

# PHOENIX ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY and SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MINUTES

**August 14, 2025**

# Phoenix City Hall Online Using Webex

Commission Members Present	City Staff Present
Lobo, Caroline, Chair, in-person	Albright, Rosanne, Office of Environmental Programs (OEP), in-person
Sandweg, Bill, Commissioner, Webex	Gerster, Katrina, OEP, in-person
Gorseigner, Eric, Commissioner, Webex	Mullis, Kailey, OEP, in-person
Barr, Kelly, Commissioner, Webex	Zima, Elizabeth, OEP, in-person
Knoop, Kathy, Commissioner, Webex	De La Chapa, Carla, Office of Sustainability (OOS), in-person
Groman, Kevin, Commissioner, Webex	Goldberg, Trixie Ann, OOS, in-person
Torres, Ginger, Vice Chair, Webex	Lekagane, Thomo, OOS, in-person
Scoville-Weaver, Amy, Commissioner, Webex	Uebelherr, Joshua, OEP, in-person
Taylor, Penny Allen, Commissioner, Webex	
Chapman, Darren, Commissioner, Webex	
Odegard-Begay, Andrea, Commissioner, Webex	
Tetreault, Colin, Commissioner, Webex	
<b>Commission Members Not Present</b>	<b>Community Members Present</b>
Porter, Sarah, Commissioner	Clauson, Rob, MtCrane, in-person
	Thompson, Christopher, Webex
	Riviere, Cecilia, Arizona State University, Webex

## **1. Call to Order/Roll Call and Announcements:**

The meeting of the Environmental Quality and Sustainability Commission (EQSC) was called to order with a roll call at 3:02 p.m. There were 12 members present at roll call.

Commissioner Kathy Knoop shared updates on the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program, noting that although federal funds were initially held, final guidance released on August 13th allows states to begin distributing money. Public comments on the guidance are due by September 7. She discussed how states will determine electricity sources for electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and mentioned that the local Federal Highway Administration office will oversee fund distribution. Chair Caroline Lobo asked about Arizona's allocation, and Kathy confirmed that Arizona is allocated \$76 million, though there's a possibility of a federal clawback if approvals aren't finalized in time.

Vice Chair Ginger Torres then announced that the City of Phoenix and Local First Arizona are partnering to host five business workshops focused on the Climate Action Plan (CAP), with the first session scheduled for that evening at Burton Barr Library. She listed the upcoming workshop locations and emphasized outreach to businesses near the Deer Valley Community Center in North Phoenix. The workshops aim to gather input from small businesses on climate impacts and priorities, with the potential to include a business-specific goal in the CAP. Torres asked commissioners to help spread the word and requested that the City send registration links to commissioners after the meeting. Chair Lobo asked if Vice Chair Torres had connected with Neighborhood Services regarding Deer Valley, and Vice Chair Torres replied that Joshua Uebelherr from the City of Phoenix is involved, with Councilwoman Stark planning to distribute information within the next day.

Vice Chair Torres proposed a future agenda item focused on data centers and their energy and climate impacts.

Commissioner Darren Chapman welcomed meeting attendee Rob Clauson, who expressed interest in becoming more environmentally responsible.

Commissioner Bill Sandweg mentioned he plans to attend the Sunnyslope CAP meeting. Commissioner Kevin Groman thanked Vice Chair Torres for posting about the workshops on LinkedIn and said he would continue sharing updates there. Vice Chair Torres also invited commissioners to volunteer as facilitators for the CAP meetings if they're interested.

## **2. Review and approval of July 10, 2025 Minutes**

Commissioner Kevin Groman made a motion to approve the July 10, 2025 minutes. Commissioner Penny Allee Taylor seconded the motion, and it carried 12-0.

### **3. Public Comment**

No members of the public requested to speak.

### **4. Climate Action Plan: Waste Management**

Commissioner Andrea Odegard-Begay presented a review of the Water Sector chapter of the 2021 Climate Action Plan. The presentation began with the overarching goal of the 2021 Climate Action Plan's waste section: to reduce waste, promote reuse and recycling, and create social and economic value. The first subgoal (WR1) focused on expanding composting programs, with a suggestion to place bins in all public buildings.

Questions were raised about construction waste collection, incentives for green construction code compliance, and how such standards might become mandatory for manufacturers, followed by discussion that generally the City approach was to implement voluntary programs that encourage or reward their use. Chair Lobo asked about partnerships with homebuilders, while Commissioner Odegard-Begay noted challenges in public sector compliance due to low-bid constraints. Commissioner Kelly Barr proposed recognizing developers who exceed sustainability standards, and Commissioner Odegard-Begay mentioned the Green Business Leader program. The City of Phoenix Chief Sustainability Officer Carla De La Chapa stated that a future presentation on that initiative from the Public Works Circular Economy Administrator could be scheduled.

Vice Chair Torres supported compost expansion but asked about barriers. City of Phoenix Climate Program Manager, Josh Uebelherr cited operational costs and staffing. Commissioner Groman emphasized the need for education around closed-loop recycling and suggested incentives like expedited permitting and something like the Copper Cactus awards.

Commissioner Odegard-Begay shifted to WR2, which aims to capture methane from waste. Josh confirmed the SR85 site flares methane because based on discussions with Ameresco there is not enough methane generation for a viable project. However, 91<sup>st</sup> Avenue does capture and convert their methane to renewable natural gas. WR3 focused on increasing waste diversion, with a recommendation to provide digital resources and partner with Planning and Development. WR4 addressed hazardous materials, with suggestions to mandate sustainable building materials and compostable packaging. Questions arose about the city's sustainable purchasing policy, which Environmental Programs Manager, Beth Zima said is under review. Environmental Programs Manager, Rosanne Albright clarified that sustainable purchasing is currently voluntary.

WR5 covered brownfield redevelopment along the Rio Salado. Commissioner Chapman shared updates on the Arizona Fresh Agrifood Innovation Center and other projects in the area. Vice Chair Torres highlighted the opportunity to address housing and collaborate with tribal communities. Albright described

cleanup efforts, bond funding, and partnerships through the Rio Reimagined initiative. Arizona Fresh is in the grading and predevelopment phase.

WR6 focused on reducing emissions from water and wastewater treatment, with data shared from the 91st Avenue plant. The presentation ended with broader questions: how to quantify success across goals, and how to improve communication beyond digital outreach. Chair Lobo requested updated metrics from Public Works. Carla De La Chapa noted that waste contributes less than 2% of GHGs but remains central to the zero-waste goal. Commissioner Eric Gorseegner suggested exploring frameworks from national organizations such as ICMA or National League of Cities to improve metrics.

## **5. EQSC Climate Action Plan Memo Discussion**

Chair Caroline Lobo asked Joshua Uebelherr of the Office of Environmental Programs for an update on the Climate Action Plan draft. Joshua said it's currently under review. He expects it to go to City Council in the Fall.

Chair Lobo then summarized the commissioners' presentations and recommendations from past meetings, asking whether their input should be framed as a memo, a letter to council, or directed to the Transportation, Infrastructure and Planning City Council subcommittee. Environmental Programs Manager, Rosanne Ablright stated that comments from the EQSC could be sent to Mayor and City Council via letter or memo.

Commissioner Barr emphasized that meaningful feedback depends on reviewing the current draft, not past versions. Chair Lobo and Commissioner Groman agreed, noting the importance of focusing on actionable items and streamlining recommendations. Commissioner Barr echoed this, urging the group to prioritize what can realistically be implemented. Chair Lobo offered to send a summary document for commissioners to review and suggested waiting for the CAP draft before finalizing their input. Commissioner Barr confirmed the goal is to support the draft with thoughtful, relevant feedback.

Chair Lobo asked why public health is not a standalone goal in the CAP. She stated that health and well-being are central to climate resilience and should be more prominently featured. Commissioner Barr assumed the CAP was aligned with C40 guidelines. Joshua clarified that while C40's new framework includes 16 requirements, there's flexibility in how cities meet them. Public health is currently integrated across chapters. Chair Lobo suggested framing health from a human-centered perspective to make the issue more compelling. Josh noted that vector-borne disease is one area C40 highlights, which could be a natural entry point.

Commissioner Amy Scoville-Weaver added that health should be viewed through multiple lenses, especially in terms of community resilience. Commissioner Groman appreciated Joshua's openness and proposed a future strategy session to explore developer incentives, suggesting the commission could craft a unified recommendation through stakeholder collaboration.

## **6. Announcements and Review of Future Agenda Items**

Commissioner Gorseegner suggested that the commission focus on data centers in September, and proposed a follow-up topic for early next year, possibly January or February, centered on Phoenix's recycling facility. He also raised the idea of reviewing the city's sustainable development standards and asked whether those fall under the Planning Department's purview.

Commissioner Barr noted that Arizona State University (ASU) is currently researching data centers, including their energy use, water consumption, land impact, and emissions. She recommended inviting ASU to present their findings at a future meeting, likely in January rather than September. In the meantime, she suggested having Planning and Zoning staff present on the city's recently passed ordinance related to data centers, so commissioners have a foundational understanding before hearing from ASU.

## **7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kailey Mullis, Environmental Programs and Innovation Specialist