



Sustainability Commission Meeting

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

Wednesday, May 27, 2026, at 6:30 P.M.

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order at 6:30 P.M.

2. Roll Call by Staff Liaison

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

Members Absent: Commissioners Paul Lemmon

Staff Present: Kimberly Anderson, Sustainability Officer / Staff Liaison

3. Unscheduled Public Appearances

No public present.

4. Approval of March 25, 2026, Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER SCHUH MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 25, 2026, AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER DUNCAN-BILLIMAN SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 7-0 WITH CHAIR RUOTI, VICE CHAIR ESTRADA, AND COMMISSIONERS DUNCAN-BILLIMAN, NUNEZ, SCHUH, AND SMITH-CASTILLO, VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

In response to Chair Routi's inquiry, Ms. Anderson said she would prepare an overview of the May 6, 2026, Ad-Hoc Meeting that will be presented for approval at the next regular scheduled meeting.

5. Lithium-ion Battery Drop Off Grant

Ms. Anderson reported a recycling grant received from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ). She provided background information that included grant funding received in previous years to create a recycling drop-off location. This location was strategically placed at the Civic Center Library to provide a recycling location for residents residing in apartments that do not offer recycling opportunities. The drop-off bins have been a great success and this year's grant funds will expand those efforts.

Batteries are an ever-growing issue, specifically lithium or rechargeable batteries that are not only hazardous to the landfill with leaching chemicals and metals but create fires as well. Currently, there is nothing addressing proper disposal and the industry is trying to figure it out because the lithium ion / rechargeable batteries are in everyday life and they pose potential hazards. They should not be disposed of in residential trash or recycling.

Underway with a fast-approaching deadline of June 30, 2026, is the Safe Disposal of Rechargeable Batteries program. This year's grant project with ADEQ is the Lithium Battery Drop-Off at the current recycling drop-off in the Civic Center Library parking lot. The intent is to bring awareness to proper disposal of lithium ion / rechargeable batteries. Ms. Anderson reviewed the recycling method of using baggies (supplied by the city) to wrap an individual battery prior to placing it in the recycling bin at the drop-off location. This program only applies to button batteries that must be removed from the devices.

In response to Commissioner queries, Ms. Anderson noted just under \$75,000 in grant funds were received for this program. The funds will be utilized for the drop-off location, printed materials and signs, a professional video that will be shared regionally. Patrice wrote the grant. She described the drop-off box that will be customized, a plastic bag dispenser, and a how-to sign that includes what to recycle.

In response to Commissioner Smith-Castillo's inquiry, Ms. Anderson explained the video along with social media post will provide some "how-to" instructions; however, due to the wide variety of devices that utilize batteries it would be the resident's responsibility to determine how to safely remove the battery from their device. The Sustainability Office would be available to assist residents to ensure they are not damaging the battery or hurting themselves. She will take his suggestion of providing other resources or guides for removing batteries back to the team for further discussion.

6. Sustainability Updates

Ms. Anderson provided an update on Green for Good Grant, noting there were 14 applications submitted, of which four were selected to receive funding. This is a big win for the community. There will be a presentation on June 1, 2026, at the City Council meeting where the awardees will be announced. Sustainability Commissioners were invited and encouraged to attend the meeting and be present for the award presentation to answer Councilmember questions.

In response to Chair Routi's request, Ms. Anderson provided an update on the Mill Bin that exceeded expectations with 54 residents signing up for the program. Currently the program is experiencing a reduction in residential consumer involvement, and the contract expires on June 30, 2026. Along with the need to reduce the budget and in agreement with The Mill it has been decided to take a pause in resident sign-ups. Residents who are signed up will continue to receive that subsidy and perpetuity.

The Mill is doing a systematic regroup and coming out with new products and the city could re-engage in the program in the future once the budget levels out.

Commissioner Schuh noted over a one-year period his household has diverted 265 pounds of food utilizing the Mill Bin. He thanked Mr. Routi and Ms. Anderson for their efforts in getting this program started.

7. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Ms. Anderson reviewed the process, noting Ben Routi and Diana Estrada are eligible for re-election and Dan Schuh and Paul Lemmonn have termed out. She opened the floor for discussion and nominations.

VICE CHAIR ESTRADA NOMINATED CHAIR RUOTI TO CONTINUE AS CHAIRMAN. NOMINATION CARRIED WITH A 7-0 VOICE VOTE IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

CHAIRMAN ROUTI NOMINATED VICE CHAIR ESTRADA TO CONTINUE AS VICE CHAIRPERSON. NOMINATION CARRIED WITH A 7-0 VOICE VOTE IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

Other:

Commissioner Nunez sought direction for the proper way to recycle Christmas lights. Ms. Anderson suggested utilizing a "recycling finder", which she will share with him. In addition, she will inquire with the Solid Waste Manager for further advice.

8. Adjournment

The next Sustainability Commission Regular meeting is scheduled for July 22, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

COMMISSIONER DUNCAN-BILLIMAN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:07 P.M. COMMISSIONER NUNEZ SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 7-0 WITH CHAIR RUOTI, VICE CHAIR ESTRADA, AND COMMISSIONERS DUNCAN-BILLIMAN, NUNEZ, SCHUH, AND SMITH-CASTILLO, VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

Ben Ruoti

Ben Ruoti (Jul 28, 2026 14:11:15 PDT)

Benjamin Ruoti, Chair

Kimberly Anderson

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 27th day of May 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.

Kimberly Anderson

Kimberly Anderson
Sustainability Officer as Staff Liaison