

**PHOENIX ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY and SUSTAINABILITY  
COMMISSION MINUTES**

**April 13, 2023**

Phoenix City Hall  
Online Using Webex

<b>Commission Members Present</b>	<b>City Staff Present</b>
Anna Bettis, via WebEx	Julie Riemenschneider, Office of Environmental Programs (OEP)
Darren Chapman, via WebEx	Katrina Gerster, OEP
Timothy Franquist, via WebEx	Ariel LeBarron, OEP
Kathy Knoop, via WebEx	Joshua Uebelherr, OEP
Andrea Odegard-Begay, via WebEx	David Hondula, Office of Heat Response and Mitigation (OHRM)
Sarah Porter, via WebEx	Mark Hartman, Office of Sustainability
Bill Sandweg	Mary Wright, ORHM
Colin Tetreault, via WebEx	Michelle Litwin, ORHM
Ginger Torres, via WebEx	
Caroline Lobo	
<b>Commission Members Not Present</b>	<b>Community Members Present</b>
Penny Allee Taylor	Dean Chiarelli
Kelly Barr	Ezekiel Camacho
Eric Gorsegner	Karli Barrett
Kevin Groman	Kayla Killoren
	Nadia Neimanas
	Penpitcha Kuram

**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 3:04 p.m. There were 10 members present at roll call.

**2. Review and approval of March 9, 2023 Minutes**

Commissioner Colin Tetreault made a motion to approve the March 9, 2023 minutes. Commissioner Bill Sandweg seconded the motion and it carried 10:0.

**3. Public Comment**

Dean Chiarelli, Clinical Associate Professor in the Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation, spoke about uncontrolled development and accountability on plans developed are supposed to do and may not follow through with, especially tree planting and landscapes. He thanks the commission for their work and incorporates their work into his classes.

**4. Heat Response Plan**

Chief Heat Officer, David Hondula, presented a PowerPoint on the Heat Response Plan and asks for comments on the intermediate goals in the plan.

Commissioner Darren Chapman asked if heat death counts are increasing as monitoring is improving. Chief Heat Officer Hondula comments that some data may have impacts by greater education and monitoring, however though conversations with the health department they believe the data on heat illness and death are unaffected as procedures and reporting has remained consistent.

Commissioner Sarah Porter commented that there has been significant growth in Maricopa County and asked if some of the increase in heat deaths are because of that. There may also be a need for education for new residents. Chief Heat Officer responded that population growth could be a contributing factor the rate of population increase is in the tens of percent while increases in heat deaths are in the hundreds of percent so there is more going on beyond growth. One factor of population growth that may be interesting is if the vulnerable populations are growing quicker than other portions of the population, but this is not fully evaluated. Hondula also commented that education on extreme heat will be increased this summer, including a video message from the mayor at the airport.

Commissioner Bill Sandweg commented that he would like to know more about the demographics on the heat deaths. Chief Heat Officer Hondula responded that the county health department prepares a detailed report with more information on the heat death cases, including age, race, gender, and air conditioning status for indoor deaths. Chair Caroline Lobo asked if the data is mapped based on location and Chief Heat Officer Hondula responded that it is and the map is similar to the 911 calls map he showed in the presentation, which is also available on the city's Open Data Portal.

Chair Lobo asked what the Heat Office is working on beyond summer action plan items. Chief Heat Officer Hondula responded by going through the staff in the office. The Urban Tree Program Manger is working on tree and vegetation concerns including updating the Tree and Shade Masterplan, updating landscape maintenance practices, aligning tree work with water conservation work. Using American Rescue Act Plan (ARPA) funding the office hired a Residential Tree

Equity Program Manager to improve tree canopy in underserved equity areas. The Built Environment Specialist is working on non-tree and vegetation cooling strategies, including city ordinances for shade in right of way, an ARPA funded shade structure program for public spaces, and works with other departments on identifying locations for the Cool Pavement and Cool Corridor programs. The office has not done a lot of work on cool roofs yet, but would like to invest more time as research shows it is a worthwhile cooling strategy.

Vice Chair Ginger Torres asked what the next phase for the Cool Corridors Program and what has already been completed. Chief Heat Officer Hondula responded that he can share a document that details where the completed corridors are and can discuss this at a future meeting. They are currently working with the Streets Department on the next phase and discussing the possibility of expanding the program beyond arterials and beyond where the city has traditionally managed trees, which would expand the options for where the program can be used. Vice Chair Torres also asked that the Streets Transportation Department do more public engagement for the program. Chief Heat Officer Hondula said that he will pass along her message and that the public outreach for the first phase was done through council offices and was dependent on their work. In the future Streets will be doing their own public engagement.

Commissioner Chapman asked about how to make the process more equitable. Chief Heat Officer Hondula responded that sites for Cool Corridors were selected based on a tool that assigns every street segment an equity score. This tool and scoring process was developed using the recommendations from the Urban Heat/Tree and Shade Subcommittee and EQSC recommendations memo. There is an unequal number of street segments with higher scores in the various districts and the first phase installed an equal number of corridors in each district which specific sites selected by the councilperson. The selection process will soon be under the control of the Heat Office as the program develops.

Commissioner Anna Bettis asked if there a way to quantify the impact of the Cool Corridors on the heat death data and if other cities have a similar model for investments like Phoenix has done with Cool Corridors. Chief Heat Officer Hondula responded that conversations about trees and the impact on heat related deaths is common and it is agreed that cooler temperatures are associated with less deaths. However, there is not much data on specific cases on how people have actually died and if shade from a tree would have lead to a different outcome. Chief Heat Officer Hondula also responded that other cities do have programs like Cool Corridors, specifically the City of Vienna has a heat exposure focused tree planting effort. Often times cities don't always plant trees for shade and heat mitigation reasons, but there are increasingly other cities with programs similar to Cool Corridors.

Commissioner Colin Tetreault ask about long term funding for the office and how to make funds from the current state and federal investments go further and farther. Chief Heat Officer said that this is an ongoing conversation with regional collaboration on how to use the upcoming once-in-a-generation funding to the fullest. Ideas include using various sectors of funds in unique ways to support heat mitigation and to encourage regional collaboration for maximum value and impact.

Vice Chair Torres recommended that the Heat Office continue their efforts for public engagement now that the UHITS Subcommittee has sunset and for there to

be additional opportunities for residents to discuss the heat programs as they are the ones most impacted by them.

Chair Lobo thanked Chief Heat Officer Hondula for his time and mentioned that he will be back to discuss the Tree and Shade Masterplan in a future meeting.

**5. Announcements and Review of Future Agenda Items**

Chair Caroline Lobo asks the commission to start brainstorming industry experts to review the upcoming Climate Action Plan and General Plan so the commission can provide valuable feedback when the time comes. She is asking for a list of recommendation names within the next one to two months.

Proposed future agenda items: - Tree and Shade Master Plan

**6. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Katrina Gerster, Environmental Quality Specialist