

Los Alamos Meeting on Sustainability Study
Oct. 27, 2005

8 members attended, including the presenters, Kathy Campbell and Gale Zander Barlow.

During the discussion that followed the presentation a number of questions were posed. Some were answered; others were not. Here is a brief summary of the questions and answers as well as a few comments made by participants.

What existing positions would be affected by a sustainability position? Response: the economic development position, which calls for economic growth, would need to be amended; the state finance position would be changed to include the desirability of shifting the tax burden from labor and income to non-renewable resources.

A position on sustainability would call attention to the interdependencies of many issues such as poverty and environmental degradation. Current economic policy promotes the over-exploitation of resources, causing environmental degradation, and bringing about the transfer of wealth that is causing the increased gap between rich and poor.

Localization would change the character of economic development. Regions would become more self-sufficient, decreasing the pollution and detrimental political decisions caused by our dependence on fossil fuels.

The Los Alamos group's agenda for sustainability is appealing. What will be the catalyst to bring organizations together to effect change?

What are some examples of the legislation we want to advocate for or against? Response: Subsidies, taxes, requirements for dairy farms and stockyards, oil and gas production. Also requiring more criteria for economic development projects, encouraging renewable energy programs, tax shifting, promoting rail over roads, an energy-efficient housing code, enforceable corporate charters, better use of school facilities.

A sustainability paradigm would provide new jobs, build a sense of community, encourage cooperation instead of competition.

Albuquerque Meeting on Sustainability Study November 10, 2005

The consensus of Albuquerque league members at a meeting Nov. 10 seemed to be that the topic "sustainability" is overwhelmingly broad but could be addressed by the league in small steps.

"The consensus is, we should at least think about this. Then we will be able to formulate a position," said Katherine Campbell who in partnership with Gale Zander Barlow presented the proposal of the Los Alamos league for a two-year state study possibly leading to a state position on sustainability.

The proposal was made at the May 2005 convention.

"The concept is too broad and difficult for the league to tackle. It should be approached on a small scale, using work done by other states (leagues)," said one Albuquerque member.

Another said he had been involved in sustainability for 25 years particularly in agriculture and "conservation is something we can all agree on... . That's so easy and so simple that's a first step toward sustainability, a place to start."

Those and other comments came in reaction to presentations by Ms. Campbell and Ms. Barlow on the study proposal. The first year of the study would be devoted to education and the gathering of information from local leagues.

Ms. Campbell told the 26 members at the Albuquerque meeting that they are trying to get a sense of whether the league needs a position and whether it should adopt a state position and/or a state principle on sustainability.

"So the questions we need to kind of think about are how would having such a position strengthen the league advocacy and education functions?: How would it impact our programs and our positions? "

Ms. Campbell said the standard definition of sustainability -- from the Brundtland Commission of the 1980's -- is "living in such a way that we can meet our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

"What on earth does that mean? . . . And that's really what we need to talk about," Ms. Campbell said.

Ms. Campbell briefly reviewed -- and elaborated on -- handouts she had distributed covering the pros and cons of adopting a position on sustainability. She pointed out the league has positions on various issues "and we find ourselves more and more facing questions when we go to the Legislature that require us to pull together bits and pieces from different parts of our existing positions in order to support a specific piece of legislation."

Ms. Barlow then presented a chart she called a basic model or picture of sustainability, with parts showing areas on which the League has positions: social, government and natural resources.

"The League has very good positions in all of these areas but what we don't have is a way to integrate between those three areas" to check to make sure that one position doesn't contradict another or enhance another position.

She used the dairy industry -- "something we can all relate to" -- to illustrate use of energy, a non-renewable resource, and its effects. .

Addressing it from a sustainability standpoint, she used an example of the government mandating that half of all energy be renewable and all barns and offices be designed to recover 50 percent of the lighting and 50 percent of the heating just from the sun.

The second thing, Ms. Barlow continued, is that cows produce a lot of waste that can be converted into energy – a concept now being used in Albuquerque with human waste.

Ending the first half of the presentation, Ms. Campbell said the point is, if legislation promoting these sorts of solutions comes before the Legislature, "are we in a position right now to support such legislation?"

Responding to the women's presentations, an Albuquerque member commented, "Sustainability is such a broad field, I think that by definition and as you're using it, . . .if we were going to zero in on it, we would have to pick something, for instance, energy . . . We couldn't just throw out the word 'sustainability. . .I just think that sustainability by itself is too broad an issue..

"You have to pick something that this state needs – energy or water or whatever – to zero in on., or I don't think you'll get too far."

Another member countered, "I think the basis of what makes this league work is that we are not specific. That is the important part of league positions. . . League takes broad-based positions that can be adapted for issues as they come up . . . We need to make sure that always we have flexibility so we don't get boxed in."

Also raised more than once during discussion was the use of the word "principle" in the title of a hand-out, which read "SHOULD LWVNM ADOPT A STATE SUSTAINABILITY POSITION OR PRINCIPLE?" A member asked the presenters what was meant by principle.

Ms. Campbell explained the league has specifically written principles based on the platform when the league was formed. She said the principles were "basically good government type principles" not related to sustainability. They have basically all been turned into positions.

"A principle could be a fairly general statement with which any position that the league adopted . . . would have to be consistent. It would just be a reference point. It probably would not be something you acted on independently of a more specifically formed position."

To another question later, Ms. Campbell said there is no precedent for the league's adopting another principle.

In the second part of the Campbell-Barlow presentation, Ms. Campbell reviewed three articles already published in La Palabra and a fourth article awaiting publication she

distributed at the Albuquerque meeting. She commented on some of the issues that need attention, including use of taxes, corporate interests, media consolidation and education.

"All of these issues are really intimately involved with things the league cares about," Campbell said.

Citing "a mass of information," a member asked, "Where do we begin?" as the meeting was opened to comment.

Campbell referred to questions on the back of the "pros and cons" handout and said the place to begin is whether the league needs a position on sustainability.

During wide-ranging discussion that followed, a member suggested the league work on conservation and use a checklist that Ms. Barlow had suggested. Others said "everything connects to everything" and that the league must look at the state as a whole and avoid focusing on local issues.

Among other suggestions was that the New Mexico league draw on work by the leagues of other states.

The Los Alamos team will visit the Santa Fe league in January and the Las Cruces league in March. Meanwhile, Ms. Barlow said, they expect to put out a questionnaire.

LVWABC Evening Unit Meeting, November 15, 2005 at Cherry Hills Public Library

Albuquerque Meeting on Sustainability Study
November 15, 2005

Present: Members 7, Guest 1, Presenters 2

Question: Should LWVNM adopt a State Sustainability Position and/or Principle?

- Advocacy
- Education
- Program
- Position

Discussion followed the presentation that summarized the 4 articles in La Palabra (on Web), a listing of pros/cons, and an Industry sample exploring possibilities for sustaining its resources

It appeared from the beginning of discussion that members favored adopting a 2-year study. Limitations of current positions and difficulty in gathering supportive materials within many LWV positions was acknowledged.

Topics were:

Where to place Sustainability?

As an Umbrella over all position? If adopted how to interact with other positions. Some conflicts within program.

Within the current positions?

- Natural Resources? Obvious placement to integrate with current positions
- Social Policy? Includes aspects of Health Care, Social Justice,

Could address population growth—a hot topic.

Specific position in each area?

Would allow Advocacy to access each (umbrella) to easily find support for action.

Area of Agreement

Statement formulated and edited:

Government Policy will be formulated by sustainability solutions to problems facing societies/countries which impact social, economic and natural resources.

Question: Should LWVNM adopt a State Sustainability Position and/or Principle? Group was in support. A show of hands for continuance resulted in a few Yes and undecided with no “no votes” raised.

3 umbrellas: One each under Natural Resources, Social Policy, Economic Development. The possibility of interaction between. First considered here in this unit.

The presenters said they would “guide our thought process” as the study of Sustainability continues.

Note: Putting Sustainability in as a Principle was not explored.

Recorder: Donna Hill, 505-797-4690, dhill@netscape.com

Albuquerque Westside Meeting On Sustainability Study
November 16, 2005

Attendees: 15

The meeting began with a definition of sustainability: “Meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations.”

We are trying to explore what could a position on sustainability do, what we should do. Not trying to reach a consensus yet—this is a 2-year study.

Locally a dairy went out of business and nothing could be done with the land because it was contaminated from the dairy business. Now it is being turned into a housing development.

One goal should be that we should join the Kyoto Treaty.

The governor of NM has appointed a citizens climate advocacy group to come up with some proposed legislation. Believe Governor has also approached the Western Governors Association and the Democratic Governors Association. The NM LWV should support this effort and legislation that may come out of it.

Why is “sustainable growth” an oxymoron? That puts it in conflict with growth.

Answer: Because we are already overusing. The population is growing. Can’t have sustainable growth—too many people.

You can base economic growth not only on consumption. Even in growth in the educated areas nothing is without major physical impacts.

Try to use development instead of growth.

What you are saying is the word “growth” now has a bad connotation. Growth (economic growth) is bad.

The Albuquerque Mayor Chavez put out a survey to determine what concerns the citizens had and growth came in second as a concern. He was surprised. This is a fast growth area. What do we do with our growth?

There was a book called “Generations” which claimed that every generation started with a war. It said the next generation to us would be conservation.

Need to get what growth means to all people.

We have to start with zero population growth.

The more we continue to grow as we are the more we are pushing ourselves to become a third world.

Are we talking about just the U.S. or the whole world. Our growth is being propelled by immigration.

All goods and services consumed by human beings (growth)

Population control is necessary. If you don’t stabilize population you will out grow resources.

All countries are using U.S. as a model they are striving to achieve.

Education part is a problem. When architects had to design for disabilities, all schools changed curriculum to teach design with disabilities in mind.

You have to present facts and solutions at the same time. If problem is isolated and solutions are given, more specific steps would be taken.

That is a positive approach. Don't think growth is bad word because it means good things to many countries.

Even on a bartering system, as long as population increases, it isn't any different.

I substitute growth for greed. I see both happening in Rio Rancho. Decision made because few persons in the right position want them. We should have solar energy and we do not.

The Governor wants to bring solar energy to NM.

If you have growth/greed more community services are needed. No one looks at this. We are subsidizing developers.

New developers have maintenance costs but no enforcement.

Greed leads in Rio Rancho.

Example of State League position – Albuquerque uses local and national could support impact fees??? (probably missed something here—sorry)

Tried to take issues at National 5-6 years ago.

We should have a State position and can support national position.

What areas of league positions will be impacted. We need an inventory of what positions will be impacted by a sustainability position.

We must encourage people to run for local positions—school board, planning commissions, etc. to get message out. Need members to sit at these meetings. Developers are on these commissions and boards.

What do you think? Should State have a sustainability position and what impact will it have?

Better utilization of sunlight. What about adopting a position on that?

The sustainability issue embraces much more.

Why did we support fair trade? What did we think was good then?

When league positions were established they were only taking that one position and not looking at issues we have today.

If under a sustainability position you run into conflict, on water specifically, it is difficult to support.

We are going for a broad opinion.

You need an inventory so league can support adequately.

Even on water, no position on limits.

We could propose positions that would impact future issues.

Incentives like tax breaks should be given like those to buy hybrid cars, or install solar in homes.

Zoning needs to be required—no efficient homes are being built.

Government should pay people to initiate energy conservation. Let legislators know we support.

Should we take next step and continue for another year—Majority said “YES”.

Albuquerque Meeting on Sustainability Study
November 20, 2005

On 11/20 the morning unit met in a conference room of the Elegante Hotel. The presentation was made by Kathy Campbell, Los Alamos League president, and Gale Zander Barlow, sustainability chair in Los Alamos. This was the final in an introductory series. The purpose of the meeting was to determine if the LWV at the state level should adopt a position or principle about sustainability. This is to be two-year project. The first year would be spent studying the issues involved, and determining what the implications might be of the LWV adopting an overall position on this subject, how that might affect League educational and advocacy activities as well as its existing positions on many other issues.

The first part of the presentation was spent educating members on what the concept of sustainability entailed, its definition and how it differed from earlier League positions on “maximum protection of the environment” and support of the Kyoto treaty. Using Venn diagrams, and economic models they explained how current concepts of growth ignore the fundamental limits of the environment to process industrial waste, recycle CO₂, and provide fundamentals of life like sufficient water and food to support our current population. This level of consumption of the earth’s resources is unsustainable and will have grave consequences for the processes of democracy, and even the survival of humanity.

After discussion, the 10 members in attendance agreed that further study should take place and that the league should continue with its search for a position on these serious problems.

**Santa Fe (El Castillo) Meeting on Sustainability Study
January 9, 2006**

Should LWVNM adopt a state position or principle on sustainability?

Did LWVLA establish a sustainability position for Los Alamos County? Yes, useful as a backup (e.g. planning and zoning.)

Need to be careful when we lobby that we don't get in position where legislators will be turned off, especially in regard to growth. It is important to tie growth to water. Economic impact of no growth. Such ideas go nowhere, but must be tried in small bites. Position needs to be very broad.

Re globalization: Need to look at our U.S. workers. If we reduce the importance of import/export would it conflict with national position?

What can we limit? pollution, growth, population...

How will this tie in to other state positions?

Could the energy spent on this study lessen local impact? Is it a distraction?

What areas should be considered? Governance, short and long term objectives. Sustainability would be long term point of view. Taxes and subsidies. Water.

The question of what would affect future generations might interest citizens in addressing long-term sustainability.

There is such a variety of needs in the various counties of New Mexico.

If LWV doesn't do this, who will?

Why don't we limit the study to a few items, rather than spreading ourselves too thin.

What do we mean by sustainability? Brundtland definition from 1980s. Local, national and international.

Santa Fe Meeting on Sustainability Study
Jan. 11, 2006

Population control positions should be stronger.

Low population growth hasn't really held up. Control of how we live is more important.

Turning off computer monitors would save so much energy. Compact florescent bulbs would help.

Subsidies for solar power with trombe walls would help again.

Have you discussed cons in your discussions?

Sustainability is a weasel word. The League should use other means to accomplish its goals. It is such a vague word.

What do we want to sustain? Conscientiousness is the issue.

Sustainability, as it relates to good government, is the League's connection. Government has the responsibility to support it.

Government expands the lack of it and thus should be responsible to reverse those effects too.

What would a principle versus a position be? In the past the League changed to taking positions.

In the areas of government, social, and natural resources, we could have sustainability positions for each.

Dairy grew in NM because other states provided more restrictions. In other states restrictions sent them away. An integrated approach would be a benefit.

Issues of consumption conscientiousness is key.

Can a stronger League position make a difference by advocating at a higher than individual level?

Shouldn't loose focus from natural resources. That's essential. The examination of this issue is good.

NPR program on electricity produced from coal ash used to build houses was mentioned as an example of sustainability.

CA community using methane from local dump to produce electricity for homes was mentioned as an example of what needs to be done in the future.

Mention of methane used in Kenya as a fuel for homes was mentioned.

Kyoto Treaty, as it applies to China and their buying of wood and other resources, was mentioned. Not covered in the treaty due to their developing status at the time of the signing.

U.S. behind European countries that use more nuclear and renewable energy.

Could debt forgiveness be coupled with emission control?

Brazil allows more cutting in the Amazon as homesteading by multinational companies grows. (not sure about recording of this?)

LWVSFC had a proposal to match growth with water. Low flow toilets was the solution adopted. The League supports a closer connection. 130 gallons/person is a good conservation effort. Can't stop growth. Only 12% of the economy is connected to growth.

Santa Fe government says new development must have water rights.

Santa Fe County affordable housing encouraged by the county's supplying water.

State law allows that in cities where you are 300 ft from a well, you can't sink a new well.

Is protecting the environment part of sustainability?

The government has betrayed us.

We need to stop trading off large term gains for short term gains.

Sustainability should be a principle that is broad based on the economy and the future. Ie. nuclear power plants advocates not thinking about waste.

The League should be careful to be selective and take on too much as our resources are limited.

Focus on natural resources and the environment shouldn't be lessened.

To argue against nuclear power plants with a sustainability position, there must be efficient arguments for alternatives versus under current positions where this isn't necessary.

As an important issue, sustainability shouldn't be ignored due to its complexity.

The majority present supports continuation of this discussion and the formation of language for a proposed position/principle.

Las Cruces Meeting On Sustainability Study
March 8, 2006

Gale Barlow started the meeting by presenting a sustainability model of a dairy farm. Kathy Campbell then followed by explaining that the current problem is that League positions don't take into consideration the need for good choices regarding sustainability. She also mentioned the need for economic growth to be linked to sustainable growth. Another point she made is that even though problems are global in nature, solutions must be local.

The question was asked by the speakers of whether we thought it necessary to add a position on sustainability to our list of positions.

There was a question for clarification on "global" versus "local" in problem identification as well as solutions. Several examples were given.

One member commented on the erosion of protected land such as national parks, national forests, etc., made him feel that we perhaps do need a position on sustainability.

Another member said that an ability to advocate for sustainability in addition to the elements we already have in place would strengthen our advocacy.

Another member read some passages from the book *Collapse* which pointed up the need for sustainability in planning. The two presenters mentioned that they had been listening to *Collapse* on their trip down from Los Alamos..

Another member mentioned that a position on sustainability would strengthen our position on recycling.

Another member: "We need sustainability to control growth." Water availability was mentioned in that context.

There followed a discussion on the Kyoto protocols, which Gale said were not enough to assure sustainability.

There was a feeling that time was running out. Also, that new technologies can help with sustainability.

Members were asked to fill out the questionnaires and return them to Marnie who will collate them and send them to the presenters.