



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

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m. There were 9 members present at roll call.

The following subcommittee members arrived at the times stated below:

- Dwayne Allen at 5:10 p.m.
- Tiffany Halperin at 5:15 p.m.

**2. Review and approval of December 8, 2020 Minutes**

Subcommittee member Rodriguez suggested two changes to the minutes: remove the mention of APS included in discussions with Planning and Development and correct misspelling of UHITS on the second page.

**ACTION:**

Subcommittee member Chandler made a motion to approve the December 8, 2020 minutes with corrections from Subcommittee member Rodriguez. Vice Chair Allen seconded the motion, and it carried 11:0.

**3. Public Comments**

There were no comments from the public.

**4. Tree and Shade Administrator: Business Case Final Review and Approval - action to send to EQSC**

Chair Torres asked for a report from the workgroup that was working on developing the business case for the Tree Administrator position. Since the last meeting subcommittee members provided comments on the memo and the workgroup revised the document. Subcommittee member Myers sent out a revised draft memo via email for members to review. The memo provides a description of the position and costs and benefits to the city. Myers thanked members for their comments and said they took the suggestions as they reworked the document. The document is very similar to what was shown during the last meeting, however they rearranged, reworded, and removed smaller things. The document isn't perfect and more work needs to be done to encourage this position. The workgroup struggled with finding the line between benefit of management position linking to all the benefits that trees bring. Despite this, the document lays out a strong case of the benefits of trees and the city needs to move fast in creating this position and prioritizing trees.

Vice Chair Allen feels the memo document expands on the work the city has already done through the Tree and Shade Masterplan and this position aligns with those values. The document makes a strong case and it isn't necessary to go too much further. The city has adopted the plan and wants to move forward and the subcommittee are just agreeing that this is important.

Subcommittee member Esposito thinks there is a lot of great information in the memo and agrees that there is more than could be added, however the more content that is included the less likely council will read it all. Being concise is important. Additionally, accountability is important for both the city and community. This document isn't to make the city look bad, but to be proactive and create a space to have transparency and trust with the community. As the position is developed there is a need to push for a subcommittee, committee, or council to keep the Tree Administrator on track with goals and requirements.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez thinks it is a no brainer to have this role. The city can have a bicycle specialist and pedestrian specialist, but people are dying on the streets in the heat and the city is not mitigating it. This is important and should warrant a specialty position too. A lot of work has been done to prepare the document and she hopes the city staff can support and champion this through. Other cities were surprise that this position didn't already exist.

Subcommittee member Chandler give kudos to the workgroup and thinks the memo is very thorough and reads well. The way the document currently stands is very ready to go to wherever it needs to go.

Subcommittee member Hager agrees that the format is clear and very well organized. She asked Vice Chair Allen to clarify what he meant. She took from his previous comments that there was that position that was funded at one time and if that was the case, then we should lead with that as it was essentially already approved. Vice Chair Allen clarified that the position was in the Tree and Shade Masterplan and the plan was adopted by council. There was not a formal position to his knowledge. Subcommittee member Rodriguez commented that the position was in the 2019 trial budget but removed by city manager before it went to council. Environmental Programs Administrator Nancy Allen said that the 2010 Tree and Shade Masterplan recommended a position, but a plan recommending a position is not the same as the city creating the position. To create a position there is a process to follow, including putting it into the trial budget, which is what happened last year. Last year is not a good year to go off of as Covid-19 impacts to the budget resulted in all supplementals, including new positions, removed from the budget. Right now there is not a position and it would require creating a whole new position. Subcommittee member Rodriguez would like to clarify that it was in the 2019 budget, not the 2020 budget. It was not called "Tree Administrator," but was in the spirit of this. It was slated to go out to the public but removed from city budget.

Chair Torres asked the workgroup if the memo document mentions that the Tree and Shade Masterplan recommended this position. Subcommittee member Myers said that is doesn't and is a good idea to add that. Vice Chair Allen mentioned that in the Motivation section the document is referenced, but not directly. Subcommittee member Hager feels it is compelling that a council approved plan recommended this position and it should be included as its own sentence or paragraph.

Chair Torres suggested that the subcommittee moves forwards in approving the document with the changes proposed by Subcommittee member Hager and asked for any additional edits. Subcommittee member Esposito mentioned that the appendix in the Tree and Shade Masterplan listed the action items and she does not see the position listed. However, there are many actions and she may have missed it. If it is included in the plan then the memo should directly reference where in the plan it is included. No other members provided edits. Chair Torres informed the subcommittee that two small changes were made before the meeting after the memo was sent out: "tree czar" was removed from the introduction of the document and reference that the position serve as staff liaison to UHITS was changed to the Environmental Quality and Sustainability Commission (EQSC) and any relevant citizen committees as UHITS is a temporary body.

**ACTION:**

Subcommittee member Myers made a motion to approve the memo with edits mentioned by Subcommittee member Hager and Chair Torres and to send it to the Environmental Quality and Sustainability Commission. Subcommittee member Hondula seconded the motion. The motion was approved 11:0.

## **5. Tree and Shade Administrator: Next Steps/Advocacy**

Chair Torres mentioned that she talked to Vice Chair Allen earlier in the day and they propose that the group approach should be to get the document through EQSC and into councilmembers' hands as soon as possible. After that the group should begin their own outreach and that subcommittee members should, as individuals or the group they represent, to reach out to council and attend budget hearing meetings. The EQSC meeting is on Thursday of this week and the subcommittee is welcome to attend if they'd like. Chair Torres asked if the subcommittee had any thoughts or discussion on that plan.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez asked what city staff thought of the document. Chief Sustainability Officer Hartman said that he can't give comments now that it is approved, but this group is presenting what he agrees with. This is near and dear to his heart and is happy to see this proceed. It is valuable that this is brought up and supported as city management are making their decisions. Environmental Programs Administrator Allen said that if this really means as much to the group as the amount of work they put into the document then they have to show up at the budget hearing meeting, use the budget tools, and email councilmembers. They do not listen to Hartman and Allen as they aren't the important ones. Residents and community members are the important people they will listen to. Memos could be written every year, but if they don't hear from people during budget season it doesn't mean anything to them. This is necessary for it to move past the trial budget into the real budget. Chair Torres mentioned that the trial budget will be coming out in April or May this year and will inform the subcommittee so they can jump into engagement then.

Subcommittee member Esposito mentioned that she attended the District 8 budget meeting when the tool was announced and though the budget tool was available all year and asked if they must wait for meetings to advocate. Environmental Programs Administrator Allen clarified that anyone can advocate whenever they want and include in the tool where they want money allocated. However, once the whole budget comes out then people can go back and support or change where the money goes. Subcommittee member Esposito asked where in the tool this position should be added as she remembered it was unclear where administrative positions should be included. Environmental Programs Administrator Allen said that everything discussed in the memo and the related actions would fall under the Office of Environmental Programs and the Office of Sustainability. People often don't know the difference between the two and they share responsibilities. Any option in the tool that allows comments would work and when the budget is decided then it can be moved to the correct place. Chair Torres clarified that she was suggesting members might want to wait until memo is out and council knows what is included before referencing it in any comments.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez asked that city staff check attendance records as according to bylaws any subcommittee member that misses three consecutive meetings can be removed. The subcommittee is talking about advocating and members are the primary activists for the memo and position, so their attendance is important. If they don't show up consistently, then the subcommittee is missing out on a needed voice. Chair Torres said that city staff will look into it, however wanted to clarify that advocacy is on members' own time and is not a requirement of the subcommittee. Members are encouraged to do work beyond the meetings and members are passionate so often do, but it is your choice how involved you will be outside of the meetings.

Subcommittee member Hondula mentioned that the summer extreme heat received a lot of media attention and was wondering if it would be beneficial to organize a bank of stories that have grabbed headlines to use in advocacy. Big headlines may catch councilmembers' attention. Chair Torres assumes that council may already receive these stories, but asked staff what the best way to put together this information would be. Chief Sustainability Officer Hartman mentioned that when engaging the councilmembers he has never brought them more than a one-pager. Another strategy could be describing the number of media articles and this could be interesting for both council and members of the subcommittee. Chair Torres asked where the information would be stored so it is accessible and utilized by various groups and mentioned it may be useful in the trial budget process to draw attention how much coverage the heat receives. Subcommittee member Hondula offered that it could be housed within ASU Library resources as a repository of articles along with a summary. This would be publicly accessible. Chair Torres added that this information may be helpful to get references in plans and programs.

## **6. Presentation: Climate Action Plan Framework and Review of UHI Goals, Discussion**

Chief Sustainability Officer Mark Hartman presented on the Phoenix Climate Action Plan Framework document focusing on the Heat chapter and its goals using a PowerPoint. The Climate Action Plan Framework is currently available online and includes a guide of what will be included in the full plan. The document is open for public feedback now and all comments will be included in the full plan later this spring. The full plan will go out for public comment in the summer then to council for approval during the fall.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez asked if city staff will present to Village Planning Committees (VPC) for feedback. Environmental Programs Administrator Allen responded that city staff will likely present to the VPCs as they had presented the Greenhouse Gas Inventories last summer and introduced the Climate Action Plan planning process then. Chief Sustainability Officer Hartman mentioned that more outreach is planned when the full plan is out and wants to leverage all available community resources. Subcommittee member Esposito attended one of the VPC meetings and remembered that the biggest concern was how the city plans to cut the amount of emissions and how to do it sooner rather than later. Trees are not always the best fit, especially in urban systems, and mentioned that she is concerned and wants to see innovation on surface temperature. Suggestions could include ways to incorporate plants and native species along with other materials. Steel and concrete are more efficient and cost effective, but they absorb more heat. Chief Sustainability Officer Hartman said that the city could use a lot more trees to reach current goals and more trees are needed before looking to instead use alternatives. He mentioned that technology has advanced and a lot of materials that can be used may absorb less heat. Future infrastructure will need to leverage these different material types. Subcommittee member Hondula suggested an engineering professor from ASU could be invited to speak on the material research being done. A colleague David Sailor has work happening in Tempe using material that has a cooling effect at bus stops. Even though it looks like a hard material it is cooler than expected. Subcommittee member Spartan also offered work from Ariane Middel on the value of different types of trees and manmade structures work together to create an urban canyon effect.

Subcommittee member Halperin asked about the spots identified for cooling and what spaces, besides bus stops, the city could provide cooling to. Chief Sustainability Officer Hartman mentioned that bus stops efforts are widely known but have a very small footprint. Parks are working towards a 30% tree canopy. The most impactful effort would

be the cool corridors. They are a network of vulnerable corridors that are planned to be developed using a watershed tool developed by ASU to provide cooling within neighborhoods that need it. For example, for within a mile stretch there would need to be 200 trees to have it shaded. The goals now are to determine how many cool corridors could be put in each year. Chair Torres asked if the cool corridors are only focused on trees or using many methods. Hartman confirmed it would be many methods, including adding water fountains and shade features to encourage people to use for pedestrian transportation.

Subcommittee member Halperin asked if there are recommendations for where cool corridors should be or is it recommending funding for length of corridor which will be decided in future. Chief Sustainability Officer Hartman mentioned this is a new program so it is still evolving. The Streets Department is currently looking at what areas should be cool corridors and working towards a goal of 30 cool corridors by 2030. There would only be cool corridors where people are and where they would be used.

Chair Torres asked if there are any cool corridors currently. Chief Sustainability Officer Hartman said there are none that are currently named as "cool corridors," but there are surely pathways in the city that are cool. These would particularly be in vulnerable communities where there is little tree canopy and would be prioritized.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez mentioned that these discussions over the years have been similar and not much progress is being made. It looks like it is not getting the support it needs. Recently the Streets Department turned down federal funding for the Van Buren Revamp Project. The funding required tree shade and improving the bike lines and walkability and Streets already had plans so turned it down. This wasn't supported by the community. The presentation mentioned working with the Streets Department and this doesn't inspire confidence. There is frustration from seeing the same presentations over and over again. Chief Sustainability Officer understands the frustration and wishes things could work quicker. There are recent data and tools to move these initiatives along so he is hopeful that these will help promote additional funding so there can be real action. A Tree Administrator will help in assuring follow up to make sure these things happen.

## **7. Next Steps/Assignments and Review of City Policy and Code**

Chair Torres reminded the subcommittee of the original charge to evaluate, analyze, and recommend policies to address the issues surrounding urban heat. The EQSC gave the subcommittee a deadline of March 11, 2021 to provide recommendations. The subcommittee should look into the opportunities to chime in on and determine the biggest drivers of the urban heat island in Phoenix and where it aligns with the previous presentation.

Subcommittee member Hondula mentioned that the current research shows that everything presented is consistent with some of the largest drivers. However, the subcommittee may want to consider what the focus should be in terms of drivers of urban heat. For example, the cool corridor project is working to improve comfort and may not cool air temperatures as much overall. The question of biggest drivers should be focused on intended outcomes, such as less deaths or decreasing surface and air temperatures. Somethings not in the presentation included parking. Phoenix has a lot of parking across the region and there is ASU research conducting a parking inventory and the relationship between parking and pavement with heat. Also, waste heat emissions from machines, like AC, is non-trivial and may contribute an increase of 1 to 2 degrees in

certain conditions. Anything to reduce energy consumption and transportation is working towards reducing anthropogenic heat projected into environment. Subcommittee member Halperin asked about the science and studies of cool park and the evening effect to cool surrounding neighborhood. There is a potential need to study this effect.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez mentioned there's a huge opportunity to make changes through Planning and Development text amendments. There needs to be proper language that requires and enforces strict environmental planning requirements. The recent text amendment did not incorporate what UHITS had previously recommended, such as cool parks and cool spaces and emphasis on waterwise approach to vegetation. The subcommittee has already done a lot of work and may need to revisit what has been done and already presented to council. Chair Torres mentioned that the current text amendment is being presented to the VPCs and Planning and Development presented to UHITS several times and is open to comments.

Subcommittee members Rodriguez and Esposito expressed frustration that it has taken years for Planning and Development to bring the text amendment to council and it doesn't even include all the items UHITS had recommended. Chair Torres understands this frustration and encouraged the subcommittee to continue commenting on the amendments to incorporate those changes. Environmental Programs Administrator Allen added that at the start of the text amendment Josh Bednarek had mentioned that this was only the first step and they expect there will be additional text amendments moving forwards. The subcommittee can prepare before the amendment is written on potential changes and to push that gets done sooner than later. There will never be one text amendment to make everyone happy and they are taking this a little bit at a time. They are hoping to get another landscape architect to help and will be putting a lot more emphasis on landscape maintenance. The subcommittee should get a head start on working on it now so they are prepared when Planning and Development are ready.

Subcommittee member Esposito asked if there is there any specific coordination with Neighborhood Services or Housing with the cool corridors. Real estate values increase for many reasons, but sometimes increased access to transit and increased trees are associated with gentrification. Chief Sustainability Officer Hartman agreed that trees are associated with increased property value, however it is meant as a service instead of a negative. City staff will work with the community to determine where these should be. There are also discussions of working with Neighborhood Services to add weatherization to the homes in the corridor.

Chair Torres apologizes for cutting discussions short, but in the interest of keeping on time wants to move on to assigning some homework to make way on these policy areas. Subcommittee member Rodriguez will work on reviewing the Planning and Development text amendments suggestions. Subcommittee member Spartan will work on reviewing the cool corridors and their planning process. Subcommittee members Hondula and Chandler will work on researching cool roofs and what would be a practicable policy for the City of Phoenix. Subcommittee member Esposito will do a deeper dive in the Climate Action Plan Heat goals and develop a long-term urban heat goal.

## **8. Announcements and Review of Future Agenda Items**

Chair Torres reminded members to check their email for the list of VPC meetings that was sent out. The streets tree planning mapping tool is now accessible to the public and asked members to go back and review the map for future conversations. There is a MAG landscape and irrigation working group to update specific sections and they have

called for participation from landscape architects or those familiar with those standards. If anyone is interested in joining to email Chair Torres. Subcommittee member Rodriguez informed the group she is already on the workgroup.

Next month's meeting will meet at 3 p.m. instead of 5 p.m.

**9. Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katrina Gerster, Environmental Quality Specialist