

PHOENIX ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY and SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MINUTES

March 11, 2021

Phoenix City Hall
Online Utilizing Webex

Commission Members Present	City Staff Present
Barr, Kelly via phone	Nancy Allen, Office of Environmental Programs (OEP)
Chapman, Darren via phone	Mark Hartman, Office of Sustainability (OSS)
Franquist, Timothy via phone	Willa Altman-Kaough, Office of the Mayor
Groman, Kevin via phone	Tricia Gomes, Planning and Development
Lobo, Caroline via phone	Matthew Potzler, OEP
Odegard-Begay, Andrea via phone	Katrina Gerster, OEP
Porter, Sarah via phone	Cindy Salazar, OEP
Sainz, Columba via phone	Brianna Williams, Office of Administrative Services
Sanders, Penny via phone	
Torres, Ginger via phone	
Tetreault, Colin via phone	
Commission Members Not Present	Community Members Present
Allee Taylor, Penny	Wayne Warrington
Ruht, Kimberly	Jennifer Rouse
Sandweg, Bill	

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 3:03 p.m. There were 8 members present at roll call. The following commissioners arrived after the initial roll call:

- Kevin Groman at 3:05 p.m.
- Caroline Lobo at 3:15 p.m.
- Andrea Odegard-Begay at 3:30 p.m.

Chair Colin Tetreault announced that Commissioner Dwayne Allen resigned from the commission effective today and that Commissioner Allen expressed his thanks to the commission, city staff, and city leadership. Chair Tetreault recognized Commissioner Allen's contributions to both the commission and Urban Heat Island and Tree and Shade Subcommittee.

2. Review and approval of February 11, 2021 Minutes

ACTION:

Commissioner Kelly Barr made a motion to approve the February 11, 2021 minutes. Commissioner Sarah Porter seconded the motion and it carried 9:0.

3. Public Comment – No one spoke.

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

No members of the public spoke.

4. Planning and Development Text Amendment Update

Tricia Gomes, Planning and Development Department Special Projects Administrator, provided an update using a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Text Amendment that will ensure that trees are considered infrastructure, provide benefits when appropriately planted and kept in place in a healthy and living condition. Special Projects Administrator Gomes said that the talks with the public utilities, Arizona Public Service and Salt River Project, have resulted in language in the text amendment that would appropriately address standards when maintaining utility lines. The next steps, now that the language is settled, is to present the Text Amendment to the Village Planning Committees for a recommendation of action beginning in April with a calendar provided to the commissioners. The next step would be to present the Text Amendment to the Planning Commission in May for recommendation of action and then to City Council for consideration in June.

Commissioner Barr thanked Special Projects Administrator Gomes and Josh Bednarek, Planning and Development Department Deputy Director, for their numerous meetings about reliability concerns to get appropriate language and Commissioner Barr fully supports the proposed Text Amendment. Chair Tetreault also expressed gratitude to the public utilities and city staff for their efforts.

Chair Tetreault was interested in having action in order to have the commission vote to support for approval of the Text Amendment prior to the Village Planning Committee meetings. As the commissioners had not received the final version, this action was tabled until the commission's meeting in April.

Commissioner Darren Chapman asked if the Text Amendment included edible landscaping and what kind of opportunities does the community have to contribute to these conversations before they reach the level of Village Planning Committee meetings. Special Projects Administrator Gomes indicated that this Text

Amendment was meant to strengthen specific code as directed by City Council to further the Tree and Shade Master Plan as part of a broader conversation where there would be opportunities for the community to provide input.

Vice Chair Ginger Torres inquired about what feedback has resulted from public meetings that discussed making the text amendment stronger with Special Projects Administrator Gomes indicating the final version has not been presented to the Village Planning Committees. Chair Tetreault also requested that the Text Amendment and schedule be provided to the Urban Heat Island and Tree and Shade Subcommittee for action of support and recommended to both commissioners and subcommittee members to attend their respective Village Planning Committee as residents to show support.

5. COVID-19 Food Programs

Rosanne Albright, Environmental Programs Coordinator, presented food programs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic using a PowerPoint Presentation. Environmental Programs Coordinator Albright reminded the commission that the 2025 Food Action Plan included a goal to create a resilient food system, which would address local and global challenges, like the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to the CARES Act Emergency Food Assistance, funding was provided to create a community food network through a grant process that would provide healthy lunches at a cost of \$10 per meal. 48 restaurants, 8 farmers, and 6 community supported agricultures were awarded grants with 77,563 meals being distributed to highest COVID-19 impacted zip codes which happened to be located in food deserts. The city of Phoenix and Local First Arizona were recipients of the Arizona Recycling Coalitions 2020 Award for the Feed Phoenix Initiative. The city of Phoenix also partnered with LISC Phoenix to ensure that equitable practices were maintained though out the grant process.

Commissioner Chapman said that as he was growing up in South Phoenix, he observed systemic issues, including during the pandemic, but that this food program was “refreshing” and thanked the city of Phoenix for its efforts.

Commissioner Porter inquired as to what water requirements were included in the application process with Environmental Programs Coordinator Albright Indicating that water requirements weren’t included in the application process to provide food to communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Commissioner Porter reminded the commission that water code that was implemented under Governor Bruce Babbitt in order to urbanize agricultural communities in Arizona and lamented that transitioning back to agriculture would decrease the city’s resilience. Vice Chair Torres was very supportive of the program and the native foods that were provided and the importance of culturally appropriate foods.

Commissioner Columba Sainz inquired as to how to find out more about this program and how to let others know where to pick up food. Environmental Programs Coordinator Albright stated that this program had ended, but that perhaps a similar program would be implemented with future funds for the pandemic.

Chair Tetreault asked what the lessons learned were for this program. Environmental Programs Coordinator Albright indicated that they learned that more connections needed to be formed between communities, farmers, and the food distribution network.

Vice Chair Torres also commented that community farms can provide a cooling effect to the surrounding neighborhoods.

6. Urban Heat Island and Tree and Shade Subcommittee (UHITS) Update

This item was taken out of turn after item 7. Legislative Session Update.

Vice Chair Ginger Torres, serving as UHITS Chair provided an update from the most recent subcommittee meeting. Vice Chair Torres acknowledged UHITS Vice Chair Dwayne Allen’s contributions to the subcommittee. Vice Chair Torres spoke about the policy review and proposals for related to urban heat island being done by different working groups within the subcommittee, including topics like cool corridors, urban heat island metrics within the climate action plan, and cool roofs.

Chair Tetreault indicated that the commission would be most interested in recommendations from the subcommittee that matched the level of quality similar to the urban infrastructure manager position now being proposed in the city’s trial budget. Chair Tetreault also recommended that subcommittee members attend the budget hearings to show support for this position and other urban heat island related initiatives. Commissioner Lobo reiterated the importance of attending the budget hearings as they are important in voicing one’s opinion.

7. Legislative Session Update

Nancy Allen, Office of Environmental Programs Administrator, provided an update to the bills being proposed in this legislative session, including providing commissioners with a Word document “Attachment A City Council Information March 10, 2021 – City of Phoenix Government Relations Legislative Update.” Administrator Allen highlighted SB 1334 that would expand permissible fireworks and indicated that PM2.5 levels in Phoenix may already exceed national standards with this bill further decreasing air quality. Administrator Allen also spoke about HB 2691 that would propose a regulatory scheme as a result of the recent roll back in Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS). HB2205 that appropriates funding for the Water Quality Assurance Revolving Fund (WQARF) is highly relevant to Phoenix as Phoenix contains the most identified WQARF sites with most containing trichloroethylene (TCE) and perchloroethylene (PCE) as contaminants with future sites having potential concern from polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), similar to Luke Air Force Base’s recent need to perform cleanup and provide surrounding residents with bottled water due to PFAS.

Commissioner Timothy Franquist asked if the city takes a position on these bills and how to support such efforts. Administrator Allen indicated that the city distributes this information to city staff with expertise in the various fields to provide the city with their opinion to Government Relations. Administrator Allen also asked for the commissioners to notify their personal and professional networks with Chair Tetreault indicated support as a commission in future legislative sessions.

8. Climate Action Plan Update

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 using a PowerPoint presentation. Dr. Potzler reminded the commission of the Climate Action Plan Framework document and its contents and then updated the commission on community outreach that has been conducted using this Framework and its impact on the climate action plan. The community outreach includes updates and presentations to this commission, Transportation, Infrastructure and Innovation Subcommittee and Village Planning

Committees. Community outreach also included workshops and presentations where some were co-hosted by professional societies and community-based organizations. A great deal of community outreach was from online surveys and social media, while also using the city's various means to communicate information to the community, like PHXTV and PHX At Your Service (PAYS) Newsletter. The community input received will be integrated into the C40 Pathways Model for the city of Phoenix that predicts greenhouse gas emissions reductions, then guidance from the climate liaisons on the best way to integrate this input based on results from the model into the plan, with verification of the plan's effectiveness based on future greenhouse gas emissions inventories.

Chair Tetreault asked when results from the model would be available with Dr. Potzler indicating that they would be available as part of the draft climate action plan in summer. Vice Chair Torres asked what other indicators would be used to determine the progress of the plan with Dr. Potzler suggesting that those indicators could be proposed and included in the draft plan.

9. EQSC Letter of Support for American Forests MOU

Mark Hartman, Chief Sustainability Officer, asked the commission for a letter of support of the Tree Equity Partnership Agreement (MOU), a voluntary partnership with American Forests to promote tree equity throughout the city of Phoenix, with a copy of this agreement being provided to the commissioners.

Chief Sustainability Officer Hartman and the commissioners entered into a discussion regarding American Forests, the significance of the MOU, and its alignment to the work that the commission would seek to encourage. Vice Chair Torres supported the MOU and indicated that the subcommittee would have supported the MOU, as well, but due to the timing did not have the opportunity to take up the MOU as an agenda item. Commissioner Porter shared concerns with the urgency of providing support to a voluntary partnership, especially if it may affect local organizations already doing tree equity work. Commissioner Sainz inquired what is being done to protect latin communities and people of color when the placement of trees increases the property values potentially outpricing the residents. Chief Sustainability Officer Hartman replied that Administrator Allen was leading the work in environmental justice issues.

ACTION:

Vice Chair Torres made a motion to provide a letter of support for the MOU to have the commission show support an equitable approach to tree placement and focus on our city's most vulnerable communities and protecting public health. Commissioner Lobo seconded the motion and it carried 10:0.

10. EQSC Climate Action Plan Event Planning

Chair Tetreault announced that the EQSC Climate Action Plan Event would be postponed to coincide with the release of the draft climate action plan.

11. Announcements and Review of Future Agenda Items for Information Only

Future possible agenda items include:

- EQSC Bylaws
- 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
Arizona Legislature bills of interest

No additional items were added at this time.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dr. Matthew Potzler, Environmental Quality Specialist