd rail of their platform. Polling in my district in Albuquerque showed that 65% think climate needs action even though it’s a conservative district. Republicans don’t engage.

Maria Cantwell (D-WA) hired me to write a water bill that was based on a climate study, but even though Republican staffers completely agreed with the bill, they insisted we had to change ‘climate change’ to ‘hydrologic change’ to get it passed with bipartisan support – it’s a way to ‘honor the politics’. I hope to get good legislation passed in Congress even though climate is a 3rd rail issue for Republicans, by being conscious of the needed language.

Q&A
Paul: Your experience will serve you well in Congress.-What is underpinning Republican motives?

MS. Working the halls of Congress you see what the realities are. It’s not a conspiracy: Koch really has spent millions on media campaigns and Republican think tanks. They have created an eco-system in which climate change discussions are claimed to be harming the bottom line of FFI and energy costs. It was corporate propaganda [my word] and became its own perpetuating myth. Now even the media doesn’t grasp or understand the issues and how conservatives are perpetuating the myths and the reality of O&G. O&G is doing fine but they do know in 10 yrs their business model will [fail] anyway.

Adam: You mentioned that the 3rd challenge is the economic transition challenge – how do we change minds to help in that transition?

MS. The sponsors of my bill became aware that it was going to be hard to get the bill passed. Rep. Angelic Rubios and social justice groups built an amazing coalition, including 35 labor unions and many tribal governments. Demand to pass the bill was huge and scared the crap out of industry. When she met with NMOGA, they thought the bill might pass so they brought in national climate experts with ConocoPhillips and went through it line by line and proposed language changes. O&G have the capacity to manage an orderly transition, but it was easier to kill our bill than do the work, partly because we don’t have the regulatory agency capacity to handle it, partly because we have a citizen legislature. So industry worked behind the scenes to kill it. One day we had the votes, the next we didn’t. NM is ready and industry can do it, we just have to beat them at their own game. California did it.
In the state, north of Valencia county people are in favor but south the fear is about the loss of O&G jobs. Part of the false language of industry we have to expose as a big lie is that the economy will die if we’re successful [it won’t]. The 2nd lie is that NM jobs will be lost when most of the labor comes from out of state. The point is NM is a huge state that wants to see action, our job is to build the policy to overcome the messaging.

Paul: We wish you the best in your election.

MS: We are 3.5 weeks out and Mark Moores is running on saving O&G. MS needs donations and help with voter turnout. Since awareness of the election is low we need help phone banking or door knocking by vaccinated volunteers.

Paul: thanks

Adam: offered to help proof read notes.

12:17 pm Any other Business
Our next Zoom monthly meeting June 12 at 10 am – Noon

CCL is holding a national conference at 11am Mountain Time on June 12.

12:20 pm Close