



Minutes

City of Tempe Sustainability Commission March 27, 2023

Minutes of the Tempe Sustainability Commission meeting held on Monday, March 27, 2023, 4:30 p.m. at a virtual meeting on MS Teams, through City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Kendon Jung (Chair)	Jake Swanson
Barbie Burke (Vice Chair)	Shawn Swisher
Natalie Mendoza	Morgan Winburn
Katja Brundiers	

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Erin Boyd

City Staff Present:

Brianne Fisher
Andy Escobar
Maddie Mercer
Evelyn Brumfield
Braden Kay

Guests Present:

Mike Hoffman
Holly Hames

Chair Kendon Jung called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and Mission of SRC

Chair stated the commission's mission, which is to research and advise on how to advance sustainability in Tempe in areas of city management, operations, and the city as a whole.

Chair also thanked Brianne Fisher for including the Commission's Charge, Scope, Objective Mission & Priorities to the minutes packet.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Appearances

No members of the public came forward.

Agenda Item 3 – Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes from February 27th, 2023.

Motion: Barbie Burke

Second: Shawn Swisher

Decision: Approved 6-0

Voted to Approve:

Natalie Mendoza

Shawn Swisher

Katja Brundiers

Jake Swanson

Barbie Burke

Meaghan Coon

Absent:

Agenda Item 4 - Cool Kids, Cool Places, Cool Futures Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Update

Presentation and update from Evelyn Brumfield, City of Tempe Youth Climate Action Coordinator. Recap and update of grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, general information, and special focus on youth work.

Topics reviewed include:

- Regional resilience Celebration on Feb 8th, 2023.
- Highlights of the City/University/Community partnerships that are the hallmarks of this grant, including the upcoming federal funding strategy session.
- McClintock High School Neighborhood Justice Club and their work on several plantings, equity trainings, READI packs, celebration.
- McClintock High School Sustainability Club: Plantings, long-term garden planning.
- Tempe High School: Peer Solutions, arts, and starting up activities.
- Mayor's Youth Advisory Council: Art project, differing governance structure.
- The values of the grant and how these activities tie into and are informed by those values.

Chair thanked Evelyn for her presentation and asked how this work connects through the district level. Evelyn explains that the high schools were chosen due to their heat vulnerability and the long-term plan is to continue to work in schools in the area, from the high school level to junior high and middle schools and down to grade schools.

Natalie Mendoza asks how the Commission can assist in this youth work. It's imperative that the Commission be aware of the office's activities, and the Commission can support this work by advising the Council on behalf of the office. Evelyn references TUHSD Superintendent Advisory Committee and her work starting there. Brianne Fisher reiterates highlighting value of youth perspective within engagement processes, in budget proceedings, as an example. Commissioners are urged to weave in Youth Agenda/CAP Update when speaking about this work. Fisher also highlighted Commissioners Katja Brudiers and her longstanding valuable partnership with Cool Kids and the Office as a whole. She references youth work being done with intentionality. Also, the need for intersectionality and collaboration between and within Emergency Management. Regarding heat – youth insights were valuable in relation to the Heat Vulnerability Map. Brudiers also acknowledges and thanks Paul Coseo, her partner in work at ASU.

Agenda Item 5 - State Farm Century of Good Grant Update

Brianne Fisher explained that S&RO has a \$500,000 funding opportunity from State Farm ESG Dept in honor of State Farm's 100th anniversary. S&RO was asked how they could invest and where they could showcase their commitment to ESG goals. (The overall dollars that S&RO has brought in is \$2.5m, not including RWJF, State Farm, or Vitalyst grants.)

State Farm funding work in the short term and long term:

Greening Schools

- Fostering beautiful campuses & hands-on learning.
- Current and future projects.
- Heat exposure map informs where we do this work.

Resilient Energy Hubs

- Two of the four agendas (Climate Justice Agenda and Neighborhood Agenda) from the CAP Update prioritize Resilience Energy Hubs.
- Current opportunities include a commercial kitchen renovation, external beautification with community input (vegetation, shade, art, etc).
- Energy and Battery infrastructure – a microgrid for EnVision is in the plans.

Chair thanked Fisher for the presentation and probed for what the timeline for opening and operating. Construction has been delayed, but S&RO's priority is for EnVision to be open before the high heat months. Chair expressed concern that this process is taking a long time, and asked what can be done to move things forward. Chair also asked what updates Council has received & what is Council's priority to open EnVision by the start of the high heat season.

Council hasn't received an update in six months. Fisher notes that this conversation would be beneficial between Council and the Commission

Vice Chair Barbie Burke is the Commission's liaison with the Sustainability and Economic Vitality Council Committee and Chair requested a follow-up soon to ensure Envision moves forward. Fisher committed to bringing this to that Committee next month. Shawn Swisher asked about future funding sources for these projects beyond pilots. S&RO coordinated with Engineering for Microgrid line item in the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) budget for the next five years. That budget amount would need to increase over time to increase capacity. Swisher also queried developing empty real estate as opposed to renovating already-built locations. Fisher replied that having backup power is also critical, and the next pilot/expansion would be in the first responder space (Fire, Medical, Rescue). She also elaborated on the difference in community presence at a Resilience Energy Hub vs a Resilience Hub. Swisher reiterated that no matter the type of hub, there should be a faster development of the network. Katja Brundiers asked how the Commission can help and Fisher reminded the Commission that they can bring this up to Council or related Committees. S&RO will continue to work with other departments and the Commission should persist in following the progress and pushing for EnVision to open. Braden Kay highlights that this pilot project must go well to ensure success of further funding and projects. Further learning needs to happen around resilience hubs and microgrids; and sticking to the values of the office and commission is also necessary. Natalie Mendoza asked about mechanisms to capture excess water from this wet spring; that would be a possible future agenda item. Chair would like to see this presented at Council and Committees, and Barbie Burke is the liaison and will push this forward. Jake Swanson asked if other Tempe departments are aware of and coordinating with S&RO about hubs. Fisher responded that Fire/Medical/Rescue and Emergency Manager is our grassroots partner in this respect. Further, Community Services is also aware, but as the services contained within EnVision are still in the planning stages, it's early days. Swanson volunteers to communicate the message in the future; Fisher highlights that the Commission is well-placed to communicate this work.

Agenda Item 6 - FY23/24 Budget Updates

Fisher presented the breakdown of the upcoming budget meetings. She references the online comment card link, Council meeting agenda link, draft CIP budget listings, all online. Mayor and Council rate performance measures (top ten) and Performance Measure 4.11 (Tree and Shade Canopy) is of special interest to the Commission. April 27th and May 11th are the main two opportunities for feedback for the budget items. After June 1st, there is little flexibility to move dollars around. For the CIP budget, S&RO work is under General Government Programs:

Community & Workplace Charging Infrastructure,

Energy Conservation Program,
Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Federal Grant Contingency,
Resilient Energy Hubs & Microgrids,
Shade and Green Stormwater Infrastructure,
Solar Power Partnerships & Solar in City Facilities

The City will have a conservative budget this upcoming year, and departments don't have room to negotiate. A short review of this year's supplements was also shown. Chair would like it noted that while S&RO received "a lot" of funding last fiscal year, that was in stark contrast to the lack of funding in prior years. Climate action was defunded more, as a percentage, than any other item combined. Chair stressed that climate action is starting to be funded appropriately. Chair requested clarification around if any of the CIP budget items are in danger of being completely defunded, versus partially funded. Fisher explained that Mayor and Council may focus more on operating budget, and the CIP dollar amounts may be reduced slightly but there isn't a precedent for completely defunding an item. Chair asked whom on Council asked for acceleration strategies for the Tree and Shade Canopy. (4.11). Fisher clarified the process by which 4.11 was selected as an acceleration strategy. Council record will show an anonymized voting record. Chair requested a presentation on the CIP and Bond process to understand the flow of those processes. Swisher queried about the budget outlook. Fisher replied that the budget office is expecting a more conservative economic forecast, referencing a downturn in the economy, plus inflation affecting CIP budgets. Kay mentioned Mark Day could review this process, and present about CIP and Bond elections.

Chair will be drafting talking points for in-person and online comments for the April 27th Work Study Session for City Council.

Agenda Item 7 – Housekeeping Items

Neighborhood Celebration 2023
Tree-A-Thon
Earth Month

The Neighborhood Celebration is taking place Saturday April 1st, 9am-11am. Chair urges all the Commissioners to attend and show support as well as to converse with members of the public. All nominees were invited to the celebration. S&RO will not have a table at the celebration as all staff are working to plant 100+ trees that morning for the Tempe Tree-a-Thon. Staff is developing an Earth Month calendar with other departments, with events in and around Tempe and the region.

Next month's meeting: April 17th will be an in-person meeting to celebrate Earth Month. There will still be a virtual option, and the priority will be an in-person meeting, location TBD.

There is a celebration of Commissions on Friday May 19th, to recognize Commissioners' service in advancing values in the City.

Agenda Item 8 – Future Agenda Items

Chair asked the commission to add future agenda items.

Motion: Morgan Winburn

Second: Katja Brundiers

Decision: Approved 6-0

Voted to Approve:

Natalie Mendoza

Katja Brundiers

Jake Swanson

Shawn Swisher

Erin Boyd

Morgan Winburn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 pm.

Prepared by: Evelyn Brumfield

Reviewed by: Brianne Fisher

Addendum:

Chat record for Sustainability and Resilience Commission March 27, 2023, meeting:

[3/27 5:14 PM] Katja Brundiers

Building off Kendon's question - how can we, as a commission, help

[3/27 5:20 PM] Kay, Braden

Resilience Hubs versus Resilient Energy Hubs

[3/27 5:22 PM] Kay, Braden

Great point, Kendon. It will take continued advocacy to training pilots into well-funded programs.

[3/27 5:25 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

Speaking of heat and drought related issues, does Tempe have any specific mechanisms in place to take full advantage of excess water that we get when we do have very wet years like this year? I know that the excess water will help replenish the reservoirs anyway, but I am wondering if we have any additional mechanisms in place to take advantage (and store for use in drier years) of the excess water from wetter years.

[3/27 5:32 PM] Kay, Braden

Great point, Jake! It has been mentioned in CAP updates but not in detail.

[3/27 5:33 PM] Katja Brundiers

Would it be helpful to give a presentation about the Resilience Hubs / Resilient Energy Hub / Envision to the AZ Heat Resilience Working Group to help spread the word?

[3/27 5:34 PM] Kay, Braden

There is an opportunity to present additional commissions.

[3/27 5:52 PM] Morgan Winburn, Keep Tempe Beaut/EstablishingRoots (Guest)

Just double-checking April 27 is a Thursday. It says Tuesday on the dates. Is it the 25th or the 27th?

[3/27 5:52 PM] Jake Swanson (Guest)

I'll be there!

[3/27 5:53 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

What time is it at?

[3/27 5:53 PM] Fisher, Brianne

Morgan Winburn, Keep Tempe Beaut/Establishing Roots (Guest)

Just double-checking April 27 is a Thursday. It says Tuesday on the dates. Is it the 25th or the 27th?

Sorry, that is supposed to be Thursday

[3/27 5:53 PM] Katja Brundiers

I will be there from 10-11am, sorry for arriving late.

[3/27 5:57 PM] Morgan Winburn, Keep Tempe Beaut/EstablishingRoots (Guest)

Unfortunately, I can't attend the Neighborhood Celebration. I can't get the day off from work.



[3/27 5:58 PM] Shawn Swisher

I will not be at the Neighborhood Celebration this year.

[3/27 5:58 PM] Katja Brundiers

This is a great idea, indeed!

like 1

[3/27 5:58 PM] Morgan Winburn, Keep Tempe Beaut/EstablishingRoots (Guest)

I can do April 17th.

[3/27 5:59 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

I will not be able to attend on April 1st or 2nd. What time is the April 17th event at?

[3/27 5:59 PM] Kay, Braden

Great meeting! Thank you everyone!

[3/27 5:59 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

What time is it at though?

[3/27 6:00 PM] Barbie Burke (Guest)

April 17th meeting will be at 4:30 pm - our usual meeting time

[3/27 6:01 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

Thanks Barbie

[3/27 6:02 PM] Katja Brundiers

Thank you chairs and OSR team and commissioners - great meeting and important work!

[3/27 6:02 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

Thank you so much everyone. Have a great evening.

