

LWVCNM Observer's Report

Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

May 24, 2023

Mary Templeton, observer (by online audio; video is unavailable)

Present: David Heil (Chair), Michael Meek (Vice Chair), Katherine Bruch, Jay Block, Joshua Jones

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

Gun Safety/Violence Prevention

Commissioner Jones made gun locks for securing firearms freely available to attendees who wanted them, and also brought veteran crisis cards for distribution.

Housing

Two commissioners pledged \$5K each to ABQ FaithWorks Collaborative to assist Sandoval County residents with eviction prevention. The funds will be used to pay back-rent or housing deposits.

Sandoval County Commission voted to issue bonds to cover increased construction costs for a 216-Unit multifamily housing complex (Sandoval Flats).

Additional Comments

Rules of Procedure

The commission posted "rules of procedures for public comment and attendance at commission meetings" on the Commission web page. The Commission Chair read these rules to attendees at the beginning of the meeting, and later paused the meeting due to infringements, such as applause and exceeding time.

Public Comment

The State Representative Cates (District 44) attended the meeting in person to express concern over Commissioners spending time on hate speech and personal campaigning during Commission meetings.

Housing

Seniors age 65 years and older are eligible for a property value freeze that prevents their taxes from increasing. This freeze can be requested from the Assessor's office.

Banning the Feeding of Free Roaming Horses within Sandoval County and Permit Process

Discussion of the public feeding of wild horses and their interaction with traffic has consumed substantial amounts of time at Commission Meetings for the past several months and additional time over the past 10 years. The County has deemed the horses a traffic safety hazard. State law holds the County liable in the event of death or injury if the Commission recognizes a problem and does not address it. The County proposed an ordinance that makes public feeding of wild horses in Placitas a petty misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$300 and/or up to 90 days in jail beginning September 1, 2023. It also creates a permitting process by which 501c3 organizations may apply to legally feed and water the horses. Many residents feel strongly about continuing to feed the horses, but may form a 501c3 and apply to feed them legally. The commission voted 4-1 to pass the ordinance and the permitting resolution.

Commissioners Discussion

One Commissioner advanced a story that veterans in New York were being evicted from hotels to make room for “illegal immigrants from the unsecure border.” He went on to comment on federal policy.

Sandoval County Commission Website

<https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/>