

1. Call to Order/Roll Call and Announcements

The meeting was called to order at 3:08 p.m. There were 7 members present at roll call.

The following subcommittee members arrived at the times stated below:

- Columba Sainz at 3:13 p.m.

Chair Torres thanked Subcommittee Myers for writing an op-ed for Arizona Republic in support of the tree and heat budget items. She encouraged subcommittee members to read it if they had not already as it relates to many of the recent subcommittee discussions.

Chair Torres announced that Wanda Dalla Costa has resigned from the subcommittee and thanked her for her participation in the subcommittee.

2. Review and approval of April 6, 2021 Minutes

Subcommittee member Rodriguez noted that she did not have a chance to review the meeting minutes so would abstain for this meeting.

ACTION:

Subcommittee member Myers made a motion to approve the April 6, 2021 minutes. Subcommittee member Hondula seconded the motion. The motion carried 6:0.

3. Public Comments

There were one public comments.

Stacey Champion asked the subcommittee to support the current landscape text amendment with the addition of tree protection zone language. She noted it is important to get the amendment passed right the first time instead of waiting to include this language. She also asked the subcommittee to continue focusing on equity as there is a large difference in tree cover across the city.

4. Manager's Proposed Budget Schedule, Updates, and Optional Reports on Advocacy

Budget and Research Director Amber Williamson updated the subcommittee on the City Manager's Trial Budget and budget hearings. Next steps are City Council will vote next week on final budget decisions, tentative budget adoption on June 2nd, and final budget adoption on June 16th. There were approximately 2,000 comments from 1,500 residents received during the budget hearings with 102 comments specifically on tree, shade, and heat initiatives.

Subcommittee member Hondula noted that he was present at a few of the budget meetings and didn't recall any comments against the heat budget items and asked if that was correct. Director Williamson confirmed that all comments were supportive of the tree and heat programs and overall comments from council have also been supportive.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez asked if there was a breakdown for all comments received. Director Williamson directed the subcommittee to view the council information packet to view all comments. These are posted every Thursday online.

Subcommittee member Esposito asked about the status of the specific parks mentioned during budget hearings and if they have been included in the budget. Director Williamson confirmed that the parks at 55th Ave and Samantha Way, 78th Ave and Meadows, and 87th Ave and Lower Buckeye Rd have all been added to the budget.

Chair Torres thanked the subcommittee for showing up to make comments supporting the budget hearings and thanked subcommittee members Esposito and Hondula for preparing the budget talking points that were shared with the group as they have been helpful to reference. Chair Torres asked the subcommittee members to provide comments at the May 18th council meeting either online via written comment or orally live at the meeting.

Subcommittee member Hondula asked what the next steps are for implementing these items should they be approved into the budget. Chief Sustainability Officer Mark Hartman shared that the funds will be available July 1st and departments like Parks and Streets can begin using it immediately. For the new heat office, the jobs will be posted online and it may take 3 or 4 months before the positions be filled and work can begin. It is expected that all items will be up and running by the end of the calendar year, with many happening sooner.

5. New Permitting and Zoning Code Recommendations for UHI/Trees and Shade

Chair Torres asked the subcommittee for new zoning code recommendations to send to EQSC. The agenda does not include the existing text amendment that is in progress so she hopes discussion will focus on new ideas to push through which may include tree protection zones, green infrastructure and low impact development best practices, and urban design standards. She asked the subcommittee members to brainstorm recommendations to focus on next.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez noted that the city has voluntary green building design guidelines and that there is room for improvement. She offered that she could present on this next meeting and propose ways to make part of it required as buildings are one of the top producers of carbon dioxide emissions. This would also include vegetation and water reduction which will produce added benefits. Subcommittee member Hondula seconded this comment and thought the document was difficult to find online to begin researching.

Subcommittee member Myers wanted to learn more about demolition permits and if they include trees. For example, the Duke Photography building demolition permit and the large, mature trees on the property. For demolition permits the trees should not be included so the trees can remain. Subcommittee member Rodriguez said that the demolition permits are only for buildings and any vegetation on-site should remain until the landscape plan is approved. However, there is no accountability for trees removed during the demolition process. Chair Torres asked what the recommendation or action item for this item would be. Subcommittee member Rodriguez noted that when she and other went to city council in 2018 there was a tiered approach to tree recommendations. Tiers 2 and 3 includes more substantial enforcement and she would like the city to move forward on those items as Tier 1 has taken many years to accomplish. She recommended the subcommittee review the previous Tier recommendations and to follow up to make sure they are completed.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez also offered working with the Streets Department on street width. Current standards and decisions are being made based on Fire Department needs and the street are wider than required so future conversations could be had to limit street width.

Subcommittee member Esposito is interesting in learning more about easements and rights-of-ways and a possible recommendation to make it as easy as possible for residents to request concrete removal and/or tree replacements. One way this could be accomplished is through grant funding.

Chair Torres asked for subcommittee members to do additional research and investigate other city's current standards so the group can come back together to better set recommendations at the next meeting. Subcommittee member Esposito will lead the neighborhood tree improvement and grant funding processes. Subcommittee member Rodriguez would like to aid in green infrastructure and low impact design and aid subcommittee member Esposito's efforts. Subcommittee members Myers and Rodriguez will work on researching demolition permitting and enforcement to retain trees.

6. Status of UHITS Recommendations for Cool Corridors

Chair Torres shared that the recommendation document approved last month was sent to the EQSC and will be voted on during their upcoming meeting. Chair Torres and subcommittee member Hondula will be presenting the recommendations and will be available for questions from EQSC. Chair Torres will provide another update next month on any actions EQSC takes.

Subcommittee member Hondula noted that the Arizona State University student working on this has successfully divided the city's road network into candidate segments. He will use this information along with other data ready to create a first rough pass of prioritization for segments soon and will present it to the subcommittee when it is ready.

Subcommittee member Esposito asked if councilmembers be the ones deciding on where the cool corridor in their district would go. Chief Sustainability Officer Hartman confirmed that council will make the decision, however this will be done with collaboration from the Streets Department recommendations based on need and discussions will community members. The most limiting factor in decision making will be where trees can be planted based on current and ability to add new infrastructure to support trees.

7. Climate Action Plan Recommendations

Chair Torres asked for an update on where city staff is on the draft Climate Action Plan as the subcommittee will wait until then to make their comments. The current comments on the framework document will serve as a baseline and the subcommittee can build from those. Environmental Quality Specialist Katrina Gerster updated the subcommittee that the current timeline is for the draft plan to be posted for comments on June 1st and will be available for the month of June. Chair Torres asked subcommittee members to set some time to review the draft plan between June 1st and the next subcommittee meeting on June 8th.

Subcommittee member Hondula asked city staff their confidence on the draft plan being posted and available on June 1st. If not, will there be enough time for the subcommittee to review the draft before their next meeting on June 8th and if the next meeting can be moved to later in June. Environmental Quality Specialist Gerster confirmed that subcommittee chair can change the meeting date so subcommittee members have enough time to review the document once it is posted. Chair Torres is open to moving the meeting date, however meetings are usually aligned with the EQSC meetings. If their meeting is not moved as well then any recommendations or comments will not be approved until their July meeting.

Subcommittee member Esposito noted that she will not be available on June 8th or 15th to attend meetings and would like to encourage separate committees specifically for trees and structural shade as they are both important and require different focuses.

8. Cool Roof Presentation and Policy Discussion

Subcommittee member Hondula presented a PowerPoint on an introduction on cool roofs including differences between traditional roofs and cool roofs, Phoenix's current and historical use of cool roofs, new technology that could provide "super cool" roofs, and other city's cool roof programs.

Chair Torres asked if there were other environmental considerations that they should be aware of, such as materials used and disposal. Subcommittee member Hondula noted that warm air occupies a larger volume of air than cool air so by cooling the environment there would be a slightly smaller volume of air so there could be a higher concentration of pollutants at the surface if there are no other measures for reduction. However, these strategies would hopefully be working to reduce pollutants in the first place. For specific questions on sustainable materials, he will need to refer to other cool roof researchers at ASU.

Subcommittee member Sainz asked if these materials will be affordable to low-income communities. Subcommittee member Hondula compared cool roofs to other energy efficiency measures where there are higher upfront costs that is repaid over time. This may not work well in low-income communities and this presents the need where there could be a city program to help subsidize the costs.

Subcommittee member Esposito asked about lighter color house paint in addition to cool roofs and proposed a task for the heat office to work with vendors who sell these products to educate and encourage cooling properties as a selling point. Subcommittee member Hondula liked the idea of educating vendors on benefits. Chief Sustainability Officer Hartman is aware of cool paints and building materials and there is current work being done to better educate vendors are only slightly aware of benefits.

Chair Torres thanked subcommittee member Hondula for his presentations and asked him for potential next steps. Subcommittee member Hondula offered that there is additional information that could be shared about other city policies and ask that subcommittee members develop more questions that they would like answered about cool roofs. Chair Torres asked for volunteers to research and aid in cool roof recommendations with no response.

9. Announcements and Review of Future Agenda Items

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 8, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. and may be moved based on Climate Action Plan release. Future agenda items will include continue discussions on policy recommendations. Subcommittee member may email Chair Torres if they wish to suggest any other agenda topics.

10. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katrina Gerster, Environmental Quality Specialist

