

**PHOENIX ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY and SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION  
URBAN HEAT ISLAND/TREE AND SHADE SUBCOMMITTEE (UHITS) MINUTES**

**January 11, 2021  
Phoenix City Hall  
Online Utilizing WebEx**

<b>Subcommittee Members Present</b>	<b>City Staff Present</b>
Vjollca Berisha, via phone	David Hondula, Office of Heat Response and Mitigation (OHRM)
Anna Bettis via phone	Matthew Potzler, Office of Environmental Programs (OEP)
Marc Campbell via phone	Katrina Gerster, OEP
Hazel Chandler via phone	Michelle Litwin, OHRM
Aimee Esposito via phone	Keith Kesti, Planning and Development
Tiffany Halperin via phone	
Tabitha Myers, Vice Chair via phone	
Ginger Sykes Torres, Chair via phone	
<b>Commission Members Not Present</b>	<b>Community Members Present</b>
Bronwyn Doebbeling	Jessica Bueno
Nika Forte	
Carlos Galindo-Elvira	
Nicole Rodriguez	
Columba Sainz	

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call and Announcements**

The meeting was called to order at 3:04 p.m. There were 8 members present at roll call.

Chair Torres wished the subcommittee a happy new year and informed them that the Environmental Quality and Sustainability Commission (EQSC) approved a 90-day extension for the subcommittee. This will allow for three more meetings and for the subcommittee to accomplish additional work.

**2. Review and approval of December 7, 2021 Minutes**

**ACTION:**

Subcommittee member Chandler made a motion to approve the December 7, 2021 minutes. Vice Chair Myers seconded the motion. The motion carried 8:0.

**3. Public Comments**

No one spoke.

**4. Update on Cool Roofs and Heat Equity Policy Memos**

Chair Torres provided an update on the memos the subcommittee approved and sent to EQSC last month. Vice Chair Myers and Chair Torres presented the Cool Roofs memo at the EQSC December meeting. EQSC members did not have time before the meeting to review the memos so they may need to return to answer any follow up questions or comments. The Heat Equity memo was briefly discussed at the EQSC meeting, but will be presented in more depth at their January meeting.

Subcommittee member Esposito asked about the next steps after EQSC reviews the memos and how it will be shared with City Council. Chair Torres assumes the process will follow the same process as previous memos. For the previous Cool Corridors memo EQSC sent the memo on to Council and city staff and asked for a response within 90 days. Streets Transportation provided an update to EQSC and EQSC will need to follow up with city staff to ensure the recommendations are being taking into consideration. The next steps for the Cool Roof and Heat Equity memos will be decided by EQSC. This may include edits from commission members or a cover letter from EQSC Chair Colin Tetreault accompanying the memo before it is sent. Chair Torres agrees that follow up is needed, especially for projects that are not currently in progress as Cool Corridors is. New projects based on recommendations may take more time to get started.

**5. Low Impact Development/Green Infrastructure**

EQSC was interested in having the subcommittee accomplish an additional recommendations memo and Chair Torres and Vice Chair Myers decided to begin with green infrastructure and low impact development (GI/LID). Planning and Development Department (PDD) Engineering Supervisor, Keith Kesti, discussed the Greater Phoenix Green Infrastructure Design Handbook that Phoenix helped developed, current roadblocks for adoption, and the current PDD guidelines in place. The city Development Advisory Board accepted the handbook as a design guide and it is encouraged to be used as a tool in development.

Chair Torres asked who the intended user of the handbook would be and what kinds of property it applies to. Kesti noted that the intent of the handbook is for use by both municipality right-of-way and private property developments for storm water management.

Subcommittee member Esposito asked who in the County lead the handbook development as there have been previous roadblocks to GI/LID adoption from the county level. Kesti responded that the county contribution came from the Maricopa County Flood Control District, and he is aware of an upcoming redesign of the Flood Control campus to include these design elements. The Flood Control district is a big supporter of GI/LID to his knowledge.

Chair Torres asked how internal city departments are using the handbook and design guides in the city right-of-way. Kesti can only speak on private development as PDD only manages and approves private development. PDD promotes the use of the handbook and many ideas come from developers themselves. The handbook allows developers to easily include design elements in their plans and ensure minimize back and forth review comments as the elements are already approved design guides through the handbook. For city right-of-way Streets Transportation manages the development. He suggested inviting Streets to speak at a future meeting to address the use for city projects. Subcommittee member Halperin mentioned that she had recently talked to Tricia Gomes and asked about other city staff to reach out to. Kesti suggested Chris Kowalsky in Streets and that Tricia Balluff in the Office of Environmental Programs may know of others.

Chair Torres asked if there are any incentives for developers to include these design elements. Kesti responded that PDD does not provide an incentive directly, but they are working to remove as many roadblocks as possible to encourage their use. Businesses are currently responding to comments from the public or industry trends and including GI/LID rather than being forced by the city. Chair Torres asked if developers are aware of the handbook. Kesti responded that innovated businesses are very aware of the handbook and are incorporating new ideas into design. Other businesses may not be aware or are hesitant to take on for fear of complication. PDD will encourage it's use to developers who they identify as would benefit from adding these design guides to their plans.

Subcommittee member Esposito expressed interest in green infrastructure as an urban heat mitigation strategy as well as stormwater management. She also asked subcommittee member Bettis if green infrastructure was considered in their recent report. Bettis said it wasn't, but The Nature Conservancy are currently working on another report where it is included. Findings and the report will be available in the upcoming months.

Subcommittee member Halperin is encouraged to hear that PDD is promoting the use of GI/LID, however mentioned that the city owns a lot of land themselves and it is a great opportunity for impact.

Chair Torres thanked Keith Kesti for attending and providing great information. The subcommittee will contact other city staff to learn more.

## **6. Heat Office - Operationalization and Public Engagement**

Michelle Litwin presented in place of Dr. Dave Hondula as he was at the City Council ARPA working session. She shared an update on what the Heat Office is currently working on, including the recent American Forest funding, hiring process for the Urban Tree Program Manager and Built Environment Specialist positions, potential ARPA funding, and

future public engagement. Litwin asked the subcommittee to provide any comments on their work and their input on the purpose and outcomes of future public engagement.

Subcommittee member Halperin commented that it is important to work with community members and organizations that are accountable and ready to do work. It is important to invest in the funding in places where the neighborhood is well organized so it is used wisely. Many neighborhoods and organizations have already been identified by previous studies as good candidates as they are high heat areas and ready to do the work. Follow up should be done with those first. Litwin agreed that neighborhood involvement is important, however many times the neighborhoods that need the support the most may not be the ones who are organized. It is important to be intentional to work on getting them organized and the help they need. Subcommittee members Esposito and Bettis agreed with both of them and noted it is important to address heat in many ways and to meet them where they are.

Chair Torres asked subcommittee members for their feedback about public engagement after the subcommittee sunsets in March.

Subcommittee member Esposito suggested an urban forest oversight committee or a way for council to review reports routinely on tree canopy and planting activities. Chief Heat Officer Hondula joined the meeting and responded that there may be a need to clarify what she intended for oversight and how it interacts with the City Council. Subcommittee member Esposito clarified that it could be housed in EQSC or another commission, but somewhere to provide reports and updates on the tree canopy and holds tree and shade goals accountable rather than providing recommendations as the subcommittee does currently.

Chair Torres asks that before the next meeting subcommittee members come up with feedback for Hondula and Litwin and direction for what should exist after the subcommittee sunsets. Providing this feedback is one of the main goals of extending the subcommittee. Hondula added that the more specific they can be the better and they want to address the various workstreams that need to exist regarding heat, trees, and shade.

## **7. Review of Future Agenda Items for Feb/March 2022**

Chair Torres suggested that the next meeting will be focused on GI/LID again with presentations from the Streets Transportation Department and MAG workgroup. She asked if there are any other ideas from the accomplishments memo they could include in future meetings. With limited time they need to be intentional in the work they take on and the time it may require. She asked what the subcommittee goals should be and what they should focus on in the final two meetings.

Subcommittee member Chandler agreed that with limited time they should focus on low impact development and if time allowed cool pavement would be of interest. Subcommittee member Bettis agreed and suggested looking into water scarcity concerns with increased trees and continuing discussions on the future of public engagement around heat after the subcommittee sunsets. Hondula suggested criteria for location selection prioritization for the ARPA funding should the funding be approved. Vice Chair Myers seconded the cool pavement idea.

## **8. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Katrina Gerster, Environmental Quality Specialist