

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

**October 19, 2021  
Phoenix City Hall  
Online Utilizing WebEx**

<b>Commission Members Present</b>	<b>City Staff Present</b>
Anna Bettis via phone	Nancy Allen, Office of Environmental Programs (OEP)
Hazel Chandler via phone	Mark Hartman, Office of Sustainability
Bronwyn Doebbeling via phone	Rosanne Albright, OEP
Aimee Esposito via phone	Matthew Potzler, OEP
Tiffany Halperin via phone	Katrina Gerster, OEP
Tabitha Myers, Vice Chair via phone	Ariel LeBarron, OEP
Nicole Rodriguez via phone	David Hondula, Office of Heat Response and Mitigation
Columba Sainz via phone	Mikaela Castle, Public Works
Ginger Sykes Torres, Chair via phone	Cuong Dinh, Parks
	Scott Coughlin, Parks
<b>Commission Members Not Present</b>	<b>Community Members Present</b>
Vjollca Berisha	Andie Abkarian
Marc Campbell	Cecilia Riviere
Nika Forte	Juan Declet-Barreto
Carlos Galindo-Elvira	Luke Simmons
	Mark Carlisle
	Melissa McCann
	Ryan Boyd
	Stacey Champion

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

The meeting was called to order at 3:06 p.m. There were 9 members present at roll call.

The following subcommittee members left the meeting at the times stated below

- Bronwyn Doebbeling at 3:23 p.m.
- Aimee Esposito at 4:12 p.m.
- Tiffany Halperin at 4:53 p.m.

Chair Torres announced that the 2021 Phoenix Climate Action Plan was approved by City Council last week, congratulated city staff, and thanked subcommittee members for participating and providing their support.

Chair Torres introduced David Hondula in his new position as Chief Heat Officer of the Office of Heat Response and Mitigation. Chief Heat Officer Hondula thanked the subcommittee for their support over the last few years and welcomes them to continue engaging with him and providing their input. He also echoed the congratulations on the approved Climate Action Plan.

## 2. Review and approval of September 14, 2021 Minutes

Subcommittee member Rodriguez included two edits to the minutes: 1) misspelling of her name on the second page and 2) inclusion of her comments about limited right-of-way tree planting during the Cool Corridors agenda item.

### **ACTION:**

Subcommittee member Chandler made a motion to approve the September 14, 2021 minutes with edits. Vice Chair Myers seconded the motion. The motion carried 7:0. Subcommittee members Rodriguez and Esposito abstained from the vote.

## 3. Public Comments

Two people spoke.

Stacey Champion commented on the subcommittee sunset date at the end of the year. She expressed concern as the topics of extreme heat, trees, and shade are important to continue focus. She also informed the subcommittee of the Arizona Corporation Commission's utility disconnect rules are being reviewed and the upcoming annual Motorola Superfund site meeting and encouraged the subcommittee to engage in those meetings.

Andie Abkarian seconded what Stacey said and agrees the subcommittee should continue beyond the end of this year.

## 4. Heat Equity Policy and Methodology Development

Juan Declet-Barreto presented a PowerPoint on urban extreme heat in Phoenix, the history of zoning in Phoenix, vulnerability to heat, and the importance of including equity in upcoming city heat projects.

Chair Torres asked for examples of what would make someone more vulnerable to heat. Juan Declet-Barreto mentioned low-income individuals, outdoor workers as those who have higher sensitivity to heat.

Subcommittee Halperin asked about the design elements of cool corridors and how they will alleviate heat on individuals. Juan Declet-Barreto's research has shown vegetation-based cooling mechanisms has substantial reductions in surface and air temperatures. This could be scaled up to the one-mile segments and would provide immediate cooling benefits to the surrounding areas.

Subcommittee member Bettis asked if there were examples of heat equity policies in other cities and how to connect heat benefits to other factors to better make a case to decisionmakers. Juan Declet-Barreto did not have examples, however previous research simulated adding cool roofs to residential homes and mapped vulnerability to target those areas. The results showed that the biggest impact was in high density areas and areas of highest temperature in the city, i.e., dense urban areas had more impact than suburban areas.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez mentioned a recent conversation with the Parks Department about archeological concerns in planting trees in parks where they are known historic archeological sites. Many of these sites exist in South Phoenix and would require additional costs, permits, and on-site archeologists, however it doesn't completely prevent planting trees, especially in areas expected for cool corridors. She also expressed concern about disconnect in city departments when implementing the Climate Action Plan and the need to ensure all departments are onboard and committed to the climate action goals. Juan Declet-Barreto agreed that any equity policy would include social equity and would be responsive to Native American historical sites. Chair Torres suggested that the city may need to invest more resources in researching additional concerns when determining tree planting sites.

Chair Torres asked about addressing vulnerable communities without increasing rent and home prices in those areas. Juan Declet-Barreto agreed that increasing trees and amenities will increase value of the neighborhood and needs to be accounted for, however a policy may not be able to address these as it is out of the control of the city. This might be able to be addressed through additional leadership from county or state resources as they address other economic concerns within climate action. Often affordable housing is contrasted against having a shady, nice place to live and these don't need to be separate choices. Subcommittee member Rodriguez agrees that these are presented as "false choices" and welcomed future conversations.

Subcommittee member Sainz thanked Juan Declet-Barreto and wished conversations like this would have been helpful when moving to Phoenix several years ago. These concerns are often not discussed and should be.

Chair Torres thanked Juan Declet-Barreto and asked if there was follow up to send it to her to distribute to the subcommittee. Chair Torres and subcommittee members Rodriguez, Chandler, and Bettis will start developing a policy.

## **5. Office of Heat Response and Mitigation Goals and Priorities Discussion**

Chief Heat Officer David Hondula presented a PowerPoint overviewing the new Office of Heat Response and Mitigation and the upcoming next steps and priorities. He also

mentioned that there are upcoming conversations on continuing the subcommittee and what that might look like. He welcomes any input and suggestions on what the new office should accomplish.

Chair Torres thanked Chief Heat Officer Hondula and reminded the subcommittee that the current subcommittee falls under EQSC and follows its rules. There might be interest or need to move the future committee to another space within the city structure. She also asked for his thoughts on what would make a helpful heat equity policy that will likely eventually go to him in this new role. Chief Heat Officer Hondula agreed with the previous conversation about certain projects may apply to an equity policy while there are larger societal issues that drive vulnerability that might not be capturable by such a policy.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez asked about the timeline for addressing the Village Planning Committees and encouraged this happen as soon as possible as they are always reviewing and approving developments. These are often not sustainable long-term. Including these communities in the conversations will help remind them of city climate and sustainability initiatives and keep focus on approving improved developments. She encouraged seeking out small, quick wins in neighborhoods using grant money and helping them navigate how to implement projects. She mentioned that concerns for the cost of trees and water shouldn't be included in the conversation as the city is wasting water in other developments that doesn't come close to the amount required for maintaining trees.

Chief Heat Officer Hondula thanked the subcommittee and encourages anyone to call or email him to discuss heat concerns and ideas.

## **6. Cool Roofs Policy Memo Update**

Chair Torres and Vice Chair Myers overviewed the draft Cool Roof memo and asked subcommittee members to provide comments and edits on the memo and to identify recommendations to include.

**\*\*Quorum was lost at 4:53 p.m.\*\***

Subcommittee member Rodriguez suggested adding mention of and include incentives for rental properties in the memo.

Chair Torres and Vice Chair Myers reminded subcommittee members to provide any comments on the memo via email to city staff.

## **7. Review of Future Agenda Items**

Chair Torres reminded subcommittee members that there are two meetings remaining for the year. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 9, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. Future agenda items will include continue discussions on policy recommendations.

## **8. Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katrina Gerster, Environmental Quality Specialist