

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 3:10 p.m. There were eight members present at roll call. The following members joined the meeting after roll call:

- Kevin Groman joined at 3:45 pm

Chair Lobo noted representatives from the Green Ribbon Commission, Honor Health, and Mayo Clinic will be present at the February EQSC meeting.

2. Review and approval of September 14, Minutes

Commissioner Tetreault made a motion to approve the November 9, 2023 minutes. Commissioner Barr seconded the motion and it carried 8-0.

3. Public Comment

No members of the public requested to speak.

4. 2024 Tree and Shade Action Plan Update

Office of Heat Response and Mitigation Urban Tree Project Manager Lora Martens gave a presentation on the Tree and Shade Master Plan update including purpose, actions taken, lessons learned, and timeline.

Chair Lobo asked if Bloomberg Associates provided pro bono services for their consulting.

Ms. Martens replied yes, and the partnership with Bloomberg Associates has been extremely helpful.

Chair Lobo asked if there was a reason why there were only two City Council community meetings where surveys were collected.

Ms. Martens responded only two Council offices expressed interest, and she hopes community engagement will extend beyond writing the plan.

Ms. Martens asked the Committee if the presented challenges align with their ideas of challenges in their own communities.

Chair Lobo replied she felt the challenges represented what her community experiences.

Commissioner Chapman asked for clarification on funding.

Office of Heat Response and Mitigation Chief Heat Officer David Hondula provided clarification on funding, including future plans and programs.

Ms. Martens added Commissioners could follow-up with her on grant programs.

Office of Heat Response and Mitigation Assistant Project Manager Kayla Killoren noted 120 trees have been planted so far with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, and there would be significantly more allocated for spring.

Chair Lobo asked if the funding covered the trees and irrigation.

Mr. Martens replied yes and there were two grants available, one for schools, and one for neighborhoods. She added the type of grant would determine how the funding could be spent.

Chair Lobo asked how long it would take to get trees in the ground from the time the application was submitted to when the tree was planted.

Ms. Martens responded timing depended on the situation, but likely a couple months.

Commissioner Cazarez asked about Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding, and if it would be treated similarly as the ARPA funding.

Ms. Martens replied staff have earmarked funding to continue the school grants and neighborhood grants for five years, hire staff to execute programs, coordinate a tree stewards' program, and more.

Mr. Hondula added the allocation of resources would be intended to elevate community engagement, build community capacity, and increase tree canopy.

Commissioner Cazarez expressed support for a strong focus on community engagement.

Chair Lobo asked how the trees would be sustained.

Ms. Martens emphasized the maintenance concern was one of the most common concerns received. She added Office of Heat Response and Mitigation staff take this concern very seriously and continue evaluating solutions.

Chair Lobo asked if funding allocated included shade structures.

Office of Heat Response and Mitigation Built Environment Specialist Mary Wright responded \$3 million has been allocated for shade structures going into the public right of way and \$1.5 million allocated for shade structures in schools.

Ms. Martens explained the workshop activity, "Turning Challenges into Strategies" for the maintenance challenge: "Trees are dying from lack of maintenance and not being replaced on public and private property."

Commissioner Tetreault, Chair Lobo, and Ms. Martens discussed clarifications on "public" and "private" properties.

Ms. Martens asked Commissioners why trees were dying in the proposed scenario.

Commissioner Tetreault replied there could be a lack of awareness of responsibility by property owners and managers and there could be operational funding constraints for maintenance budgets. He also commented on high turnover and lack of education and awareness messaging.

Commissioner Barr added lack of specific resources to pay for the water and infrastructure.

Commissioner Taylor added there could also be disputes between those responsible for planting and maintaining.

Commissioner Knoop added the person in charge of the property may not live in Arizona and not be familiar with the site. She also noted a lack of reporting for maintenance concerns.

Commissioner Groman added the public may also not know who to call and report maintenance concerns to.

Commissioner Tetreault added there could be a lack of enforcement interest from City of Phoenix as these concerns may be seen as secondary to life safety issues.

Chair Lobo added trees and shade may need to be incentivized.

Commissioner Tetreault added lack of awareness regarding incentives for tree and shade could be a challenge.

Ms. Martens prompted the Commission to discuss solutions for the lack of awareness of incentives and value proposition.

Chair Lobo suggested identifying specific incentives, rebates, credit programs, etc. for tree and shade performance metrics.

Commissioner Cazarez emphasized the benefits of trees, such as improved property values.

Ms. Martens suggested specific education could be created for tree managers to emphasize the benefits of tree and shade.

Mr. Hondula asked if the City would be the messenger for the education.

Commissioner Taylor responded perhaps programs and education could come from other sources that elevate community champions around trees and shade. Additionally, an excellence award could be added to recognize champions.

Chair Lobo commented on water conservation concerns for landscaping and noted that should be included in education materials.

Commissioner Cazarez commented on the lack of skilled labor and recommended training be offered.

Commissioner Taylor suggested working to survey and ask questions about what can be done to support maintenance employees with their work.

Chair Lobo thanked the Office of Heat Response and Mitigation for their time.

5. Announcements and Review of Future Agenda Items

There were no announcements or comments.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danielle Vermeer, Administrative Assistant II