



**Sustainability Commission
Online Meeting via Zoom**

Wednesday, March 23, 2022 at 6:30 P.M.

Minutes

1. Call to Order at 6:33 PM

2. Roll Call by Staff Liaison

Members Present: Chair Paul Lemmon; Vice Chair Daniel Schuh; Commissioners Litzy Hernandez, Alejandro Arreguin, and Thomas Albrigo

Members Absent: Commissioners Billy Vaughan (excused) and Bernadette Barba (unexcused)

Municipal Staff Present: Danae Presler, Sustainability Officer

Ms. Presler shared that Rebecca Forstner and Kim Avila resigned from the Commission due to other obligations and noted that Commissioner Arreguin has moved into a voting member position. The Alternate position is currently vacant.

3. Unscheduled Public Appearances

None.

4. Approval of January 26, 2022 Minutes (For Action)

Motion was made by Commissioner Hernandez, seconded by Vice Chair Schuh, to approve the January 26, 2022 Meeting Minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Discussion of Community Engagement Activities

Chair Lemmon invited Danae Presler, Sustainability Officer, to update the Commission on the award the City recently received. Ms. Presler shared that Avondale received an Environmental Excellence Award of Distinction from Arizona Forward for its Drive Electric Project. Chair Lemmon and Ms. Presler attended the Annual Awards Gala on Saturday, March 19th and accepted the award on behalf of the City.

Chair Lemmon provided a summary of recent events that the Commission was represented or participated in, including the Tres Rios River Cleanup and Tres Rios Nature Festival in February.

Ms. Presler shared that Commissioner Vaughan and she received a virtual presentation from West Point High School Engineering Class on their research on electric vehicles and recommendations for electric vehicle charging stations. The presentation was the culmination of a project initiated between the Sustainability Commission, City of Avondale, and West Point High School in January, 2022.

Ms. Presler noted that KidFest will be held on Saturday, April 9th from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Friendship Park located at 12325 W. McDowell Road, Avondale, AZ 85323. Ms. Presler asked if any Commissioners were interested and available to table at the event. Vice Chair Schuh and Commissioner Hernandez are interested in volunteering for part of the day and wish to assist another department.

6. Review Draft Community Sustainability Plan

Ms. Presler presented an overview of the Draft Community Sustainability Plan, including the timeline and components of the document – including vision and goals, sustainability challenges and opportunities, greenhouse gas emissions, equity principles, and eight (8) sustainability pathways.

Regarding community greenhouse gas emissions, Chair Lemmon and Vice Chair Schuh noted an increase in the number of warehouses coming into the area and voiced concern about the increase in semi-truck traffic and impact on air quality and carbon emissions. Ms. Presler replied that hydrogen fuel cell could provide a more sustainable option, but the infrastructure and technology is not fully developed yet.

Regarding municipal greenhouse gas emissions, Chair Lemmon inquired if the City has educated residents about only putting out their trash and recycling containers when needed, noting this could save fuel and time if staff did not have to stop for every can. Ms. Presler was not sure if the City has done this and will follow-up with Public Works Department to find out.

The Commission reviewed the eight proposed sustainability pathways: Efficient Buildings and Renewable Energy, Clean Transportation, Resilience to Extreme Heat, Reliable Water Supply, Healthy Environment, Waste as a Resource, Fresh Food for All, and Green Economy. Feedback from the Commission is summarized below.

With regards to the Efficient Buildings and Renewable Energy pathway, Chair Lemmon voiced concern that solar panels are often not an option for low-income households.

Commissioner Albrigo noted that Arizona Public Service (APS) offers solar program for low-income households.

Ms. Presler shared that community solar programs have been effective at reducing the price of solar for homeowners, but often more work is needed to bring older homes up to code and ensure roofs are safe for panels, which adds more barriers for people.

Commissioner Hernandez added that it would be useful to motivate landlords to improve energy efficiency and install solar, as renters usually have to pay utility bills and do not have control over these decisions.

Chair Lemmon asked if any developers were doing green construction. Ms. Presler replied that some developers are implementing more sustainable construction practices on a voluntary basis, but that there are not standards in place for it. Adoption of standard green construction codes by the City or regionally would support this.

Concerning the Reliable Water Supply pathway, Commissioner Arreguin suggested the City find ways to harvest and utilize stormwater as a resource.

Chair Lemmon inquired what the City's current rate of water consumption was. Ms. Presler said she would follow-up with staff to find out.

Regarding the Waste as a Resource pathway, Commissioner Albrigo asked if diversion rates from the landfill were decreasing in recent years. Ms. Presler replied that she believed the rates have been relatively constant but noted the recent loss of the green waste program.

Commissioner Arreguin advocated for a local solution for composting green waste in the West Valley and working with other cities to establish it.

Related to the Fresh Food For All pathway, Commissioner Hernandez is currently working on her capstone project on food insecurity and will send resources related to metrics that can be used to track progress towards food access, such as household eligibility for food assistance programs and proximity to supermarkets with healthy foods.

Chair Lemmon suggested having portable farmers markets to help increase access to food where it is needed. Commissioner Schuh voiced his support for the idea.

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Regarding community engagement approaches to gather feedback on the Draft Plan once it is released, the Commission suggested including information in the water bill, presenting to HOA board meetings and neighborhood meetings, and advertising on refuse trucks and billboards.

7. Discussion of Future Meeting Format

Chair Lemmon inquired if the Commission would prefer future meetings to be held in-person, online, or a combination of each. The Commission determined to have the next meeting in-person if health protocols allowed and discuss future format again at the next meeting.

8. Adjournment

The next Sustainability Commission Regular Meeting is scheduled for May 25, 2022 at 6:30 PM.

Motion by Vice Chair Schuh, seconded by Commissioner Hernandez, to adjourn the meeting. There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Paul Lemmon, Chair

Danae Presler
Sustainability Officer as Staff Liaison

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd day of March 2022. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.

Danae Presler
Sustainability Officer as Staff Liaison