

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: November 14, 2020

Place: via Zoom

Attendees: Robert Cordingley, facilitator; Paul Biderman, facilitator; Adam Wasserman, Christopher Mann, Colleen Burns, David Groenfeldt, Elaine Germano, Emily Syal, Gary Payton, Greg Sonnenfeld, Jean Darling, Jim Eagle, Judith Stanley, Julia Ying, KC Nelson, Maj-Britt Eagle, Mark Bourke, Maya Van Rossum, Melissa Pickett, Nancy Singham, Stefi Weisburd, Tanya Knoop, Teresa Bradford, 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 Albuquerque Academy is interested in using C-ROADS with its students. Chris also suggested contacting the Santa Fe Council on International Relations to see whether they might want to use the simulation.

Greg Sonnenfeld, team lead for the **Climate TRAC Team**, shared a slide with a synopsis of six projects the team is investigating or involved in:

- 1) Neighborhood/Regenerative Farming
- 2) Community Solar Act
- 3) Reviewing the New Mexico Renewable Energy Transmission Authority report
- 4) Distributed storage legislation (Abbas Akhil)
- 5) HM9 (state investment in renewables)
- 6) NM State Electric Vehicle Fleet/Reserve Margin

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 ~ Second issue went out and had a nice high open rate of nearly 50%
- 3) Team wants to find ways to reach out to more of the general public

Paul Biderman and Christopher Mann are co-leads of of the **Legislative Action Team**. Christopher explained the columns on the 350 Santa Fe Legislation Tracker and gave a description of each bill or issue in the first column. Paul spoke with Julia Barnes, who said that House Speaker Egolf is not ready yet to present about his proposed climate legislation. He may be ready in time for our December monthly meeting. Paul also warned that the Legislative Finance Committee seems to be tending toward opposing anything that would decrease oil and gas production.

Mark Bourke is the Citizens' Climate Lobby liaison to U.S. Senator Tom Udall. He plans to have a virtual meeting with Senator Udall or his staff the week of December 7th to discuss carbon pricing legislation. Attendees at the meeting today are welcome to join the call; please contact Mark.

What's Happening at the Alliance for Local Economic Prosperity

Adam introduced **Melissa Pickett**, the Outreach Coordinator with The Alliance for Local Economic Prosperity, the think tank for a New Mexico Public Bank. A state public bank could play a role in managing state investments and support the transition of the state's economy to a more sustainable climate future

Melissa reviewed the background of public banks in the United States and in New Mexico. Public banks manage and invest public funds. About a year ago, legislation was passed in California that allows cities and counties to form public banks. Melissa expects the draft version of the Public Banking Act for New Mexico to be ready by mid-December. She emphasized the difference between a public bank and other state money is that with a public bank the money does not go to Wall Street. It is a bankers' bank to provide money for existing local banks and credit unions to make loans they normally could not make. Credit unions in New Mexico have endorsed the concept of a public bank. Melissa supports the public bank, in part, because the bank could address the impacts of climate change by financing clean energy infrastructure, increasing renewable energy lending and incorporating values for regeneration and sustainability into its lending policy.

Melissa said that attendees and 350 Santa Fe can support the effort to create a public bank by using the endorsement form at <http://aflep.org> and by contacting your state legislators.

During the question and answer period, Melissa gave more details about how a public bank would be a partner with banks and credit unions. She explained it would provide a guarantee for certain loans and that counties and cities could use the public bank instead of bonds.

Invited Talk

A Green Amendment for New Mexico

Speaker: **Maya K. van Rossum**

Speaker note: Maya is the founder of Green Amendments for the Generations, a grassroots non-profit organization inspiring a nationwide movement to secure constitutional recognition and protection of environmental rights in every state and ultimately at the federal level.

She is the Delaware Riverkeeper, leading the watershed-based advocacy organization, the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, for 26 years in its efforts to protect the health of the Delaware River and its tributaries. Maya was a lead petitioner in the 2013 landmark case *Robinson Township, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, et. al. v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* that breathed new life into Pennsylvania's long-ignored environmental rights amendment.

A skilled activist, attorney, strategist and community organizer, she was named in 2020 as a River Hero by River Network, in 2019 as one of Philadelphia Business Journal's Power 100, and one of the "10 Most Influential People of 2015 When It Comes to Energy Issues" by SNL Energy. She is the author of [The Green Amendment, Securing Our Right to a Healthy Environment](#), which was selected as the 2018 Living Now Evergreen Awards GOLD Winner in the Nature Conservation category.

Maya explained that although our states have many laws and regulations about the environment, what is missing is something to give constitutional protection to the natural environment. What is needed is a statement of "environmental rights" that goes into the "Bill of Rights" section of the state constitution. In New Mexico there is a section in the state constitution about "Pollution Control" specifying that the legislature can pass legislation related to this issue. However, that section is not self-executing, does not mention future generations, and only applies to state government, not county or municipal governments.

Q & A section

- Maj-Britt: Is capitalism attacked with the trustee language? Answer ~ Compare it to a money trust, which must consider the ramifications of its decisions to the beneficiary. The Bill of Rights represents restraints on the government. No new rights are granted to government.
- Paul comment: In New Mexico any amendment to the constitution first has to have a joint resolution from the legislature to put the proposed amendment on the ballot for the next general election. Answer ~ We have sponsors for the proposed legislation. If it passes both houses of the legislature then it can be put on the ballot, probably in 2022.

- Stefi: Was the landmark Pennsylvania case before the fracking boom? Answer ~ The amendment was passed in 1971. The mid-2000s was when fracking expanded in Pennsylvania. The case was heard in 2013.
- Stefi: We can anticipate a lot of pushback from the oil and gas industry in New Mexico. How do you recommend we handle that? Answer ~ For The Generations has tools and help for states attempting passage of a green amendment. We would be a partner with you.
- Paul: The National Caucus of Environmental Legislators supports a green amendment. Let's do a straw poll right now determining whether attendees are in favor of pursuing a green amendment for the New Mexico state constitution. Result: All who answered voted yes.
- Gary: When is the next PBS segment about the green amendment? Answer ~ All video is in the hands of the producer. We did 25 interviews in New Mexico so there may be as many as four episodes on PBS. Parts 1 and 2 can be seen at <http://bit.ly/PBSHeresTheStory>
- Adam: How would the Green Amendment affect federal facilities such as national labs and military installations? Answer ~ If a federal facility needed a state permit, then it would be applicable.

Announcement

On Wednesday, November 18, at noon, 350 New Mexico will sponsor a virtual meeting about the Green Amendment. Senators Antoinette Sedillo Lopez, Mimi Stewart and Bill Soules and Representative Joanne Ferrary will host the call. We will also have Maya Van Rossum, who is the author of the *Green Amendment: Securing Our Right to a Healthy Environment* on the Zoom call. She has agreed to serve as a resource as we pursue this exciting and innovative approach to addressing climate change and protecting our precious and fragile environment.

It will take all of us to make this happen. We need your input, ideas, and energy.

Please RSVP to Bridget, bridget@delawareriverkeeper.org so she can ensure you get the link and the current draft of the language.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be Saturday, December 12th, 2020.

Meeting ended at 11:50 am

Notes taken by Barbara Sinha