

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 p.m. There were 9 members present at roll call. The following subcommittee members arrived at the times stated below:

- Vanessa Spartan-Platt at 5:05 p.m.
- Tabitha Myers at 5:06 p.m.
- Aimee Esposito at 5:10 p.m.

2. Review and approval of September 29, 2020 Minutes

ACTION:

Vice Chair Dwayne Allen made a motion to approve the September 29, 2020 minutes. Subcommittee member Nicole Rodriguez seconded the motion, and it carried 12:0.

3. Public Comments

Darren Chapman is a member of the Environmental Quality and Sustainability Commission (EQSC) and shared that he loves trees and is excited to be on the call

Jessica Bueno is speaking on behalf of the Urban Phoenix Project and wanted to share support of the Tree Administrator position and spread importance of trees and shade. Also, would like to see the subcommittee to push these policies forward as they have been in progress for a long time.

4. Subcommittee Member Welcome and Introductions

Chair Torres welcomed members to the subcommittee and asked for feedback on the meeting time. Chair Torres instructed subcommittee members to email her with suggestions for setting a routine meeting time and any time conflicts.

Each subcommittee member then introduced themselves.

Aimee Esposito is the Director of Trees Matter and is excited about the collaboration and inclusivity of this subcommittee. Aimee was a part of past UHITS group and wants to focus on following up on the Tree and Shade Master Plan. Aimee would like to see committee and commission requirements to uphold accountability. Aimee sees the committee and Tree Administrator position as a place for community to come and provide support. The committee needs to not just focus on the Tree Administrator position but also community representation on trees and shade.

Anna Bettis is Healthy Cities Program Manager for The Nature Conservancy in Arizona. Anna is excited to see familiar faces on the subcommittee and is eager to learn what has already been done and contribute to the group. Anna's previous work includes mapping tree canopy and poverty, which you often see low tree canopy in places with high rates of poverty. Anne would like to see the subcommittee make a plan for where to target resources within the subcommittee goals.

Carlos Galindo-Elvira is the Director of Community Engagement & Partnerships at Chicanos Por La Causa. Carlos is excited to be on the committee and hopeful to learn about role of subcommittee and its influences on policies surrounding this issue. Carlos is also concerned on ensuring that communities of color are also served well by the mission of this subcommittee.

CJ Hager is the Director of Healthy Communities for Vitalyst Health Foundation. CJ is fortunate to have been a part of the first UHITS committee and is happy to see familiar faces along with new folks to come together with community knowledge. It is important to CJ that there is coordination and active participation in meetings from the Planning and Development and Street Transportation Departments as they are the only who are implementing the work that the subcommittee does. CJ would like to focus on human health related to shade and other ways to keep people healthy.

David Hondula is an Associate Professor at Arizona State University (ASU) and hopes to serve as liaison to the ASU research community and the resources and data they could provide to the subcommittee. This subcommittee will allow David to listen in for ASU colleagues to see what questions need to be answered in the community.

Dwayne Allen works in the sustainability space as it relates to food and primarily works with local agriculture to create a better food system and supporting farmers. Dwayne recommends that everyone reads the Tree and Shade Masterplan. Dwayne sees that one of the challenges for the subcommittee is changing the of mindset the desert should be dry and arid as research supports planting trees provides many benefits.

Hazel Chandler is a part of Elders Climate Action and the Union of Concerned Scientists doing work on climate change and heat issues Arizona faces. Hazel states that the city will not be livable unless heat is addressed, and trees are one of the key elements for the city to remain livable. Hazel acknowledges that lower income areas and children are greatly impacted by the quality of air and trees have great filtration system for air and provided shady places, which is really important.

Nicole Rodriguez is a certified arborist and began in 2017 on citizen commission for tree and shade recommendations which lead to what the subcommittee is today. Nicole states that this subcommittee will take a lot of work and diligence to accomplish its goals. Nicole emphasized that trees are infrastructure and they are not just ascetic features but have a health value.

Nika Forte is the Urban Farm Manager for St. Vincent de Paul's urban farm and owns ABC Education Center teaching low income communities about agriculture, bees, and harvesting. Nika feels trees beatifies neighborhoods and reduces heat and would like to see more in low income communities.

Vanessa Spartan-Platt is a Transportation Planner with the City of Tempe working on creating a heat resilient city with similar goals as the City of Phoenix.

Vjollca Berisha was not present, but David Hondula introduced her as he has previously worked with her. Vjollca runs the heat health surveillance program at the Maricopa County Department of Public Health.

Tabitha Myers was also a part of the 2017 citizen committee and earlier UHITS wanting the city to live up to promise in the master plan. Tabitha is excited about diversity of who is on the subcommittee but is disheartened at lack of progress so far with the plan. Tabitha feels this issue needs a greater sense of urgency as heat deaths are increasing and on the level of other natural disasters so should be treated as such.

Ginger Torres is a member of the EQSC and was appointed chair of this subcommittee. Ginger works in environmental planning and consulting working on environmental impact statements previously. Ginger has also worked on climate resilience issues and renewable

energy planning zones. Ginger hopes that this subcommittee can accomplish something tangible and is excited to channel all the knowledge on this subcommittee into spaces where there is the greatest impact.

5. Tree Administrator

The memo from Chair Torres detailing previous Tree Administrator position descriptions was shared and discussed. Chair Torres explained that the EQSC has asked the UHITS to revisit the idea and create a business case for the benefits of creating this position within the city.

Subcommittee member Hondula discussed that the connection in the federal hazard mitigation planning process would be a role for that the Tree Administrator. The traditional city representatives that participant in this process are often emergency managers and they do not always perceive heat to be a part of their responsibility. This leaves heat underrepresented in the document. If heat was formalized in the document it could provide access to monies which could help fund the Tree Administrator position and work related to heat. Vice Chair Allen asked who at the city participates in the hazard planning and Sustainability Officer Mark Hartman stated that the city's emergency management has had their traditional role in the hazard planning process, but heat and trees are not a focus of their work. Hartman has worked on highlight potential FEMA funding relating to heat to city management and is working to advocate for FEMA funding to work on heat and provide resources similar to the cooler climate resources they already provide. Allen noted that this would be a good opportunity to get funding to support the Tree Administer position as that seems to be the biggest barrier to creating the position.

Subcommittee member Chandler stated that is important when looking at the business case to look at costs involved with health care issues that heat and air quality issues cost citizens. Subcommittee member Rodriguez echoed what Chandler stated about health care costs and suggested the group look at other cities to see the roles and benefits that their tree administrator provides. The City of Austin is one example. It is also important to not have position be too dynamic where they are pulled in various directions and not focused on improving the shade canopy.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez stated that the city has many other coordinators, such as for biking and pedestrian, but not for trees so the funding it there it just hasn't been a priority. Subcommittee member Myers echoed this idea and stated that before Covid there as a surplus in the budget and was told there wasn't funding so the position could be done if it was made a priority by city council.

Subcommittee member Myers stated that there is nothing in the description about artificial shade and agrees that the position shouldn't be too large, but trees and artificial shade are related and complement each other so it should be considered within the position. Chair Torres agrees to not make the duties too cumbersome but including urban hat issues might be a good opportunity to get it approved faster. Subcommittee member Esposito agrees that there should not be too many responsibilities beyond tree and shade as it may be too much for one person to handle. The subcommittee should look at other cities as a model. The cites of Tucson, Los Angeles and Tempe have similar positions to this. Subcommittee member Spartan-Platt agreed that the scope of the role and the geographic size of city are very large and it would be a disservice to expand the scope too much. Spartan-Platt also mentioned that city decision making is based on improving either efficiency or effectiveness and those areas need to be targeted to make a compelling argument for this position.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez recommends changing the title to Urban Forestry Administrator as trees are not the only kinds of vegetation included in heat mitigation. Vice Chair Allen asked that if title is changed is it reasonable to expect that an urban forester would also have the skill set to address structural shade. This may make finding a person with the knowledge to fill the role of both duties hard to accomplish. Chair Torres prefers to focus on what skills are desired and not what is out there.

Chair Torres asked if there are members that would like to start working on developing and drafting the business case. Subcommittee members Rodriguez, Myers, Allen, and Hondula volunteered.

6. Tree and Shade Text

Agenda item 6 and 7 were discussed together.

Planning and Development Department Zoning Administrator Tricia Gomes used a PowerPoint Presentation to show the text amendment changes compared to the recommendations from the subcommittee and how the recommendations are addressed. The presentation also summarized the schedule for public review with Village Planning Committee (VPC) presentations in January 2021, city council briefings in March 2021, and final text amendment approval in April 2021.

Chair Torres asked for comments from members on the text amendment portions shared and how they compared to the subcommittee recommendations. As the text amendment moves forward the subcommittee needs to decide how to be involved in the process and advocate for the changes.

Subcommittee member Esposito mentioned that she reached out to the VPCs in February to present to talk about trees and the UHITS recommendations, but they wanted Planning and Development to present the text amendment first. Esposito expressed frustration that UHITS is stalled due to the text amendments and the deadlines keep changing, even before Covid and wants to know if the timeline is going to be followed this time. After Planning and Development presents to the VPCs Esposito would like to present the subcommittee recommendations and encourage discussions about trees. Gomes understands the frustration but Planning and Development has made commitments to the text amendment and will see it through. Planning and Development will provide updates to the EQSC and UHITS before the end of the year. Chair Torres shared that during the last EQCS meeting Chair Colin Tetreault was committed to tracking the text amendment through to completion on time. The UHITS recommendations and text amendments may not be approved all at once so the UHITS will have to monitor to make sure each one is on track and they are being addressed.

Vice Chair Allen stated the text amendment is lacking in any sort of enforcement mechanism from the city that has real teeth to it. Other cities include this in their policy. Gomes stated that the current language on enforcement has been strengthened, for example that if a property owner is not following their site plans that is a violation of the zoning ordinance. Residents would also be able to call Neighborhood Services (NSD) to report violations if they notice a tree has been removed and NSD will be able to issue a notice with timeline to fix the issue and reinspect to ensure it is completed. NSD has a 90% success rate at voluntary compliance.

Subcommittee member Esposito asked if these requirements are only for new development going forward. Gomes clarified that prior to the 1990's site plans weren't required for all types of development, but all current landscape plans on file will need to be

followed. Currently city staff already works property owners to decide is landscaping is required on their property and will work with property owners to see the landscaping plans are followed.

7. Tree and Shade Recommendations

Combined with agenda item 6.

8. Tree Canopy Policy for Vulnerable Communities

Street Transportation Department Horticulturist Erik Wilson shared a map for Phoenix Tree and Shade Prioritization:

<https://phoenix.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2ce7ec39970c45e5861559318c7ee54e> . The presentation detailed that Streets has an annual budget of \$400,000 which allows for about 800 trees planted annually. The current tree planting decision making process is based on customer request and inspector review to determine feasibility based on city right-of-way, water line access, and tree need. The new mapping tool will allow for a more scientific way to analyze tree need based on City of Phoenix Program Areas, City of Phoenix Mobility Areas, Maricopa County Public Health Shade Need Study, and ASU ICARUS model that evaluates travel behavior and heat exposure during travel. The map shows need based on these studies by color, where red is the highest need and green is lowest need.

Subcommittee member Hondula noted that in his introduction he mentioned the need for this the opportunity for the subcommittee to help ASU researchers to shape the understanding of the problem. This mapping tool highlights the amount of knowledge that can be generated, and the subcommittee can help determine priority and importance of these pieces of information to narrow the focus to assist decision makers.

Subcommittee member Hager appreciates the access to this tool, however it is a lot of information and will need review before discussion and hopes discussion can be revisited in a future meeting.

Chair Torres agrees with the idea of addressing tree need based on vulnerability and this idea is a model for other departments doing similar activities. An additional layer could be added that highlights walking and/or transit corridors that people travel through to mitigate heat during travel. Wilson mentioned there is a lot of different opportunities to work with this information and the tool could be enhanced with time.

9. Group Discussion: Should the City have an official policy that prioritizes tree plantings/shade corridors in vulnerable communities given the transit dependency of low-income zero car households?

Agenda item 9 was not discussed due to time. Chair Torres asked subcommittee members to review the link provided by Erik Wilson and think about the question for a future discussion.

10. Announcements and Review of Future Agenda Items

Chair Torres shared that the Phoenix Climate Action Plan Framework is posted online and available for comments at phoenix.gov/oep/climate.

Future possible agenda items include:

Tree Planting Prioritization and Vulnerability

City Right-of-Way and Neighborhood Programs Residential for Tree Planting

Update on Tree and Shade Recommendation Planning and Development Text
Amendment

11. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katrina Gerster, Environmental Quality Specialist

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