

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

Date: October 10, 2020

Place: via Zoom

Attendees: Robert Cordingley, facilitator; Paul Biderman, facilitator; Melanie Stansbury, Greg Sonnenfeld, Gary Payton, Teresa Bradford, Jim Eagle, Maj-Britt Eagle, Jean Darling, Tom Solomon, Mark Bourke, Layne Duesterhaus, Lynn Pickard, Adam Wasserman, Antoinette Reyes, Barbara Sinha

Current Business

Welcome and introduction

The meeting began at 10:00 am.

Team Progress Reports

Jim Eagle, **Climate Action Simulations Team** lead, reported that he met with Stefi Weisburd and Adam Wasserman by Zoom to discuss which educators to approach about using a simulation and whether En-ROADS or C-ROADS might work better. They decided to start by contacting Robb Hirsch, Eileen Everett and Elena Kayak.

Greg Sonnenfeld, team lead for the **Climate TRAC Team**, shared a slide with a synopsis of eight projects and a second slide about all the things the Regenerative Agriculture spin-out group is considering or actually doing. The projects include:

- 1) Reviewing the New Mexico Renewable Transmission Authority report
- 2) State-led and State-owned transmission and storage
- 3) PNM distributed storage legislation (Abbas Akhil)
- 4) Community Solar storage needs
- 5) NM State Electric Vehicle Fleet
- 6) Grid modernization
- 7) NM Climate Science and Engineering Technology Partnership
- 8) Coal ash disposal
- 9) Neighborhood/Regenerative Farming — guerilla gardens, small forest installations, city-sponsored large urban farms, Santa Fe County farming legislation, Santa Fe River adoption planting

He also said the State Investment Council will put out a report on October 27th that will be of interest to the team.

Robert Cordingley is the lead for the **Communications Team**. He gave the following updates:

- 1) Weekly News Digest ~ Issues continue to be distributed on a regular basis
- 2) Quarterly Newsletter ~ Robert has received one article for the next Quarterly Newsletter to be published around November 1; he invites more submissions
- 3) There are 207 people on the email list

Paul Biderman and Christopher Moore are co-leads of the **Legislative Action Team**. Paul welcomed Layne Duesterhaus, who has a background in graphics. He also greeted Lynn Pickard, who is attending for the first time in a while. He said anyone can attend the next meeting of this team at 3:30 pm on Wednesday, October 21st. Paul gave a summary of what the team is investigating or working on:

- 1) State methane emissions rules
- 2) Community solar
- 3) Healthy soils and regenerative agriculture
- 4) Green (environment) amendment to the state constitution – The November monthly meeting of 350 Santa Fe will feature Maya Van Rossum speaking on this topic.
- 5) Tax credits for purchase of electric vehicles
- 6) Support for electrification of mass transit
- 7) Electric vehicle charging corridors –setting up corridors will require interstate cooperation
- 8) Bonding requirements for oil and gas wells
- 9) Carbon pricing in the form of a gasoline tax increase
- 10) Tom Solomon added that he saw a tweet from Senator William Soules on a bill to require the state vehicle fleet to be all electric vehicles by 2030

The **Positive Public Education Team** is led by Adam Wasserman. He confirmed that the speaker for the November 14th monthly meeting will be Maya Van Rossum, author of the book “The Green Amendment: Securing Our Right to a Healthy Environment.”

What’s Happening at 350 New Mexico

Tom Solomon, one of two coordinators of 350 New Mexico, is a retired engineer who worked at Intel part of his career. He has lived in New Mexico since 1990. He described the following projects 350 New Mexico is pursuing:

- 1) The Land Witness Project — Short videos with interviews of New Mexicans who are being impacted right now by climate change. There are two interviews on the website (www.landwitnessproject.com) now and they plan to add a new story every few weeks through the end of this year. The videos are also available through YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- 2) Speaker series — There will be a presentation about the Land Witness Project on October 23. Then on October 26 Maggie Hart Stebbins, the Natural Resources Trustee for New Mexico, will be the speaker.

- 3) The presentation by Tom entitled “A Sustainable Economy Without Fracking” is available on the 350 New Mexico website
- 4) Strategic Plan for a Sustainable Economy is a bill that will be introduced in the 2021 legislative session
- 5) Obtaining pledges from politicians to take no fossil fuel money

Invited Talk

Prospects for Climate Legislation in 2021

Speaker: **Representative Melanie A. Stansbury**

Speaker note: Representative Melanie Stansbury is a native New Mexican, born in Farmington. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in human ecology and natural science from Saint Mary’s College of California, followed by a Master of Science from Cornell University.

Rep. Stansbury began her career as an ecology instructor at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science. As a White House Fellow, she worked as a policy advisor on the Council on Environmental Quality. She was a consultant at Sandia National Laboratories and later served as a program examiner in the Office of Management and Budget during the Obama administration. She worked as a staffer on the United States Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Since 2017, she has worked as a consultant and senior advisor at the Utton Transboundary Resources Center of the University of New Mexico.

She was elected to the New Mexico House of Representatives in 2018, defeating incumbent Republican Jimmie Hall. She took office on January 15, 2019 and is running for re-election now.

Representative Stansbury shared some additional details about her background in the science aspects of climate strategy and energy plans. She described her reason for introducing HB 28 (Resource Sustainability and Security Act) in the 2019 legislative session. She believes New Mexico is not prepared for climate change, which is already here. In drafting the bill she took concepts from Obama administration documents. In the next legislative session she will sponsor bills addressing water governance reform and a ‘food and farm’ bill. She expects Speaker of the House Brian Egolf to advance as many climate and energy legislative initiatives as possible.

Representative Stansbury next talked about why she voted in committee against HB 173 (Gas Taxes, New Funds and Distributions) in the regular 2020 legislative session. In essence she did not feel the bill was ready to go, that it was not fully fleshed out enough. We do not have a full picture of carbon in New Mexico. She did not see a clear articulation of how the re-allocation of revenue would really address the problem of

carbon pollution in the oil and gas sector. Also, there was insufficient evidence of whether the benefit of revenue distributed would be enough to offset the tax aspect. She also has concerns about the regulations being drafted for methane emissions and electric vehicles in the state fleet, knowing that a change of administration can wipe out these steps forward.

She sees the role of environmental groups such as ours to support the administration in its actions. We should avoid spreading our efforts over too many issues. She added that she would like to see the science addressing how a gasoline tax affects people's behavior. Is it the most effective way to change carbon dioxide emission in the oil and gas sector?

Q & A section

- Maj-Britt: Our national laboratories engage in environmentally destructive activities such as plutonium pit production. Our U.S. Senators are supposedly climate champions so why do they favor pit production? Response ~ Those laboratories also have some of the best water, energy and climate modelers in the world.
- Robert comment: The En-ROADS simulation shows how various actions affect the goal of reaching 2° C or less temperature rise by 2100. The simulation shows that carbon pricing has a role in reaching this goal.
- Robert: 350 Santa Fe is investigating the possibility of a New Mexico Climate Science and Engineering Technology Partnership. How can we pursue this concept? Answer ~ There was a hearing at the Interim Science and Technology Committee last year, during which the results of a National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) study about how New Mexico could enter the manufacturing market were presented. In some areas such as water and supply routes New Mexico is at a disadvantage. However New Mexico has an advantage in the sectors of electronics and the smart side of electricity grids. She worked with Abbas Akhil on the Grid Modernization bill. Currently our transmission system is geared toward electricity generated at coal-fired plants and that needs to be changed.
- Gary: Do you support a Green Amendment for the state constitution? Answer ~ I hope it is drafted to complement science and strategy bills.
- Adam: If a new administration is elected at the national level, which actions would you support that will affect New Mexico? Answer ~ Re-join the Paris Accords; put back rules the current administration rolled back; climate adaptation to things such as droughts and fires
- Tom: It sounded like you were interested in the Strategic Plan for a Sustainable Economy bill. Mimi Stewart is the sponsor. Can we talk by phone about this bill? Answer ~ Wait until after November 3rd.
- Greg: In terms of the Gas Tax bill, would usage of the tax for carbon sequestration by regenerative agriculture incentives be a reasonable way to address some of the concerns about linking taxes and other funds? Answer ~ I recently read about the idea of a "carbon economic system" in New Mexico. Right now there is no

coherence around this issue. Carbon sequestration potential should be included. There was a Bloomberg-funded report about forest fire treatment and forest regeneration. We also need to prevent natural grasslands from being converted to other uses. The net carbon benefit of carbon sequestration for New Mexico is small. Probably the right carbon strategy for us is to look at joining a regional carbon market.

- Paul: You mentioned the need for a comprehensive plan. New Mexico does not have a great history of creating or implementing comprehensive plans (example given). Don't we have to act on a piecemeal basis? Answer ~ It's been a bit of a shock coming from the national scene to the state scene. The main issue in New Mexico is that we do not have enough capacity, resources or private investors. That may mean a public/private partnership would work better for New Mexico. Let's bring everybody in to the fold.
- Paul comment: Look at Melanie's website. There's a donate button. She will be one of the best advocates for climate actions in the legislature.
- Maj-Britt: Current Forest Service plans involve thinning [cut and burn] nine out of ten trees in the Santa Fe Forest. Our only hope is to pass something akin to NEPA that would require an environmental impact statement for such a move. Answer ~ I suggest getting Matt Hirtow (not sure about that name) as a guest speaker on forest ecology. I agree we have to treat our forests to prevent wildfires like they are having in California. The Nature Conservancy is another resource.

Announcement

All are welcome to join Extinction Rebellion today near the Southside Library to plant trees. To volunteer call Natalie Castillo at 575-302-6336.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be Saturday, November 14th.

Meeting ended at 12:00 pm

Notes taken by Barbara Sinha