Climate Defenders New Mexico

Date: August 10, 2019
Place: Santa Fe Public Library, Washington Street
Attendees: Paul Biderman, co-chair; Bob Kreger, co-chair; James Bradbury, Mark Bourke, Lisa Bowdey, Lucinda Folsom, Elaine Giavando, Sharon Shoemaker, Richard Cramer, Steve Schmidt, John McAndrew, Jean Darling, Robb Hirsch, Barbara Sinha

Meeting started at 10:05 am

Climate XChange event

Paul announced that the event set up by Climate XChange will be on October 3rd and 4th in Santa Fe. He has a draft invitation and explained that the plan for the first day is to discuss carbon pricing at the state level. The organizers estimate 50 people will attend. There will be a reception in the evening. The second day will actually be a half day consisting of a roundtable with attendance by invitation only. Paul asked for suggestions about who to invite to the roundtable. The following suggestions were made:

1) Camilla Bustamante, Dean of the School of Trades, Advanced Technology and Sustainability at Santa Fe Community College (Barbara Sinha)
2) Brian Dear with the Tesla Owners Club of New Mexico (Steve Schmidt)
3) Someone from Los Alamos National Laboratory, possibly in an unofficial capacity, possibly Rob Thompson (Mark Bourke)
4) Electricity cooperative representatives (John McAndrew)
5) Bill McCamley (John McAndrew)
6) Santa Fe Homebuilders Association (Mark Bourke)
7) Green Fire Times (Dick Cramer)

The person making the suggestion will be responsible for getting contact information to Paul, who will pass it on to Noa Dalzell.

Progress toward national legislation

The House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis was established in January 2019. It is chaired by Rep. Kathy Castor. Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, the representative for northern New Mexico, is a member of the committee. Paul stated that Rep. Lujan has asked House Speaker Pelosi to put carbon pricing on the agenda for the committee. Staff of Rep. Lujan are aware of the Citizens’ Climate Lobby approach to carbon pricing and Paul reported that Levi Patterson, in the Washington office of Rep. Lujan, will follow up on getting information to the Select Committee.
Elaine said she was at a meeting of the Sunrise Movement and Rep. Lujan was there. He seemed moved by the youthful speakers. When she praised him for being there, he replied that “it’s for the kids.” Elaine also reported that Rep. Lujan will have a town hall meeting in Santa Fe but for security reasons the meeting will only be announced three days in advance.

For the benefit of people attending a Climate Defenders New Mexico meeting for the first time today, Paul summarized the market-based approach for addressing carbon dioxide emissions and the introduction of H.R. 763.

**Upcoming events**

Participants are invited to take part in these upcoming events:

- Conference call on Tuesday, August 13, 2019 ~ organized by Camilla Feibelman of the Sierra Club; focus will be arrangements leading up to Environment Day at the 2020 state legislature
- Western Regional Conference of Citizens’ Climate Lobby ~ Boulder, Colorado on September 28th and 29th, 2019

**Santa Fe chapter of 350.org**

Bob gave an update on what is being done to establish a chapter of 350.org in Santa Fe. Robert Cordingley, Jean Darling and Bob are working on the details to set up a chapter.

**World Climate Simulation**

Bob explained that the World Climate Simulation is a role-play game simulating United Nations climate change negotiations in which participants represent a country. The game uses software developed at MIT to instantly show the effects of decisions made by negotiators. Bob has found that after people participate in the simulation they are much more likely to understand the implications of climate change and be motivated to do something about it.

Rev. Dr. Dave Wasserman will run the World Climate Simulation in Taos on September 14. People who want to participate must sign up in advance and plan to be there by 9:30 am. At least six people in the room plan to attend.

**Climate Strike**

The Climate Strike will occur on September 20. There is another planning meeting this afternoon at the Center for Progress and Justice in Santa Fe.
Endorsements

Paul brought up a general issue regarding endorsements. He said there may be occasions when he could be asked whether Climate Defenders New Mexico will endorse an event or something else and the turnaround time for a response is very short, e.g., before the next meeting of CDNM. He requested input about how to handle endorsement requests.

Discussion of the issue included a suggestion it could be handled by email. It was noted that very few people in general respond to emails asking for input. Paul thought perhaps he could send out an email and then gauge the general consensus and determine whether anyone had a major concern. Mark commented that he trusts Paul’s judgment so if Paul recommends an endorsement then it would be fine with him. Dick noted that he would not endorse organizations that mindlessly condemn nuclear energy.

Then the discussion turned more specifically to endorsement of the Climate Strike in September. People felt they needed more information; Jean offered to make copies of their two-page “Call to Action: Global Climate Strike and Week of Resistance” written by the Northern New Mexico Youth Climate Coalition & Sunrise Steering Committee of Earth Care. Instead, she summarized that document. Paul proposed wording for an endorsement of the climate strike: ‘We are deeply concerned about global warming and climate change. We endorse the Climate Strike day as a means of promoting awareness of climate change.’ The endorsement passed unanimously.

Retake Our Democracy

Sharon gave an introduction to the scope of what “Retake Our Democracy” is researching and involved with. They use ideas from the book Drawdown. The non-profit organization is composed of volunteers who engage in 1) election advocacy, 2) legislative advocacy, and 3) climate and regulatory advocacy. The organization put out the The 2019 New Mexico Legislative Report Card and have a long list of issues they plan to research and analyze next. They engage, educate, organize and activate people through trainings, actions, town halls, and educational events. They intend to come up with an economic development transition (to renewable energy) plan. They attend Public Regulation Commission meetings. They are starting to look at other boards and commissions in New Mexico.

Elaine commented that wind and solar generation of electricity does not create enough jobs or revenue to replace current fossil fuel jobs and revenue. Paul said there is an interest in the state legislature to either tax transportation fuels or set up a fee applied to them.
**Newsletter**

Paul threw out a general question about whether we need a newsletter to supplement our in-person meetings. No one volunteered to do that. Lisa suggested as an alternative we could send people on the CDNM email list a document containing minutes of the meeting. Paul and Bob stated they will do that for the most recent meetings.

**Fiscal agent**

New Mexico Community Foundation is the fiscal agent for Climate Defenders New Mexico. We pay them 8% on whatever money goes into the CDNM account. They have informed us that inactive accounts will be assessed a $250 fee. The CDNM account had a burst of activity at the beginning of 2019 but is typically not very active so the fee would apply. Paul asked whether anyone knows of another entity that could serve as our fiscal agent. No one spoke up to offer such an entity. [Follow-up: the Community Foundation has subsequently agreed to waive the $250 fee for another year.]

**Mentors needed**

The organization for children formerly known as Global Warming Express has changed its name for teen-age groups to Global Warming Emergency. The organization was started by a child in Santa Fe and continues to be active here. They are looking for mentors. If anyone wants to be a mentor, Paul said they can contact him for details.

**Solar panels**

Steve brought up the fact that California requires solar panels to be on all new homes and small apartment buildings starting in 2020 and wondered whether that could be done in New Mexico. Bob stated there are building codes in New Mexico but he does not believe that requirement would find enough support here. However, he mentioned that Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham is moving state agencies in the direction of solar panels along with other measures to decrease carbon emissions.

**Founders of Retake Our Democracy**

Bob followed up on the earlier discussion of Retake Our Democracy by mentioning that Paul Gibson and his wife (Roxanne Barber) were the founders of Retake Our Democracy and the organization has grown in several years to a very active group of hundreds of people engaged in multiple community and state-wide issues.

**Carbon pricing state legislation**

Robb Hirsch joined the meeting and talked about state legislation. His daughter Tabatha was one of the main student proponents involved in getting the first carbon pricing
legislation written and introduced in the 2019 session of the state legislature. She will also be involved in the effort to have it introduced again in the next session. He gave a list of what needs to be done:

- Engage more schools around the state
- Identify stakeholders beyond the environmental groups
- Find a way to write the bill so it can be supported by rural communities

Robb said the Climate Change Leadership Institute is prepared to give a seed grant to an organization who can help in these and other ways.

**Next meeting**

The next meeting will be Saturday, September 21, at the Public Library downtown.

Meeting ended at 11:50 am

Minutes taken by Barbara Sinha