

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 3:04 p.m. There were eight members present at roll call.

Commissioner Gorsegrner joined the meeting at 3:06 pm.

Commissioner Sandweg shared about his coffee business, Copper Star Coffee.

Commissioner Chapman congratulated the Arizona Sustainability Alliance for implementing a pollinator garden alongside the Rio Salado.

Commissioner Tetreault congratulated Commissioner Sandweg for his business achievements and congratulated Commissioner Chapman on Fund the Farm. He also shared about the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) recently submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Commissioner Hernandez shared about the Nature Conservancy's Urban Heat Leadership Academy Program.

Commissioner Knoop shared notable achievements for Arizona's progress towards adoption of electric vehicles.

Commissioner Gorsegrner shared he was elected to the Salt River Project (SRP) Council Division 7 Association and District.

2. Review and approval of March 14, Minutes

Commissioner Tetreault made a motion to approve the March 14, 2024 minutes. Commissioner Barr seconded the motion and it carried 9-0.

3. Public Comment

No members of the public requested to speak.

4. Working Session

Chair Lobo asked Commissioner Barr to report back on the work group discussions.

Commissioner Barr replied the Commission should consider a collective approach to engage businesses in climate action. She noted the proposed ideas at the March EQSC meeting would be a heavy lift and invited the Commission to discuss.

Environmental Programs Administrator Nancy Allen encouraged exploration of paths forward. For example, she commented on the CPRG as an opportunity to make significant progress towards climate action goals. Ms. Allen encouraged the Commission to think about how to capture regional impact. For example, she asked if SRP, Valley Metro, etc. could tailor goals to align with the Climate Action Plan.

Commissioner Barr responded SRP could potentially connect their goals to the Climate Action Plan. She also commented on the impressive outside speakers who have spoken to the Commission. She prompted the Commission to think about how they could capture meaningful work and suggested the Commission continue inviting speakers.

Chair Lobo agreed with Commissioner Barr and suggested Commissioners share contacts to help bring in more speakers.

Ms. Allen asked if the Commission could help identify what groups, priorities, and information make sense to include in the Climate Action Plan. She also commented on other ideas such as the potential for a summit to bring people together, share work, and recognize accomplishments. The Commission could formulate how they want this to look and make a recommendation.

Commissioner Gorsegrner replied with a discussion on who should lead the project. He commented on the value of summits to bring people into the room and proposed an expert moderator could be recruited to help facilitate.

Chair Lobo asked if Commissioner Barr was still on the board of Arizona Forward and asked if there would be an annual summit.

Commissioner Barr replied yes and asked if the City would have funding for a summit.

Ms. Allen responded there was potential for funding. She added the Climate Action Plan was an ever-evolving document and emphasized the importance of including as much information as possible to get the full picture.

Commissioner Gorsegrner asked how to get people excited about this work.

Chair Lobo replied the excitement was there, but there was a gap between how to share information with the City.

Ms. Allen responded that if the regional coalition was awarded the CPRG, it would be all over the media—creating valuable airtime that could be leveraged to spread the word.

Commissioner Tetreault discussed sustainability governance, administration, and project management.

Chair Lobo asked if an overarching body to oversee the work was needed.

Commissioner Tetreault responded a body did not need to necessarily oversee, but different models could be considered.

Commissioner Chapman discussed a non-profit perspective on the conversation.

Chair Lobo discussed potential pathways for the Commission to explore and asked for ideas to proceed in a meaningful way.

Commissioner Gorsegrner asked how many other cities might be pondering the same questions around structure.

Commissioner Knoop commented on entities, such as Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs), that might be tracking what other businesses are doing.

Commissioner Barr mentioned Arizona State University (ASU) was pulling together local municipal Climate Action Plans to compare them. She suggested separating this work into more bite-sized pieces and continuing the conversation after giving it some thought.

Chair Lobo asked if Arizona Forward would have the appetite to take this on.

Commissioner Barr replied the staff team was small and might not have capacity for this, but perhaps they could explore a single convening.

Commissioner Tetreault encouraged the Commission to think about benchmarks.

Chair Lobo asked if a small group should take this on or if the Commission should continue to dialogue at an upcoming meeting.

Commissioner Barr responded she could take it on one more time, but the Commission might be more productive by having larger group conversations.

Chair Lobo commented on the specific categories of the Climate Action Plan and the potential to have different people champion each category and think about what organizations are working in those spaces.

Ms. Allen added the categories were not an exhaustive list. She also noted the plan needed a land acknowledgement statement and more equity dialogue.

Chair Lobo recommended having some time to discuss this topic at future meetings.

Commissioner Barr agreed this was a good plan, and suggested Commissioners could share about their work at future meetings.

Commissioner Hernandez suggested inventorying where Commissioners were connected and exploring who makes sense to invite from there.

Chair Lobo asked if there was a list of non-profits and NGOs in this area.

Ms. Allen replied yes, and staff could share this list with the Commission.

Commissioner Gorsegner noted the Phoenix Business Journal had a list of different businesses broken out by categories.

5. Announcements and Review of Future Agenda Items

Chair Lobo asked for future agenda items. She noted Valley Leadership representatives might be available for a future meeting.

Commissioner Cazarez shared someone from Arizona Sustainability Alliance could talk about urban forestry.

Chair Lobo asked Commissioner Chapman if someone from Tiger Mountain Foundation could share about their work.

Commissioner Chapman replied yes.

Chair Lobo suggested bringing folks to the table on air quality, water, and urban agriculture.

Commissioner Cazarez recommended bringing in a heat response individual at the State level, such as Eugene Livar. He also recommended Local First as a potential presenter. He commented on Arizona Townhall as a potential convener for a summit.

Commissioner Gorsegner agreed.

Commissioner Cazarez commented on the Arizona State University collection of municipal plans, and this could be a potential topic to review a summary.

Commissioner Barr responded this was a good idea and added the Commission could reach out to other cities with notable climate action plans to see if they could present.

Chair Lobo asked about the Restaurant Association.

Commissioner Sandweg replied this could be explored for a future meeting.

Commissioner Gorsegrner asked if government relations staff might be able to connect with League of Cities and share insights.

Commissioner Knoop recommended that John Heckman with ASU/Rocky Mountain Institute and Michigan EIBC might be a good contact.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danielle Vermeer, Administrative Assistant II