



**Sustainability Commission
Online Meeting via Zoom**

Wednesday, June 21, 2023, at 6:30 P.M.

Minutes

1. Call to Order at 6:32 PM

2. Roll Call by Chair Schuh

Members Present: Chair Daniel Schuh; Vice Chair Shaun Grimm; Commissioners Paul Lemmon, Billy Vaughan, Litzy Hernandez (6:34 PM) and Bernadette Barba (6:46 PM).

Members Absent: Commissioners Thomas Albrigo (unexcused) and Alejandro Arreguin (unexcused).

Municipal Staff Present: Katrece Swenson, Senior Management Analyst; Nancy Wallace, Administrative Assistant

3. Unscheduled Public Appearances

None.

4. Approval of March 22, 2023, Minutes (For Action)

Motion was made by Commissioner Paul Lemmon, seconded by Commissioner Billy Vaughan, to approve the March 22, 2023, Meeting Minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Waste Reduction Campaign Updates

Katrece Swenson, Senior Management Analyst, spoke on the progress of the Waste Reduction Campaign. These include a pilot food waste reduction program and initiatives to increase recycling rates while decreasing the contamination rates in Avondale's residential recycling.

The food waste reduction program is in the exploration phase (illustrated in the PowerPoint timeline). The pilot program budget was approved with the adoption of the Fiscal Year 24 budget on June 5, 2023. During July-August 2023 the City will perform a community survey to determine what Avondale residents desire in a composting program. Program development will occur August-September 2023 and

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implementation is expected October 2023-April 2024 (Late fall to early spring).
Program evaluation will occur May-June 2024.

In the exploration phase, City staff met with several different entities about waste reduction strategies. HDR is an environmental consulting service located in Tucson that runs the Tucson Compost Program. They were able to give advice on the program and on potential grant opportunities. Denali operates the Phoenix composting & green waste facility. Denali also has an animal feed outlet that reprocesses materials in Goodyear. City staff were able to visit the Goodyear site and see how it is processed. Coldwater Coffeehouse & Bakery is a business located on Western Avenue that composts food scraps from their kitchen and garden on their property. They are interested in working with the City of Avondale to expand their program. R. City operates a door-to-door food scrap collection service in the Phoenix metro area for a fee. EcoRich sells equipment that can process hundreds of pounds of food in a 24-hour period using machines that have an internal and controlled process.

The next step is to develop a community survey and analyze the results. This survey will help the City understand what the residents of Avondale desire in a food waste reduction program. The survey will ask residents if they are interested in a food scrap pick-up option, drop-off option, or backyard composting. The survey will also ask if residents would be willing to pay for a food scrap service, and if they are interested in using the final compost. The survey will be hosted on Avondale Connect and promoted through Avondale's social media.

Ms. Swenson asked if there were any questions. Commissioner Lemmon asked if the program will include a community garden, composting, or both. Ms. Swenson answered it will only focus on composting.

Commissioner Cota asked if the survey will only be available online, or also presented at community meetings and events. She also asked if the survey will be bilingual. Ms. Swenson answered City staff will look into opportunities to present the survey at neighborhood meetings and having the survey in both English and in Spanish.

Commissioner Lemmon asked if there was a way to get a link to the survey for the Garden Lakes HOA newsletters. Ms. Swenson answered that asking HOA's to promote the survey is a great idea. Chair Schuh asked if the City needs contacts for the HOA's. Ms. Swenson answered the City has HOA contacts listed on the website, however it is preferred to reach out to HOAs through direct contact when possible. Commissioner Lemmon stated he knows several HOA board members he can forward

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the information to. Chair Schuh offered to send the survey to the Coldwater Springs HOA.

Ms. Swenson provided updates on the City's recycling efforts. City staff toured the Phoenix Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) on April 24, 2023. A behind-the-scenes video of the MRF was shown to the Commission.

Commissioner Vaughan asked if Avondale's regular trash goes through the process shown in the video or only the recycling service? Ms. Swenson answered it is only the blue cans (recycling) goes through the sorting process. Black cans (trash) go to the landfill. Commissioner Lemmon commented that a lot of what is put in recycling gets rejected and sent to the trash side of the MRF.

Statistics on recycling were provided to the Commission from the Recycling Partnership's 2023 Knowledge report. The report stated approximately 75% of people in the US believe recycling makes a difference, recycling has a positive impact, and is worth the effort; however, in households with recycling access only 50% of available recyclable materials are captured. Reasons why may include confusion about what and how to recycle, lack of confidence in the system, and diverse needs of individuals.

Commissioner Vaughan asked if the City has a video that explains what can and can't be recycled in Avondale? Ms. Swenson answered the City has some older materials and would like to update marketing materials during the waste reduction campaign.

Commissioner Barba asked if there was signage on the blue bin stating what is permissible in recycling. Ms. Swenson answered that she believes some of the recycling cans do have that information on them, but the older ones do not.

Commissioner Cota stated that she helped develop "top five" stickers which identified five things you can recycle. She wondered if the City use these stickers or something similar.

Commissioner Lemmon stated they still place smiley face sticker on the recycling bins. Ms. Swenson stated the City has two inspectors that perform inspections and use the smiley face stickers. The inspectors will also be leading a lot of the education campaigns.

Commissioner Lemmon stated the City of Phoenix removes your recycling can after too many rejected recycling inspections and he wondered if Avondale does something similar. Ms. Swenson answered that the Solid Waste Division is updating the

Sanitation Code right now which may have more stringent requirements, but the City will promote education first.

Ms. Swenson stated the next step for the Waste Reduction Campaign is to develop recycling education strategies and look into funding opportunities.

Commissioner Barba asked if the campaign is going to be implemented this year. Ms. Swenson answered the food composting program will be as there is \$30,000 set aside for the pilot program this fiscal year.

Chair Schuh asked how continuation of funding works given the \$30,000 is onetime funding. Ms. Swenson answered City staff would submit a supplemental request to continue the program or look for grant funding. Commissioner Lemmon asked if the funding request must be submitted prior to the Council Budget Retreat in December. Ms. Swenson answered the City will not have the program implemented or fully evaluated at that time and will need to wait to request additional funding.

6. Update from Interim Sustainability Officer

Avondale's former Sustainability Officer, Danae Presler, had her last day with the City on Thursday, May 18, 2023. Until further notice Ms. Swenson will be filling in as the staff liaison for the Sustainability Commission. Commissioner Schuh asked if there are any internal staff members interested in the Sustainability Coordinator position. Ms. Swenson answered that she is not sure, but the position will be promoted externally.

Due to staff vacancy, the water conservation outreach strategies and opportunities update to the Sustainability Commission that was scheduled to occur on March 22, 2023 has been moved to the July 26, 2023 meeting.

Commissioner Lemmon brought up concerns regarding water and development. He asked if we have enough water for our current developments in Avondale and if we have enough water for our 99-year supply. Ms. Swenson answered Avondale has a unique water portfolio and offered to invite a representation to speak about the portfolio at the next Sustainability Commission meeting. Commissioner Cota suggested visiting the AMWUA website to learn more in the meantime.

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7. Adjournment

The next Sustainability Commission Regular Meeting is scheduled for July 26, 2023, at 6:30 PM.

Motion by Commissioner Paul Lemmon, seconded by Vice Chair Shaun Grimm, to adjourn the meeting. There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 7:27 PM.

Daniel R Schuh
Daniel R Schuh (Jul 27, 2023 10:00 PDT)
Daniel Schuh, Chair

Katrece Swenson

Katrece Swenson
Interim 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 21st day of June 2023. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.

Katrece Swenson

Katrece Swenson
Interim Sustainability Officer as Staff Liaison