

PHOENIX ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY and SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MINUTES

August 8, 2024

Phoenix City Hall
Online Using Webex

Commission Members Present	City Staff Present
Allee Taylor, Penny, Webex	Allen, Nancy, Office of Environmental Programs (OEP)
Barr, Kelly, Webex	Gerster, Katrina, OEP
Cazarez, Orlando, Webex	Hondula, David, Office of Heat Response and Mitigation (OHRM)
Franquist, Timothy, Webex	Killoren, Kayla, OHRM
Gorsegner, Eric, In-person	Marturano, Julia, OHRM
Groman, Kevin, Webex	Uebelherr, Joshua, OEP
Hernandez, Baltazar, Webex	Vermeer, Danielle, OEP
Knoop, Kathy, Webex	Wright, Mary, OHRM
Odegard-Begay, Andrea, Webex	Zima, Elizabeth, OEP
Sandweg, Bill, Webex	
Lobo, Caroline – Chair, In-person	
Commission Members Not Present	Community Members Present
Chapman, Darren	Cecilia Riviere, Arizona State University
Porter, Sarah	
Tetreault, Colin	
Torres, Ginger – Vice Chair	

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 3:05 p.m. There were 10 members present at roll call.

Commissioner Cazarez joined the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

Commissioner Barr left the meeting at 3:33 p.m.

2. Review and approval of July 11, 2024 Minutes

Commissioner Gorsegrner referenced page 2 of the July 11, 2024 minutes, and commented he was having some technology issues at the last meeting. He also added that he would approach proposing the motion differently if he could go back again and felt his motion was related to the EQSC goals after all.

Commissioner Gorsegrner made a motion to approve the July 11, 2024 minutes. Commissioner Barr seconded the motion, and it carried 10-0.

3. Public Comment

No members of the public requested to speak.

Commissioner Cazarez asked if the Public Comment agenda item could come after the material has been discussed.

Environmental Programs Administrator Nancy Allen replied the EQSC followed a similar structure to City Council meetings. She explained the public could ask questions specific to agenda items after the agenda item was complete and noted that general comments, not related to the agenda items, happened at the beginning.

Chair Lobo affirmed she would open public comment after agenda items.

4. Shade Phoenix Plan Feedback Discussion

Office of Heat Response and Mitigation (OHRM) Director Dr. David Hondula gave an overview of where OHRM is at with the Shade Phoenix Plan update including actions, budget, etc. and opened the floor for feedback on the Shade Phoenix Plan.

Commissioner Barr applauded OHRM for a report well-done and commented on the relationship between air quality and tree species' contribution to ozone and asked if OHRM was considering including a list of trees to provide guidance on what to plant and what not to plant.

Dr. Hondula responded this could potentially be called out at the beginning of the plan and then discussed the plan's action number 32, "Update City of Phoenix plant species guidance." Dr. Hondula also noted that the Maricopa County roundtable already has a list and that could be referenced.

Ms. Allen noted this plan was for five years, and it might be beneficial to consider including this as an action for the next iteration as the Environmental Protection Agency is strengthening ozone regulation, and actions could include limiting trees that produce high biogenic ozone which would inform this action item.

Commissioner Barr replied calling this out in the current iteration could be a good opportunity to educate the public on the most appropriate and beneficial trees to plant.

Commissioner Barr also commented on the tree canopy map, noting that the areas within the Salt River Project (SRP) irrigation water rights service territory appeared to be areas where there was higher tree canopy. She added some neighborhoods historically had access to SRP irrigation rights but lost the infrastructure for it over time. She shared it might be worth investigating opportunities to repair infrastructure and reinstate SRP access.

Dr. Hondula asked if Commissioner Barr could share details about infrastructure reinstallation cost.

Commissioner Barr responded costs were variable, an inventory would be needed to assess the infrastructure's condition, and she could share a contact at SRP to discuss more. She also recommended OHRM staff do a deeper analysis on the life cycle costs of trees versus built shade over a 20-year timeframe.

Dr. Hondula noted Commissioner Barr's feedback.

Commissioner Gorsegrner complimented the plan. He then discussed action number 33, "Embed shade recommendations into City-owned building design standards and facility review." He asked how much the proposed plan would impact private development since he noted only a small percentage of land is City owned.

Dr. Hondula replied with a discussion of City code including current strengths, deficiencies, and efforts to streamline the permitting process. He also expressed excitement about action number 11, "Pilot a public shade fund," which would be related to the development process.

Commissioner Gorsegrner asked how this would work with a school.

Dr. Hondula responded OHRM was providing resources to schools for planting trees but is still in the process of learning their regulatory landscape.

Chair Lobo replied schools complied with State standards and recommended OHRM staff meet with the school facilities board at the State level. She added the State could potentially develop a MOU so that new school buildings consider shade in more meaningful ways.

Dr. Hondula affirmed this could be something OHRM explores.

Chair Lobo asked if a partnership could be developed with SRP to discuss the canals.

Dr. Hondula responded staff could explore opportunities for making language more specific related to canals, and a partnership with utilities should be considered in the future.

OHRM Project Manager Mary Wright replied there had been some discussions at the City and public comments requesting shade structures at the canals, but this was logistically challenging because canals were first and foremost a utility asset.

Ms. Allen added trees could drop materials into the canals and root growth could damage their integrity.

Dr. Hondula responded this topic could be more explicitly called out in the plan.

Commissioner Gorsegrner recommended OHRM staff review the Scottsdale and Gilbert canal scape.

Chair Lobo mentioned the Sunnyslope area is looking at built shade opportunities, and that just like EQSC is trying to get businesses to support the Climate Action Plan, EQSC could also get support from businesses for the Tree and Shade Plan. Chair Lobo asked about the plan's education strategy and if there was plan for that.

Dr. Hondula responded a full-blown plan had not been developed but it would be created collaboratively, for example, with the Office of Communications.

Chair Lobo asked if OHRM staff was open to giving presentations about the plan now.

Dr. Hondula said OHRM was open to giving presentations.

Chair Lobo commented on Neighborhood Associations in Phoenix who would appreciate a presentation from OHRM. She also noted she has heard some complaints that trees were being brought in from other states.

OHRM Program Manager Lora Martens replied OHRM trees were purchased and grown locally in Arizona, but it was possible that other City departments may have gotten some from other states.

Chair Lobo responded she heard some trees were coming from Texas.

Dr. Hondula replied staff could investigate and report back.

Commissioner Gorsegrner commented on the importance of emphasizing function when exploring community art efforts for shade structures. He also asked if a solar covered parking lot could be considered a shade structure.

Dr. Hondula replied solar shade structures would be considered shade structures. He noted the engineering firm working with the City on the integrated art shade structures was aiming to maximize shade, even with art components. He also spoke about the City's Sombra temporary shade project, and recommended this could be an interesting future agenda item.

Chair Lobo recommended artists and engineers keep in mind a balance between summer and winter shade.

Ms. Wright discussed how shade angles are considered in more detail and that the goal is to maximize shade at 3pm.

Commissioner Knoop commented she was happy the plan was finally coming into fruition and appreciated that it would include regular updates.

Commissioner Cazarez applauded OHRM staff for their plan and commented on the Arizona Sustainability Alliance Urban Forestry Roundtable.

Chair Lobo asked if Commissioners should send a list of organizations they are involved with to be considered for an OHRM presentation.

Dr. Hondula replied yes, and it would be helpful to know if any organizations would be interested in engaging before October.

5. Announcements and Review of Future Agenda Items

Chair Lobo noted the EQSC would continue supporting the Climate Action Plan and bring in businesses to share about their sustainability and climate plans.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danielle Vermeer, Administrative Assistant II