

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 8 members present at roll call.

Commissioner Allee Taylor joined the meeting at 3:13 p.m.

Chair Lobo invited Office of Sustainability Director Mark Hartman to share about his recent resiliency work.

Mr. Hartman replied with an overview of his work engaging local businesses in exploring resiliency themes.

Chair Lobo commended Mr. Hartman for his work and invited him to speak in more detail at a future meeting.

2. Review and approval of Augst 8, 2024 Minutes

Commissioner Gorsegner made a motion to approve the August 8, 2024 minutes. Commissioner Franquist seconded the motion, and it carried 8-0.

3. Public Comment

Madison Kaminsky introduced herself as an Arizona State University Walter Cronkite student.

Cecilia Riviere introduced herself as Arizona State University City Exchange Director.

No members of the public requested to speak.

4. Circular Economy Discussion

Public Works and Community and Economic Development Circular Economy Project Manager Amanda Jordan gave an update on the City's circular economy landscape including Phoenix waste diversion goals, China's National Sword Policy, North Gateway Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) upgrades, and Circular Plastics Microfactory collaboration with Arizona State University, Goodwill of Central and Northern Arizona and Hustle PHX.

Commissioner Gorsegner asked why Phoenix had a higher average price per ton for cardboard than the national and regional average.

Ms. Jordan responded upgrades to the MRF helped Phoenix continue recycling services after the China National Sword Policy, while some other cities halted or reduced services.

Commissioner Gorsegner asked about the process for auditing the quality of Phoenix's recyclables.

Ms. Jordan replied that City staff routinely conduct bail breaks to inspect for contamination and quality internally and the operator also inspects bails before accepting them.

Ms. Jordan continued her presentation discussing the MRF upgrade, Resource Innovation Campus (RIC), and circular plastics microfactory.

Commissioner Gorsegner asked for clarification on the plastics microfactory status.

Ms. Jordan responded the plastics microfactory opened in February 2024 and was co-located on the Goodwill Clearance Center at 51st Avenue and Van Buren. She added the campus was working on helping divert and repurpose plastic waste.

Chair Lobo asked if there had been a pilot with clothing.

Ms. Jordan replied no, but active conversations on clothing and textiles were being had.

Commissioner Gorsegner asked if plastic bags still clog up recycling machinery.

Ms. Jordan responded yes.

Commissioner Gorsegner asked if the “oops sticker” was still active.

Ms. Jordan replied the “Oops Shine On” program was still active and now a full-scale program. She explained residents would get an “Oops” sticker if recycling bin contained nonrecyclable contamination.

Ms. Jordan continued the presentation sharing on education, outreach, strategic engagement, and knowledge distribution.

Commissioner Barr asked if the EQSC could consider a field trip.

Ms. Jordan recommended the North Gateway Facility, the 27th Avenue Facility once open, and the Compost Facility in cooler weather.

Chair Lobo asked if the Goodwill facility was open for tours.

Ms. Jordan responded the facility was not open for tours yet, but it could be a possibility in the future.

Commissioner Gorsegner commented on the importance of increasing public awareness about the recycling service and how the process works.

Ms. Jordan agreed and added there was a virtual tour of the MRF online.

Chair Lobo asked if Public Works had partnerships with school districts.

Ms. Jordan replied the MRF was open every Thursday to the public for tours and Public Works could also coordinate with schools to accommodate their schedules. She noted the 27th Avenue location when it reopens would help reach more schools who have limitations on how far they can travel for field trips.

Commissioner Hernandez asked how Public Works could support with zero waste events for organizations interested.

Ms. Jordan responded a formal pathway did not currently exist, but Public Works was open to collaborating on a case-by-case basis.

Chair Lobo asked if Public Works worked with external consultants.

Ms. Jordan replied Public Works tapped into existing consultants on retainer and for more complex cases could explore something like a Request for Proposal (RFP).

Chair Lobo asked what other cities were leveraging innovative practices in this arena.

Ms. Jordan recommended looking into the City of Austin.

5. Climate Action Plan Community Engagement

Chair Lobo grouped agenda items 5 and 6 together.

Chair Lobo discussed the Climate Action Plan Update timeline, revisited the Arizona Townhall partnership, and asked the EQSC how to move forward.

Commissioner Chapman thanked Ms. Jordan for the presentation.

Commissioner Barr asked for clarification on the ask for Arizona Townhall.

Chair Lobo recommended using Arizona Townhall as a neutral third-party facilitator to bring together 10-20 businesses with a larger footprint in the valley and have a conversation on future directions for Phoenix with respect to the Climate Action Plan.

Chair Barr asked if Arizona Townhall would act as the facilitator for discussion and if they had contacts for large companies.

Environmental Programs Manager Beth Zima asked if Commissioners could help use their networks to recruit businesses.

Commissioner Gorsegrner commented Arizona Townhall could potentially play a role in helping convene. He added the goal could be to get input on the Climate Action Plan and gather ideas from what other entities are doing.

Commissioner Barr asked for an update on if climate action was selected as a topic for the 2026 Arizona Townhall.

Chair Lobo responded housing shortfall was selected as the topic to move forward.

Commissioner Barr asked how much Arizona Townhall would charge and if the City had a budget for this.

Chair Lobo replied a four-hour meeting with prep-time, breakfast, and a report would be about \$7,500.

Ms. Zima responded that OEP does not have the funding to provide.

Chair Lobo asked Mr. Hartman for his thoughts on how the City might be able to facilitate this.

Mr. Hartman responded he would need to talk with Environmental Programs Administrator Nancy Allen.

Chair Lobo asked Mr. Hartman if the townhall would add value to the relationship he has with businesses.

Mr. Hartman replied he would need to look at the details before he could comment.

Chair Lobo noted she thought the City had some funding available and asked if conditions had changed.

Ms. Zima responded the conditions had changed.

Chair Lobo replied the Commission would need to strategize workarounds.

Commissioner Gorsegrner asked if Arizona Townhall used sponsors for the townhalls.

Chair Lobo responded Arizona Townhall had sponsors and asked the EQSC to continue bringing businesses to the table to discuss the Climate Action Plan.

Commissioner Gorsegrner, Commissioner Knoop, Commissioner Barr, and Commissioner Allee Taylor affirmed it would be good to have businesses on board.

Chair Lobo asked about engagement in the past for the Climate Action Plan.

Environmental Quality Specialist Katrina Gerster replied the City had different themed workshops to engage the community and a survey.

Chair Lobo asked the Commission to help strategize how to get more support and eyes on the Climate Action Plan.

Commissioner Allee Taylor asked if there was outreach to the Village Planning Committees.

Chair Lobo responded she believed this was correct.

Commissioner Barr summarized two possible paths forward: (1) if there was budget, a workshop could be held and (2) if there was not a budget, the City could make presentations at existing meetings for organizations such as Arizona Forward.

Chair Lobo agreed making presentations at organizations like the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC) would be a good idea and encouraged the Commission to share organizations they were involved with.

Commissioner Hernandez responded his programs at The Nature Conservancy (TNC) could possibly lend insight on how to engage communities in the action planning process. He spoke about consultation processes such as meeting community members where they are at and the importance of language access. He noted TNC had some experience with being a convener and could explore offering space for meetings.

Commissioner Chapman expressed excitement about the conversation.

Commissioner Gorsegrner asked what the actual Climate Action Plan document looks like today.

Ms. Zima replied the 2021 Climate Action Plan was published, the 2024 Progress Report would go out in the next few months, and the 2025 Update was in the initial stages.

Chair Lobo asked who was working on the 2025 Update.

Ms. Zima responded Climate Program Manager Joshua Uebelherr was working on it.

Commissioner Gorsegner asked if content was still coming from different departments.

Ms. Zima replied yes. She noted the 2024 Progress Report would be a shorter document and the 2025 Update would be more robust.

Chair Lobo asked where the Commission could help with the update.

Ms. Zima responded receiving contact recommendations for community engagement opportunities could be helpful and if the EQSC could help promote outreach efforts.

Commissioner Gorsegner asked if there was already a list of community organizations collected from the EQSC.

Commissioner Barr replied yes, but clarified the ask would be specifically for organizations Commissioners were personally involved with to help get the item on meeting agendas.

Chair Lobo asked if staff could follow-up with an email to request this information from the Commission.

Commissioner Knoop encouraged staff to consider all types of businesses, not just the “gold standard” ones.

6. Climate Action Plan Business Engagement

Chair Lobo grouped agenda items 5 and 6 together.

7. Announcements and Review of Future Agenda Items

Commissioner Knoop shared the Maricopa County Air Quality Department received a \$15 million grant from the Federal Highway Administration to support its Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Improvement Project. She added it would be interesting to hear about their plans for the grant.

Commissioner Gorsegner commented it would be interesting to learn more about charging station requirements for commercial and multi-family development.

Chair Lobo asked if there was movement on requirements for electric vehicle charging stations in new developments.

Mr. Hartman responded the City was exploring adopting a code but was still in the exploration phase.

Chair Lobo asked if any other cities had established a code.

Mr. Hartman replied yes and discussed examples such as California and Tucson.

Chair Lobo asked for an update on grants for electric vehicle charging.

Mr. Hartman responded the City got rejected for the Charging Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) grant but had recently reapplied. He noted Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) had funding dedicated for electric vehicle charging and a small amount of funds would be available to Phoenix through the General Obligation (GO) bond.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danielle Vermeer, Administrative Assistant II