

PHOENIX ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY and SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MINUTES

July 11, 2019

Phoenix City Hall
Room 12 Central
200 West Washington St
Phoenix, AZ 85003

I. Call to Order and Announcements:

The meeting was called to order with a roll call at 3:02 p.m. There were 8 members present at roll call. The following Commissioners arrived at the times stated below:

- Kelly Barr via phone at 3:08 p.m.
- Park Howell at 3:08 p.m.
- Elyse Guidas via phone at 3:09 p.m.
- Josh Bendor at 3:10 p.m.

Chair Colin Tetreault announced that the Arizona State University (ASU) just hired Mark Bernstein to become the Chair of the Rob and Melani Walton Sustainability Solutions Service of ASU's Global Institute of Sustainability. The goal of the service is to bring academic research ideas into practical sustainability solutions for the wider community. Chair Tetreault wants to bring Mr. Bernstein to the EQSC in the fall.

Karen Peters, Deputy City Manager, announced schedule dates for upcoming meetings of the Public Works Solid Waste Fee Advisory Board and Water/Wastewater Advisory Committee. Ms. Peters indicated she would send the dates by email to all EQSC members. Ms. Peters also indicated that Mayor Gallego would soon be establishing the Rio Reimage Task Force with meetings to begin in the Fall.

Chair Tetreault announced that a Fall agenda topic would focus on solid waste issues.

Chair Tetreault welcomed new member – Park Howell. Mr. Howell has been in Arizona since 1985 and has a background in marketing, communications, and environment / sustainability. He is currently on the Sustainability Advisory board for Walgreens.

II. Public Comment – Two people spoke:

Arlinda Basjrami representing Mi Familia Vota, announced that she is an environmental justice organizer for the organization.

Lyle Plocher of SODO Phoenix Inc. collaborates with three neighborhoods, Central, Grant and the Warehouse district to raise sustainability standards.

III. Review and approval of June 11, 2019 Minutes:

ACTION:

Commissioner Sarah Porter made a motion to approve the June 11, 2019 minutes. Commissioner Kimberly Ruht seconded the motion and it carried 12:0.

IV. Presentation: Green Finance

Chair Tetreault indicated that Denise Olsen, Chief Financial Officer for the City was unable to be present, so her presentation will be postponed until September. Chair Tetreault stated he met with her and she is open to looking at green financial mechanisms. Such options could result in lower interest rates for the city.

V. Update: Tree and Shade / Urban Heat Island Subcommittee

Chair Sarah Porter announced that the Urban Heat Island / Tree and Shade Subcommittee met earlier that day and unanimously approved their recommendations for implementing the city's Tree and Shade Master Plan. She then distributed the draft recommendations to members of the Environmental

Quality and Sustainability Commission. Highlights of the recommendations include:

- The City shall establish a standing Phoenix Tree and Shade Commission.
- The City shall establish a Tree and Shade Fund to receive public funds and private donations.
- The City shall establish the position of a Tree and Shade Administrator, whose duties would focus on the Tree and Shade Commission, interdepartmental coordination, overseeing the Tree and Shade fund; creating a manual for best practices; and championing the Tree and Shade Master Plan.
- Planning and Zoning recommendations (Part 3 of the recommendations) aligns and overlaps to some degree with the current draft of the text amendment to the Landscaping Code of the Planning and Development Department. In some cases, the recommendations are more stringent regarding compliance assurance. For example, there are stringent penalties for people who remove trees and don't replace them or who top trees (cutting off the top of the main stem of the tree, which diminishes orderly growth)

Subcommittee Chair Sarah Porter stated the recommendations only address commercial and multi-family residential uses and do not address single family residential uses. However, development of a best practices manual will include information that can be used for single family uses.

EQSC Chair Colin Tetreault asked what was the process to develop the recommendations. In response Subcommittee Vice Chair Dwayne Allen stated that the process started when citizens in the downtown area were not pleased with loss of canopy of trees and in 2017 created an ad hoc committee to look at what the city was doing with the Tree and Shade Master Plan. That Ad Hoc Committee looked at best practices for managing tree stock in similar environments nationwide. A petition was submitted to Council for a Tree and Shade commission to be created. Council gave the charge to EQSC and a subcommittee was formed. The Ad Hoc Committee document was used as a foundation for a set of recommendations. Then over the last year, the Subcommittee heard from every city department involved in tree planting and maintenance and solicited those staff for guidance, feedback, etc. The Subcommittee also heard from County agencies, citizens, etc.

Subcommittee Chair Sarah Porter added that the Subcommittee also had members who were not in the Ad Hoc Committee. Education was important for members of the Subcommittee. Subcommittee members will be solicited to attend August's EQSC meeting for their insight and questions. A specific recommendation for Council is for the City to fund purchase of trees over a 10-year period and the cost of their maintenance to ensure meeting the canopy goals of the Tree and Shade Master Plan.

Joe Gibbs, staff for the Commission, addressed the fact that while the review of the Subcommittee recommendations is proceeding, the review and drafting of the Text Amendment to the city's Landscape Code by the Planning and Development Department is scheduled to be drafted and reviewed by City Council in the Fall.

The Subcommittee recommendations are supportive of the amendment and there may be opportunities to support both efforts.

Commissioner Ginger Torres inquired as to whether the Planning and Development Department (PDD) was involved in the Subcommittee recommendations process. Subcommittee Chair Sarah Porter indicated that PDD was fully involved and there are some overlap and similarities in their respective documents, but Subcommittee recommendations regarding penalties were more stringent in some cases.

Commission member Josh Bendor wanted to know when the development community would get the opportunity to offer their review of the recommendations. Commission member and Subcommittee Chair Sarah Porter assured him that will happen before the recommendations go before Council. EQSC Chair Colin Tetreault urged Commission members to network with their contacts, especially those in the development community and solicit their attendance to the next EQSC meeting if possible.

Chair Tetreault requested staff to use city outreach avenues to announce to the public the opportunity to comment on the Subcommittee Tree and Shade recommendations at the next EQSC meeting August 8, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. in City Hall Conference Room 12 Central. Commenters are urged to submit a summary of their comments in writing and to limit verbal comments to 5 minutes.

VI. Strategic Planning

Chair Tetreault requested staff to send a template of future EQSC topics to EQSC members that was created by Talia Offord and presented to EQSC in 2018.

Announcements and Review of Future Agenda Item

Future possible agenda items include:

August: Talking Stick Arena Sustainability Update
Camp Colley

September: Green Finance
Working Together: Trees and Green

TBD: Mayor Kate Gallego
Solid Waste Rate Advisory Committee
Rio Reimagine

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joseph Gibbs, Environmental Quality Specialist