



**Sustainability Commission
Online Meeting via Zoom**

Wednesday, September 27, 2023, at 6:30 P.M.

Minutes

1. Call to Order at 6:31 PM

2. Roll Call by Chair Schuh

Members Present: Chair Daniel Schuh; Commissioners Paul Lemmon, Thomas Albrigo & Litzy Hernandez Cota.

Members Absent: Vice Chair Shaun Grimm, Commissioners Alejandro Arreguin, Bernadette Barba, & Billy Vaughan.

Municipal Staff Present: Katrece Swenson, Staff Liaison; Harold Siguenza, Public Works Assistant Director, Simon Lara Solid Waste Manager.

3. Unscheduled Public Appearances

None.

4. Approval of July 26, 2023, Minutes (For Action)

Motion was made by Commissioner Lemmon, seconded by Commissioner Hernandez, to approve the July 26, 2023, Meeting Minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Recycling Updates

Before staff came on to speak about the recycling updates, Commissioner Lemmon and Chair Schuh discussed their passion about recycling. They described their attendance at a recent City Council meeting they attended to share their desire to keep the recycling effort going with the City Council.

Harold Siguenza, Avondale Public Works Assistant Director, spoke about the Avondale Recycling program, the history, what other cities are doing, and what our plan is for the future of the Avondale Recycling Program. Avondale currently uses the City of Phoenix for recycling processing. Mr. Siguenza described that it is currently our only affordable recycling option, but it is still more expensive than taking the materials to the landfill. Mr. Siguenza stated we do have the funding to continue the

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current recycling program, at least for the time being. This is partially because the Solid Waste division recently underwent a study which resulted in changes to operations that increased efficiencies and decreased cost. The City also recently revised the solid waste code and will update the fee schedule. This will allow the city to assess fees to residents who don't comply with code after education attempts. Mr. Siguenza stated that if some point we have to go back to Council to ask for increased fees to continue recycling, that is something we will do.

Commissioner Lemmon asked how far out we are projected for being able to cover recycling costs. Mr. Siguenza responded that we are budgeted through Fiscal Year 25 and will work with finance on forecasting expenses past that point.

Commissioner Lemmon further asked how the Sustainability Commission can help gain City Council's support to ensure that recycling efforts continue. Mr. Siguenza responded that the Public Work's job is to express to the City Council that we support recycling and present the information on what it will take to continue recycling. Then commissions and residents can speak to Council to let them know it's important to the community.

Commissioner Albrigo asked if we can reduce the amount the City pays if the recycling is less contaminated. Mr. Siguenza responded that the City's rate with Phoenix is not directly affected by contamination as it is a contracted rate paid, but stated Phoenix will turn a truck away if contamination is too high.

Chair Schuh asked if there has been consideration in making up increased recycling costs by cutting other services such as bulk trash. Mr. Siguenza replied this was evaluated as part of the recent consultant study. There was discussion of this as a future possibility, but it is not being considered at this time.

Chair Schuh requested if the City is considering big changes to recycling, that public outreach and input is requested by the City. Mr. Siguenza stated this is a great idea and something we will look into if changes are needed.

Commissioner Hernandez asked about contamination and recycling for commercial businesses. Mr. Siguenza responded that we don't provide commercial recycling and we don't have the ability to mandate recycling at commercial and multi-family residences.

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Avondale Solid Waste Division Manager, Simon Lara, also briefly spoke about recycling. He stated his team is working hard to clean up the recycling program as well as doing outreach to areas that need more clarity and education.

6. Community Sustainability Plan Progress

Katrece Swenson, Avondale Senior Management Analyst, provided a one-year update on the Community Sustainability Plan passed October 2022, which includes the following.

Progress on the Clean Transportation pathway includes the city completing the Active Transportation Plan and the City's General Plan update in progress. These have recommendations for incorporating walking and biking elements. The City also completed the WeRIDE, Microtransit Pilot Program October 2, 2023. This program has been very well received by the community and resulted in the elimination of Zoom circulator bus service in October 2023. Additionally, the Avondale Park-and-Ride updates are in progress.

The City has installed 29 Charging stations on city property, many of which are publicly available. The city also has an EV charging station modeling study with ASU in progress. In the Sustainability plan their goal is to support 14,000 EV's in the city by 2050. Currently the City has 29 charging stations with a goal of increasing it to 35 stations. A question was asked if the city kept track of how much these charging stations are being used. Ms. Swenson stated we do have that information. Also, new developments are required to have EV charging stations as part of city code requirements.

The City's work to building Resilience to Extreme Heat includes the planting of 155 trees at Agua Fria High School and city parks. The City also has a cool pavement pilot program, in progress and is waiting on evaluation. Other progress includes the city hosting three hydration stations/cooling centers over the summer and addition of 8 portable air conditioning units for the home repair program while individuals are waiting for full air conditioning repair.

For the Reliable Water Supply pathway, Avondale completed a Drought Preparedness Plan in November 2022 and stage one was declared in February 2023 which focuses on education (classes), & rebates. Avondale also applied for two grants related to water conservation and is awaiting notification of award. The city is investing in our infrastructure by expanding our Wastewater Plant. Additionally, the City has paused

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pursuing a designated assured water supply for South Avondale until further study of this area and the water credits needed.

The City has made progress on the efficient buildings and renewable energy pathway through various grant opportunities. Avondale is part of a coalition that was awarded federal funding to develop consistent green building codes across the Southwest U.S. Avondale was also awarded a grant from the Department of Energy to complete energy audits and perform efficiency improvements that include traditional energy sources as well as renewable energy sources. Avondale is also installing solar panels on the new aquatic center and Fire Station 171 being evaluated for LEED and Green Globe certifications.

The purpose of the Healthy Environment goal is to revitalize and expand natural areas. The city is working on repairing the damage at Tres Rios from flooding. The city also applied for a grant to remove invasive species in the Agua Fria Riverbed south of Festival Fields. Although not awarded this grant, the City is being considered for another funding opportunity. As far as pollution reduction, Avondale's elimination of the Zoom bus operation will decrease the diesel emissions in the City. Other efforts include the city hosting bi-monthly Tres Rios cleanups and promotion of the Brownfields Grant opportunity that resulted in two Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessments being completed in the City at Brownfield sites.

In addressing the Waste as a Resource pathway, the city currently has planning for a pilot program for composting underway through developing a survey to gauge community interest. The Public Works department is a potential backyard bucket composting system to see if it is a viable option as a backyard composting system to distribute to residents. Additionally, Public Works continues to host two Household Hazardous Waste Event every year and the City recently updated the Solid Waste Code.

In making efforts towards ensuring Fresh Food for All, Avondale recognized OnePointOne as a green business of the year. Additionally, Avondale resource center offers a tool loan program for gardening, and the City's Economic Development department developed a buy local campaign over the Holiday season.

Green Economy Pathway updates include Avondale having 26 certified green businesses, and many of those businesses being further in the October 2022 Green Living Magazine issue. Economic Development is promoting ecotourism options as well. In attempting to develop a green workforce, the AZ Sustainability Alliance capstone project took place in Avondale on Earth Day 2023.

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The presentation concluded with Ms. Swenson sharing that some top priorities for the new Sustainability Officer will be to continue support electric vehicle adoption, continue exploration of renewable energy feasibility, support and expand waste reduction and recycling efforts, continue and expand water conservation efforts, continue food composting pilot program, and continue/expand the Green Business program.

7. Update from Staff Liaison

Katrece briefly went over last year's projects and accomplishments and on-going priorities which was covered in this meeting. Avondale is still in the interview stage for the new Sustainability Officer. Billy Moore Days are October 21 and 22, 2023. Ms. Swenson requested volunteers for this event from the Sustainability Commission to work at the Public Works booth.

Commissioner Hernandez announced that this is her last Sustainability Commission meeting. Commissioner Cota has been with the Sustainability Commission for five years.

8. Adjournment

The next Sustainability Commission Regular Meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2024, at 6:30 PM.

Motion by Commissioner Lemmon, seconded by Commissioner Hernandez, to adjourn the meeting. There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 8:18 PM.

Daniel R. Schuh
Daniel R Schuh (Jan 25, 2024 18:51 MST)

Daniel Schuh, Chair

Kimberly Anderson
Kimberly Anderson (Jan 25, 2024 09:07 MST)

Kimberly Anderson
Sustainability Officer as Staff Liaison

CERTIFICATION

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I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the meeting held on the 27th day of September 2023. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.

Kimberly Anderson

Kimberly Anderson (Jan 25, 2024 09:07 MST)

Kimberly Anderson
Sustainability Officer as Staff Liaison