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## **Sustainability Commission Meeting**

**Municipal Operations Service Center  
399 E Lower Buckeye Road  
Avondale, AZ 85323**

**Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at 6:30 P.M.**

### **Minutes**

#### **1. Call to Order at 6:31 P.M.**

#### **2. Roll Call by Staff Liaison**

Members Present: Chair Ben Ruoti, Vice Chair Diana Estrada and Commissioners Amanda Duncan-Billiman, Paul Lemmon, Al Nunez, Daniel Schuh, and Alternate Commissioner Von Burns

Members Absent: Commissioners Ramon Sanchez, and Daniel Smith-Castillo

Staff Present: Kimberly Anderson, Sustainability Officer / Staff Liaison

Newly appointed Alternate Commissioner Von Burns provided a brief introduction of himself and why he chose to join the Sustainability Commission.

#### **3. Unscheduled Public Appearances**

No public present.

#### **4. Approval of September 25, 2025, Meeting Minutes**

COMMISSIONER LEMON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 25, 2025, AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER SCHUH SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 6-0 WITH CHAIR RUOTI, VICE CHAIR ESTRADA, AND COMMISSIONERS DUNCAN-BILLIMAN, LEMMON, NUNEZ, AND SCHUH VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

#### **5. Green for Good Grant Program**

Ms. Anderson reminded the commissioners about the launch of the AviPro Intern Program and noted that Public Works was the first division to host an intern. Madison Bigham was selected for the placement and was assigned to develop the Green for Good Grant Program. This program will utilize Environmental Funds to provide

small-scale grants that support community-driven sustainability initiatives. Ms. Bigham excelled in her role and delivered strong results.

Ms. Anderson provided an overview of the grant program and the application process. She emphasized that proposed projects must initiate or enhance sustainable community actions that strengthen Avondale's environmental resilience and demonstrate a clear, measurable benefit to the community. In addition, each project must align with at least one of the Sustainability Pathways outlined in the Avondale Community Sustainability Plan.

The grant is open to all applicants, provided the project benefits the Avondale community. Multiple applications may be submitted, but each must have a different lead applicant. City staff, Sustainability Commission members, and elected officials are not eligible to apply. The application consists of four main sections: contact information, project goals and objectives, project timeline, and budget. Applications will be available online.

Ms. Anderson also reviewed the program timeline. The process begins on February 23, 2026, with a presentation to the City Council. Applications are due April 3, 2026, after which Ms. Anderson will conduct an initial review before forwarding them to the Commission for discussion, scoring, and recommendations to the City Council. Three awards of \$5,000 each are planned, though smaller awards may be issued if applicants request less funding. Award recipients must use the funds between June 15, 2026, and June 30, 2027, and will be required to submit quarterly reports to Ms. Anderson for monitoring purposes.

In response to Chair Ruoti's inquiry, Ms. Anderson provided an overview of the self-disclosure policy, noting that it will be reviewed in greater detail during the training session at the next meeting.

Applicants selected to receive grant funding will be notified in advance, and the awards will be formally presented at the June 1, 2026, City Council meeting. Ms. Anderson will issue full payment to each recipient once the required documentation has been submitted.

All program materials including grant guidelines, an idea guide, and application documents will be available through Avondale Connect. Questions and quarterly reports will be submitted via the designated email address: [sustainability@avondalez.gov](mailto:sustainability@avondalez.gov).

In response to additional questions from Chair Ruoti, Ms. Anderson clarified that Madison Bigham served as the AviPro Intern until her internship concluded on January 15, 2026. Ms. Bigham developed the Green for Good Grant Program, and Ms. Anderson is now responsible for its implementation, monitoring, and ensuring

successful completion of funded projects. Ms. Bigham has been invited to attend Sustainability Commission meetings and will receive a specific invitation to the June 1, 2026, meeting when the grant awards are presented.

## 6. Sustainability Updates

Ms. Anderson presented and discussed proposed agenda items this year. The first three meetings of the year focus on the Green for Good Grant implementation and selection process. During the discussion, Commissioner's recommended new members to attend the Water Academy.

Chair Ruoti suggested holding the March meeting in person. After discussion, commissioners agreed. Ms. Anderson will plan the in-person meeting.

Commissioner Lemmon recommended adding an agenda item to discuss the impact of the Data Centers on water usage and other environmental impacts. A discussion ensued and Ms. Anderson agreed this is a great topic and suggested adding it to the July agenda.

Ms. Anderson presented an update on current sustainability initiatives, highlighting several key projects:

- Green for Good Grant: Developed by AviPro intern Madison Bigham, the grant program is now moving into the implementation phase, as discussed in the previous agenda item.
- Electric Vehicle (EV) Chargers: The City has received the necessary documents to plan for future installation of EV chargers on City owned land through a contractor. Although the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) grant applied for over a year ago is no longer funded, having "shovel-ready" documentation positions the City to apply quickly when new grant opportunities arise. Internal funding may also be used if available.
- Recharge Basin Scarifying Project: Beginning Monday, February 2, 2026, the City will initiate the scarifying process at the Recharge Basin to remove pollutants that have accumulated over the past 25+ years. This work is expected to improve percolation rates. Ms. Anderson provided an overview of the recharge process.
- City Tree Inventory and Software Project: An RFP will be issued in the spring to establish a baseline tree inventory and implement supporting software. This effort is essential to track progress toward the City's sustainability goal of increasing tree canopy coverage by 10 percent.

Ms. Anderson will also participate in community meetings this spring to raise awareness about Green for Good Grant and will host a community workshop to support public engagement.


Ms. Anderson reviewed and discussed upcoming events that include hosting Water Fest for the fourth graders along with Goodyear; Tres Rios Nature Festival which is back at the river will be held February 28, 2026, and March 1, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; and KidFest will take place on April 11, 2026 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Friendship Park. Sign-up sheets will be provided to the Sustainability Commission for anyone who would like to volunteer to help at these events.

## 7. Adjournment

The next Sustainability Commission Regular Meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. in person.


COMMISSIONER LEMMON MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:18 P.M. COMMISSIONER DUNCAN-BILLIMAN SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 6-0 WITH CHAIR RUOTI, VICE CHAIR ESTRADA, AND COMMISSIONERS DUNCAN-BILLIMAN, LEMMON, NUNEZ, AND SCHUH VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

  
Benjamin Ruoti, Chair

  
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Kimberly Anderson  
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 28<sup>th</sup> day of January 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.

  
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Kimberly Anderson  
Sustainability Officer as Staff Liaison