

**PHOENIX ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY and SUSTAINABILITY
COMMISSION MINUTES**

January 8, 2026

Phoenix City Hall
Online Using Webex

Commission Members Present	City Staff Present
Penny Allee Taylor, Webex	Nancy Allen, Office of Environmental Programs (OEP), in-person
Darren Chapman, Webex	Katrina Gerster, OEP, in-person
Kevin Groman, Webex	Rosanne Albright, OEP, in-person
Kathy Knoop, Webex	Maddie Mercer, OEP, in-person
Caroline Lobo, Webex	Ariel LeBarron, OEP, in-person
Andrea Odegard-Begay, in person	Adrian Wilton, OEP, in-person
Bill Sandweg, Webex	Carla De La Chapa, Office of Sustainability (OOS), in person
Amy Scoville-Weaver, Webex	TrixieAnn Goldberg, OOS, in person
Colin Tetreault, Webex	Carlos Aguiar Hernandez, OOS, Webex
Ginger Torres, Vice Chair, Webex	
Kelly Barr, Chair, Webex	
Commission Members Not Present	Community Members Present
Gorsegner, Eric	Cecilia Riviere, ASU University City Exchange, Webex
Porter, Sarah	Mark Carlisle, Webex
	Wayne Warrington, 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 3:03 p.m. There were 11 members present at roll call.

Vice Chair Torres asked for an update on the light rail expansion project from city staff. There is an upcoming City Council Meeting on Jan 27th and there is a potential for reconsideration of light rail extension plans. She suggested that EQSC get involved and learn how they can engage and support public transit. Chair Barr agreed and asked city staff to send out an update before the City Council Meeting. Environmental Programs Administrator Nancy Allen stated there was an information gathering session at City Hall, however didn't have all of the details. She stated that OEP will send out information after the meeting.

2. Review and approval of November 13, 2025, Minutes

Commissioner Tetreault made a motion to approve the November 13, 2025, minutes. Commissioner Groman seconded the motion, and it carried 11-0.

3. Public Comment

No members of the public requested to speak.

4. 2030 Phoenix Food Action Plan

Food System Environmental Programs Manager Rosanne Albright and Food Systems Program Manager Maddie Mercer gave a presentation on upcoming 2030 Food Action Plan draft. The City of Phoenix has a 2050 goal that all Phoenix residents have enough to eat and have access to healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant food. The city completed the previously adopted 2025 Food Action Plan and helped inform programs to address problems during the Covid-19 pandemic and established the formal Food Systems program in July 2021. The city completed over 95% of the actions within the 2025 plan and published an impact report of the plan, which is available online. There is also a "Cultivating Food Resilience" documentary which highlights these programs.

Chair Barr applauded the success of the Food Action Plan programs.

Mercer continued the presentation and provided a timeline for the 2030 Food Action Plan and overviewed the feedback they received at recent community workshops and conversations. Through this outreach they found that 70% of participants experienced barriers to accessing fresh and healthy food and 37% of participants experienced food insecurity. Desired solutions included neighborhood food production, community kitchens, and the need to focus on more opportunities to access food in their neighborhood so they could learn and share together and enjoy public green space. This plan development is timely as recent public food benefits changes cause shocks to the food system, similarly as it did in 2020 during the Covid pandemic.

Albright and Mercer asked EQSC to share the draft once it is published in February, provide comments on the draft plan before March 20th, and provide official letter of support before April 15th.

Commissioner Knoop thanked the team for their presentation and mentioned she attended one of the workshops and it was jammed packed. She also asked what the challenges are to install community gardens to meet the needs described given that Phoenix is a large geographic city. Albright stated that the biggest challenge is funding to expand what is happening now and the ability of people to harvest and invest time into the gardens all over the city. The solution presented is neighborhood food production and those who want a garden within walking distance are committed to the process. Partnerships other cities and community organizations will be required to accomplish this work. Mercer added that they are working with departments in a working group to help make collaboration easier and clearer.

Commissioner Scoville-Weaver asked if the top ten desired solutions were ranked from options provided or came from emerging themes from comments and discussions. Mercer responded that those came from the investment menu they created and tallied the options selected. They found that conversations aligned with the options provided.

Commissioner Scoville-Weaver asked if the desire for public green space was specific to community gardens or a greater need for access to nature. Mercer responded that it was the second options, where many people desired space for shade and multiple purposes and general gathering.

Commissioner Scoville-Weaver asked if the letters of support should be from EQSC or from them as individuals or their respective organizations. Albright responded that both kinds of letters are needed. They were specifically asking for a letter from EQSC, however they are also compiling letters from organizations and will be asking certain organizations to sign on to a commitment letter that will be included within the plan.

Commissioner Groman applauded their work and asked if there has been an uptick for training needs in response to SNAP changes on eligibility or if they had any information related to SNAP benefits. Mercer responded that changes to SNAP has resulted in greater desires for training, including for food skills and applying for benefits. The plan includes actions for improved enrollment and would like to partner with organizations that do this kind of work. OEP recently collaborated to make a food access resource page to inform residents on available resources and would like to continue this webpage.

Commissioner Lobo recommended adding schools as a category in the plan as they are an important part of the community. Mercer agreed and this aligns with feedback they received.

Vice Chair Torres thanked the team for their work and mentioned challenges such as access to farmland, cost of land, and permitting obstacles and that the average resident may not be aware this is a barrier. She wanted to know how to

incorporate this into the plan. Mercer stated that these concerns came up during their focus groups with farmers and they are working to address these concerns. Albright responded that they continue to clarify zoning requirements. This was included in the previous plan, but will be a higher priority for this plan. They would be returning to EQSC to discuss these issues.

Commissioner Chapman thanked the team for their work and agreed that schools need to be part of the conversation. Also, there is a need to figure out how to pay for all of these actions.

Chair Barr thanked city staff for their presentation and for providing a timeline for EQSC involvement. She asked Commissioners to stay engaged in the process and to share the draft plan when it's published and to be prepared to come to a future meeting with feedback and share their own individual feedback during the public comment period.

5. City of Phoenix Energy Access Plan Letter of Support

Chair Barr asked for a summary of the Energy Access Plan approval process and asked if the timing of their letter was still appropriate.

Chief Sustainability Officer Carla De La Chapa stated that the Energy Access Plan was approved during December, however the EQSC meeting schedule did not allow for them to approve a letter of support before the Policy Session where the plan was approved. Implementation will be ongoing through 2030 and a letter of support or assistance on how to implement the plan would be appreciated from EQSC.

Chair Barr responded that she would entertain a motion to approve the letter as-is and EQSC will later talk about further support for implementation of the plan.

Commissioner Knoop made a motion to approve the Energy Access Plan Letter of Support. Commissioner Allee Taylor seconded the motion, and it carried 11-0.

Chair Barr thanked Commissioners and apologized to city staff for not getting the letter approved before the Policy Session in December.

6. EQSC Future Planning and Assessment

Chair Barr asked Commissioners to begin thinking about how to rearrange and revitalize the Commission. She proposes that the next EQSC meeting in February be focused on strategic planning. She recently met with Mayor Gallego and she has high expectations for the Commission. During the February meeting she asks Commissioners to attend future meetings in person and will be sending out a survey with questions on how to improve the Commission and will be making phone calls to Commissions to gather feedback before their next meeting.

Commissioners Knoop and Chapman agreed that this was a good idea.

Chair Barr asked Commissioners to check their calendars now to verify their availability to attend the next meeting on February 12th in person and asked if a change of date or time would be necessary.

Commissioner Knoop said she was out of office that day and would be unavailable to attend.

Commissioner Scoville-Weaver said it is hard to come in person at 3 p.m.

Commissioner Lobo suggested a change of date and time.

Chair Barr asked how the Commission decided to set the meeting on the second Thursday at 3 p.m.

Commissioner Lobo stated that a survey was sent out to determine meeting times.

Chair Barr suggested that we send another survey out to determine common meeting times. Meetings feel different in person vs online and highly encourages Commissioners attend meetings in person.

Allen stated that finding a time for the Mayor to attend and Commissions will need to commit to a time very quickly to get on her calendar.

Chair Barr stated that the Mayor can attend a portion of the meeting and not the full two hour meeting. She asked city staff to send out a poll for the next meeting and the Commission can determine a meeting time during that strategic planning session to set as a permanent time.

Chair Barr thanked the Commission for their engagement and asks for them to create a list of issues the Commission could focus on and how they can be more engaged in the city's existing plans.

7. Announcements and Review of Future Agenda Items

Chair Barr mentioned that the February 2026 EQSC meeting will be rescheduled to accommodate more Commissioners to attend in person for the Strategic Planning Session.

Environmental Programs Administrator Nancy Allen announced that CDP scores were publicly released, and the City of Phoenix received an A Rating again. Phoenix is the only Arizona city with an A Rating and thanks city staff for their work to submit all of the information required. The rating is an award for the entire city and their work, rather than one specific department.

Chair Barr applauded the great work the city did to receive an A Rating.

Chair Barr mentioned that the meeting was ending early, however Commissioners should expect lot of work to come and encouraged them to respond to upcoming emails and polls and to stay engaged.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Katrina Gerster, Environmental Quality Specialist