

**PHOENIX ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY and SUSTAINABILITY  
COMMISSION MINUTES**

**December 10, 2020**

Phoenix City Hall  
Online Utilizing Webex

| <b>Commission Members Present</b>     | <b>City Staff Present</b>                                |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Allee Taylor, Penny via phone         | Nancy Allen, Office of Environmental Programs (OEP)      |
| Allen, Dwayne via phone               | Mark Hartman, Office of Sustainability (OSS)             |
| Barr, Kelly via phone                 | Amber Williamson, Budget and Research Department         |
| Chapman, Darren via phone             | Josh Bednarek, Planning and Development Department (PDD) |
| Franquist, Timothy via phone          | Tricia Gomes, PDD  |
| Groman, Kevin via phone               | Erik Wilson, Parks and Recreation Department             |
| Howell, Park via phone                | Willa Altman-Kaough, Office of the Mayor                 |
| Lobo, Caroline via phone              | Matthew Potzler, OEP                                     |
| Porter, Sarah via phone               | Katrina Gerster, OEP                                     |
| Sanders, Penny via phone              |  |
| Sainz, Columba via phone              |  |
| Sandweg, Bill via phone               |  |
| Torres, Ginger via phone              |  |
| Tetreault, Colin via phone            |  |
|                                       |  |
|                                       |  |
|                                       |  |
| <b>Commission Members Not Present</b> | <b>Community Members Present</b>                         |
| Ruht, Kimberly                        | Mayor Kate Gallego                                       |
|                                       | Philip McNeely   |
|                                       | Adrian Keller  |
|                                       | Alexis Yapple  |
|                                       | Andrew Edelstein   |
|                                       | Brianna Williams   |
|                                       | Hazel Chandler   |
|                                       | Helen Heiden   |
|                                       | Linda Brady  |
|                                       | Nicole Hill  |
|                                       | Nicole Rodriguez   |
|                                       | Rodney Boden   |
|                                       | Sina Matthes   |
|                                       | Tabitha Myers  |
|                                       |  |

**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 12 members present at roll call. The following commissioners arrived after the initial roll call:

- Kelly Barr
- Bill Sandweg

Chair Colin Tetreault welcomed Columba Sainz as a new commissioner who spoke about environmental goals she would like to achieve as part of this body.

**2. Review and approval of November 12, 2020 Minutes:**

**ACTION:**

Commissioner Penny Sanders made a motion to approve the November 12, 2020 minutes. Commissioner Dwayne Allen seconded the motion and it carried 13:0.

**3. Public Comment – Two people spoke:**

Chair Colin Tetreault indicated that attendees wishing to offer comments to feel free to do so.

Andrew Edelstein has a vested interest in seeing more trees, food forests and community gardens throughout the city.

Philip McNeely said it was good to see this work continuing after he left the Office of Environmental Programs.

**4. Office of the Mayor Visit**

Kate Gallego, Mayor of the City of Phoenix, left the meeting prior to this agenda item due to prior commitments and may return to the meeting in January.

**5. City Budget Process**

Amber Williamson, Budget and Research Department Director, spoke about the city's budget process. Director Williamson provided a timeline for the process, which begins in July, when the new fiscal year starts, and ends in June with approval of the budget by the City Council. In between, Director Williamson said there were opportunities for the Commission, city staff, and greater community to make changes to the budget even during the pandemic. Director Williamson stressed that any changes recommended to the budget had to be offset to maintain a balanced budget that is required by law. The public can now use the FundPHX tool online found at <https://www.phoenix.gov/budget/fund> to suggest changes to the budget. Chair Tetreault inquired about how community-based organization recommendations are received as the Commission is interested in advocating for changes to the budget. Director Williamson advised that typically, recommendations for a new position comes from city staff. Director Williamson also said that in addition to the other venues, changes to the budget can be facilitated by councilmembers.

**6. Planning and Development Text Amendment Update**

Josh Bednarek, Planning and Development Deputy Director, and Tricia Gomes, Planning and Development Special Projects Administrator provided an update to the Text Amendment regarding trees and shade. Special Projects Administrator Gomes spoke said most of the comments received so far were to provide clarity on the landscaping and utility requirements. The other comments concerned the enforcement of the amendment, which would follow established procedures found

in the Zoning Ordinance Chapter 41 Section 507 where design guidelines are housed. Special Projects Administrator Gomes explained the difference between requirements and presumptions found in the guidelines, where there may be more than one way to fulfill the guideline, e.g. structures used for shade rather than trees. Special Projects Administrator Gomes also reiterated the timeline of the amendment's approval, with Planning and Development Department presenting an update to EQSC and beginning the presentations to the Village Planning Committees (VPCs) in January and approval by City Council in April. Special Projects Administrator Gomes then spoke about a meeting with SRP regarding the requirements for utilities and safety issues that may arise from the amendment. Commissioner Kelly Barr, who is SRP's Associate General Manager & Chief Strategy, Corporate Services & Sustainability Executive reiterated those concerns and indicated that SRP would be submitting more formal comments to the amendment. Chair Tetreault asked if any of the comments received so far would deter the amendment from being passed as scheduled. Director Bednarek answered that the amendment is on schedule, but that may change depending on feedback that is received. Chair Tetreault then requested the VPC meeting information was distributed to the commissioners and that the commissioners attend as individuals in the villages they reside. Commissioner Kevin Groman then asked again about the timeline due to the significant public comment being made, with Director Bednarek saying it looks to be on time. Commissioner Sanders said language already exists for utilities that may address the issues being presented. Special Projects Administrator Gomes said the issues are more complicated when dealing with private property and that they were speaking to the Law Department. Vice Chair Ginger Torres received comments regarding enforcement of the amendment and is looking forward to an update to the Urban Heat Island and Tree and Shade Subcommittee in January.

- 7. Urban Heat Island and Tree and Shade Subcommittee (UHITS) Update**  
Vice Chair Ginger Torres, serving as UHITS Chair, and Commissioner Allen, serving as UHITS Vice Chair, provided an update from the most recent meeting. The main discussion during that meeting was surrounding the draft business case being developed for a "Urban Forest Infrastructure Manager" position for the city of Phoenix. The draft would be complete by the next EQSC meeting and will include the position description, benefits of the position to the city, and additional information from other cities that have a similar position. Commissioner Allen suggested establishing work group within the EQSC to advocate for the position to be approved and feels the business case is ready to be presented to EQSC. Chair Tetreault said that next meeting, once the business case is in hand, further steps can be decided on the best way to advocate for this position. Vice Chair Torres then spoke about the presentations given during the meeting, including a healthy cities program from The Nature Conservancy and the interest in the mapping stories they use to talk about pollution and the communities it affects. During the next meeting, the Nature's Cooling System project will be presented. Commissioner Columba Sainz asked how one can become more involved and support planting of trees, with Vice Chair Torres saying to attend the UHITS meetings, which are currently scheduled on the Tuesday before the EQSC meetings.
- 8. Urban Forests and Low VOC/Nitrogen Fixing Trees**  
Roll call was taken prior to this agenda item maintaining quorum with 10 commissioners still present.

Commissioner Timothy Franquist presented information about planting trees with low VOC emissions and the possibility of using trees to fix nitrogen, decreasing an ozone precursor. Commissioner Franquist explained how ozone is formed from the reaction of VOCs and nitrogen oxides in sunlight and that plants in Phoenix are a significant source of VOCs. The 2017 US EPA Emissions Inventory for Maricopa County was displayed and showed that the largest source of VOCs in the county is from biogenic sources, like soil and vegetation. An image of the nitrogen cycle was displayed and Commissioner Franquist explained that by choosing the right trees with the right nitrogen-fixing bacteria, precursors to ozone can be decreased. One of the ways it will be reduced is by lowering the use of fertilizer that is needed for the plant to grow. Commissioner Franquist also added that this factor should be included in the selection criteria recommended for Maricopa County. The following link leads to an Excel file containing the selection criteria for what tree to plant in Maricopa County, including VOC emissions.

<http://cleanairmakemore.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Maricopa-County-Urban-Tree-Selection-Criteria-December-22-2017.xlsx>

Commissioner Franquist recommended considering all benefits of trees, including shade provided, associated reduction in air conditioning costs, health benefits, reduced local air pollution, and sequestration of carbon dioxide. Commissioner Sarah Porter, who serves on the Phoenix Parks and Recreation Board, providing this information to the environmental architect, but suggested that residents may desire different plants on their private property. Commissioner Franquist suggested that plants hold heat differently, which may also have an impact on the urban heat island effect. Vice Chair Torres asked who may have more information, with UHITS Subcommittee Member David Hondula being recommended. The discussion continued and included talk of including proper tree section into the text amendment from agenda item 6. Finally, Commissioner Franquist recommended further investigation into using trees as nontraditional offsets to encourage future economic growth with Commissioner Porter advising to consider the emissions from watering the trees as well.

#### **9. Climate Action Plan Update**

Nancy Allen, Office of Environmental Programs Administrator, and Dr. Matthew Potzler, Environmental Air Quality and Climate Specialist in the Office of Environmental Programs, gave an update to the efforts towards producing a C40-compliant climate action plan. Dr. Potzler presented results from the latest climate action plan virtual workshop focused on water, heat, and energy sectors of the climate action plan framework. Dr. Potzler then reminded the commissioners about commenting on the framework by December 31, 2020. Vice Chair Torres asked what happens with these revisions, with Administrator Allen explaining that the comments would be incorporated into the framework, which is a set of programs and plans that already exist, producing a different document. Chief Sustainability Officer and Commissioners discussed the upcoming youth event co-hosted by the Office of Sustainability's High School Sustainability Officer program. The event will be virtual and is planned for 300 youth participants, which would be open to all youth across the city. Dr. Potzler then spoke about the upcoming workshop co-hosted by CHISPA Arizona, a program of the League of Conservation Voters, to engage latinx communities in Phoenix. Chair Tetreault inquired if the documents available are in multiple languages. Dr. Potzler replied that the framework was not, but the upcoming draft plan would be in both English and Spanish. Vice Chair Torres and Commissioner Chapman volunteered to assist in reaching out to additional communities in Phoenix, as well.

#### **10. EQSC Year-end Roundup**

Chair Tetreault requested that all commissioners provide bullet points on the achievements of the EQSC as well as future agenda items for the upcoming calendar year. These could be sent to [oeinfo@phoenix.gov](mailto:oeinfo@phoenix.gov)

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

Future possible agenda items include:

- Status of AZ Recycling Industry
- Permitting for Rooftop Solar: City and State
- Batteries / Storage & Fire Codes
- Rio Reimagined
- EQSC Branding
- Air Quality Update
- Phoenix Water Drought Pipeline Project
- Opioids in Water
- Increase in population of individuals facing homelessness
- Walkability throughout the city

Commissioner Park Howell resigned as he will no longer be a full-time resident of Phoenix. Chair Tetreault thanked him for his service to the city.

**12. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dr. Matthew Potzler, Environmental Quality Specialist