

PHOENIX ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY and SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MINUTES

September 11, 2025

Phoenix City Hall
Online Using Webex

Commission Members Present	City Staff Present
Lobo, Caroline, Chair, Webex	Allen, Nancy Office of Environmental Programs (OEP), in-person
Sandweg, Bill, Commissioner, Webex	Gerster, Katrina, OEP, in-person
	Mullis, Kailey, OEP, in-person
Barr, Kelly, Commissioner, Webex	Zima, Elizabeth, OEP, in-person
Knoop, Kathy, Commissioner, Webex	Jordan, Amanda, Public Works, in-person
Groman, Kevin, Commissioner, Webex	Goldberg, Trixie Ann, OOS, Webex
Torres, Ginger, Vice Chair, Webex	Cervantes, Veridiana, Public Works, Webex
Taylor, Penny Allen, Commissioner, Webex	
Chapman, Darren, Commissioner, Webex	
Tetreault, Colin, Commissioner, Webex	
Commission Members Not Present	Community Members Present
Porter, Sarah, Commissioner	Mankee, Baylie, Webex
Gorsegner, Eric, Commissioner	Rodriguez, Martin, The Nature Conservancy, Webex
Scoville-Weaver, Amy, Commissioner	Flores, Alicia, Webex
Odegard-Begay, Andrea, Commissioner	Floyd, Anthony, Presenter, 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 3:06 p.m. There were 9 members present at roll call.

Vice Chair Ginger Torres gave a summary of the first few Local First Arizona and City of Phoenix Climate Action Plan Business Meetings. Vice Chair Torres asked the commission for help to get folks to the Deer Valley business meeting next week on September 17 at 6PM, and discussed the community meeting at Cesar Chavez that evening.

Commissioner Darren Chapman talked about the Environmental and Sustainability Forum at the Maryvale Community Center that Saturday, September 13 for awareness.

2. Review and approval of August 14, 2025 Minutes

Commissioner Colin Tetreault made a motion to approve the August 14, 2025 minutes. Commissioner Kelly Barr seconded the motion, and it carried 9-0.

3. Public Comment

No members of the public requested to speak.

4. Public Works: Green Business Leader Program and Waste Data

Chair Caroline Lobo introduced Amanda Jordan with a preface on the interest from the last meeting to hear from our Public Works department on the Green Business Leader Program and updated waste data.

Public Works oversees trash and recycling and maintains ownership over our facilities, which allows flexibility for creative initiatives, like circular economy projects.

Jordan talked about what the City can and cannot do with waste pick up. Jordan said the City cannot mandate or incentivize recycling, but the City already has high participation. Jordan said the CAP is the driving force behind establishing our diversion goals, which includes 50% diversion by 2030. The City currently fluctuates between 34–38%, which is above the national average of about 31%.

Jordan discussed the impact of the City's diversion rates, which includes extending the life of landfills, reducing reliance on virgin materials, and keeping materials in use.

Jordan talked about the Zero Waste team, which is dedicated to outreach and education for residents, including tours of facilities (in person or virtually), presentations, community events and tabling, the Recycle Right Wizard (an online search tool showing the recyclability of items and where they can be disposed of if not recyclable), and the Zero Waste Newsletter.

Jordan mentioned the latest program for residents, which is the Master Recycler Program (2024), which engages passionate residents through a combination of education, outreach, and engagement.

Jordan provided an overview of several waste and recycling services, including household hazardous waste (HHW) and bulk trash collection by appointment, EcoStations (recycling drop-off sites located in public parks), the iRecycle – Keep Phoenix Beautiful events held five times a year, and green organic waste containers available in select areas of the city.

Jordan said the City is upgrading the 27th Avenue MRF in South Phoenix to expedite the recycling process and reduce contamination.

Jordan said the City cannot pick up from businesses, but supports them through the Green Business Leader Program. Launched in 2017, it lives within the Zero Waste team. It is free of charge to become certified. Businesses fill out a form online, a walkthrough is conducted, and then a certification is given. There are green, gold, and platinum certification levels based on the actions taken by businesses. There are currently almost 120 businesses. The City is revamping the program to realign with the goals set forth in the Climate Action Plan. They're working actively with departments to ensure the program aligns with their sustainability goals. Aviation also runs a program for businesses within Sky Harbor.

Jordan mentioned the Zero Waste Business Program. Businesses create an agreement (or Memorandum of Understanding) with the City, and in return, the City promotes these businesses among partners and other networks. There are currently 3 businesses. Businesses are also being engaged in the Business Workshops for the Climate Action Plan. Jordan attended one and was happy to see that waste was a popular topic of conversation.

Jordan said that food waste and organics services (composting) are the most commonly requested services by residents and businesses alike. She mentioned partnerships with Recyclops, Recycled City, and Mill, and their work composting at our city facilities. We are expanding their services to more facilities and plan to make them citywide in the future, so they are not just housed in Public Works.

Jordan also mentioned the Certified Green Organics Program.

Jordan said one of the biggest efforts focused on businesses is the development of the Resource Innovation Campus. It will house startups and other businesses, including R&D. It is ready to have tenants.

Commissioner Kathy Knoop commended their work. Commissioner Knoop asked how it's going getting folks to follow the rules for recycling. Amanda Jordan said participation is high, even as people are still learning. Jordan brought up the "Oops: Shine On" program, in which a team goes through neighborhoods and checks bins. Good bins receive a "Shine On" sticker, while bins with mistakes get an "Oops" sticker. This has fostered neighborly pressure and positive behavior changes.

Commissioner Bill Sandweg mentioned that Copper Star Coffee is Green Business Certified and that he's interested in becoming a Master Recycler. Commissioner Sandweg expressed liking the ecostations, but noted the one at Indian School Park was set on fire and removed, wondering if it will return someday and that it is needed due to the number of multi-housing units. Amanda Jordan said it's something they have to work

through with Parks and Recreation Department, since their staff is impacted when incidents like that happen, but it's at the top of the list to figure out a better solution.

Commissioner Kelly Barr congratulated the team and asked Amanda would recommend to move the needle to meet the City's waste goals. Amanda Jordan said most waste measurements are based on weight, and the challenge is figuring out how to pull those materials out of the waste stream to create circular economy materials. This is expensive and requires large capacity, which is why they're hoping the Zero Waste Business partnerships will boost what's already being done. Jordan also mentioned possibly launching curbside organics and building a larger composting facility.

Commissioner Kelly Barr also noted that organics service is limited to some areas and asked what it would take to expand. Amanda Jordan said they're looking to expand. They started in neighborhoods with large amounts of organics and interest in participating. Expansion is tricky because it would require more truck routes, which could increase GHGs, but they're working on it.

Commissioner Barr asked if the CAP goal should be changed to a per capita basis to better reflect progress. Commissioner Barr also expressed interest in becoming a Master Recycler. Amanda Jordan said she loves that idea and would love to return in the future to present on the different ways they are trying to measure waste diversion.

Vice Chair Ginger Torres thanked Amanda for sticking around despite all the changes at the City. She asked if they are reaching out to businesses in the Chamber or those trying to stay afloat, and whether there's a strategy to go beyond the "easiest reach" businesses. She also looked at the map of green organics neighborhoods and asked how this relates to equity concerns and equal opportunity, noting that areas not eligible for the program often face other challenges.

Jordan said for that the most engagement with potential green businesses is inbound. Outreach is done through community event tabling and partnerships with OEP on programs like Project REDUCE and Food Waste Watchers, which target small restaurant businesses. They are thinking about this more as they revamp the program. For the second comment, green organics is not available to businesses, but they can be connected to service providers. At the school level, they are doing food waste diversion in cafeterias, especially in less affluent neighborhoods, and are expanding that. However, staff bandwidth is a limiting factor. The compost facility can only accept so much organic waste at this time, so they need to be mindful of that while also planning for expansion. Both issues are top of mind.

Vice Chair Ginger Torres noted that many business owners are also residents, and as such, they are interested in participating in green organics programs from both perspectives. She asked what steps residents need to take to access food waste and composting services.

Amanda responded that the best approach is the traditional route, residents should bring their interest to the City Council and the Mayor. She explained that strong community interest helps provide the political support needed to reassess and potentially expand service fees for these programs.

5. International Green Construction Code (IgCC)

Caroline introduced Anthony Floyd, formally an employee of the City of Scottsdale, noting that his presentation was in response to the previous meeting's interest in learning more about the green construction code.

Anthony Floyd shared that he worked for the City of Scottsdale and recently retired after starting his career in 1985. He played a key role in developing Scottsdale's green building code, drawing inspiration from the City of Austin. The initiative began with residential buildings but eventually evolved into a mandatory code.

Floyd explained that he began tracking the IgCC during its early development. While the International Code Council (ICC) sets the model standards, it is up to individual cities to adopt them if supported by the Council and residents. Floyd noted that the IgCC is similar to LEED and other commercial sustainability programs. The City of Phoenix adopted a voluntary version of the code in 2012.

Floyd clarified that the green construction code applies to multifamily buildings, commercial properties, remodels, and tenant improvements. LEED certification is accepted as an alternative compliance path. The code addresses areas such as heat island mitigation, indoor and outdoor water efficiency, and on-site renewable energy.

Floyd outlined the top 10 provisions for green new construction and explained that trained staff use a presentation to help integrate these requirements into plan reviews. The building department enforces the code, and it is fully embedded in the permitting process.

Floyd explained that the code requires 50% of construction waste to be diverted from landfills, either through comingled or sorted materials at a materials recovery facility (MRF). Applicants must submit a stamped construction and demolition waste management plan before receiving a permit. This ensures that expectations are clear from the beginning.

Floyd added that the City provides a resource list of construction companies to help builders understand where to dispose of materials properly.

Regarding heat island mitigation, Floyd said that at least 50% of the site's hardscape must be shaded by structures or trees, or use light-colored paving with a solar reflective index of 29 or higher. Cool roofs are required for both conditioned and non-conditioned spaces. All new buildings must include solar or solar-ready zones. EV charging infrastructure is required for new multifamily, hotel, and commercial buildings.

Floyd also explained that projects must use reduced impact materials, which may include recycled content, regional materials, biobased or wood components, or products with environmental product declarations (EPDs), depending on the size and type of construction. For indoor environmental quality, 85% of interior finishes must be low-VOC. The code also requires infrastructure for recycling in multifamily and multi-use buildings, such as built-in recycling containers or chutes in mailrooms.

Floyd said water efficiency measures include high-efficiency plumbing fixtures, water bottle filling stations, and hot water supply controls. While water softeners and reverse osmosis systems are not required, there are compliance measures for those that use them.

Floyd noted that the City of Scottsdale has developed stamps, worksheets, and checklists to help applicants and architects demonstrate compliance. All major new builds must include EPDs, which can be either industry-wide or product-specific.

Floyd emphasized that while the City cannot mandate recycling due to state laws, it can require that the infrastructure be built to support it.

Floyd shared that he worked closely with Scottsdale's boards and commissions to develop the code, and it was ultimately approved by City Council.

Chair Caroline Lobo commended Floyd and the team for their accomplishments and asked whether the process was smooth or met with resistance.

Floyd replied that the only pushback came from homeowners' associations and the Arizona Multifamily Housing Association. Since the IgCC primarily applies to commercial buildings, single-family homes were not significantly affected. He noted that EV charging requirements were initially contested, but overall, there was broad support from industries including energy and public health.

Commissioner Chapman asked whether rooftop gardens could be incorporated into the code and whether decomposed granite could be used in parking areas to help with heat island mitigation.

Floyd responded that covered parking automatically meets compliance requirements for heat island mitigation.

Commissioner Barr commented that the political climate in Scottsdale has changed and that the commission may have shifted. He said he was encouraged to hear there wasn't much opposition but asked whether Floyd was concerned that the approach might be reversed.

Floyd replied that while the sustainability plan adopted in December was rescinded in January, the IgCC is part of the building code that was approved by Council two to three years ago. Although there is a new Council and Mayor, the City has continued to move forward with implementation. Floyd acknowledged a potential conflict with a 2005 resolution requiring City facilities to be LEED Gold certified. There is some overlap between the LEED requirement and the IgCC, and resolving that conflict may require political action, which could affect the future of either program.

Commissioner Penny Allee Taylor noted that the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) has an upcoming agenda item to eliminate the state's energy efficiency standards. She asked whether this would impact Scottsdale or other cities across the state.

Floyd said he wasn't sure but explained that it's ultimately up to local jurisdictions to decide which codes to adopt. He added that code updates typically occur every three years, though some cities wait six years, and he doesn't foresee a direct issue at this time.

Floyd explained that compliance is tracked through building permits. It's not measured as a percentage but applies to all relevant projects. While there aren't strict field inspections or verifications, the requirements are embedded in the approved plans, which are legal documents.

Chair Lobo asked what the biggest hurdle was for the Homebuilders Association in adopting the code.

Floyd responded that the main concern was related to single-family homes, which are not significantly impacted by the IgCC. He added that the Arizona Multifamily Association has not raised any objections since the code was adopted.

6. Announcements and Review of Future Agenda Items

Chair Lobo asked if the Climate Action Plan letter should be addressing the OEP or to Council. Nancy Allen, OEP, said it needs to go to Council. Chair Lobo then asked if it needs to be approved at an EQSC meeting by commissioners, to which Nancy Allen said yes.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kailey Mullis, Environmental Programs and Innovation Specialist