



## Minutes

# City of Tempe Sustainability and Resilience Commission January 22, 2024

Minutes of the Tempe Sustainability Commission meeting held on Monday, January 22, 2024, 4:30 p.m. in person at Tempe Transportation Center, Don Cassano Community Room, 200 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Tempe, Arizona.

### **(MEMBERS) Present:**

Shawn Swisher (Chair)  
Kendon Jung (Vice Chair)  
Barbie Burke  
Morgan Winburn

Taylor Conley  
Ben Paulat  
Joshua Randall  
Jacob Bethem

### **(MEMBERS) Absent:**

Jake Swanson  
Erin Boyd

### **City Staff Present:**

Eric Iwersen  
Andy Escobar  
Maddie Mercer  
Carissa Fowler  
Evelyn Brumfield  
Dawn Ratcliffe  
Tom Duensing

**Guests Present:**

Emma Kogan

Hugo Tapia

Erika (no last name given)

David Lucier

**Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and SRC Mission**

Chair Swisher called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. and read the commissions' charge and mission.

**Agenda Item 2 – Public Appearances**

Emma Kogan and Erika (no last name given), both ASU students, addressed the commission and stated they were in attendance because of their general interest in sustainability. Both did not call attention to any agenda items. David Lucier addressed the commission and stated a major objective of his is to establish Tempe as one of the most livable cities in the state and looks forward to seeing the commission's mission come to fruition. Hugo Tapia addressed the commission and stated he is interested in urban farming and in learning more about the commission's work.

**Agenda Item 3 – Review of Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

**Motion:** Vice Chair Jung

**Second:** Commissioner Burke

**Voted to Approve:** 8-0

**Agenda Item 4 – Restaurant Circular Economy Project**

Nick Shivka from Local First Arizona (LFA) and Maddie Mercer from City of Tempe gave a presentation on Tempe's Restaurant Circular Economy Project, a partnership between City of Tempe, LFA, and Recycled City. The project's objective is to have restaurants compost food and for the composted soil to be used to grow food that participating restaurants can potentially purchase. Some of the environmental benefits include food waste prevention, methane gas reduction, soil health improvement and other benefits include cost reductions, local produce sourcing, and enhancing marketing strategies for restaurants.

Shivka walked the commission through the process of participating in the project.

- Restaurants undergo waste audits
- Food waste is picked up on a weekly basis
- Food waste is composted into soil to be used to grow produce
- Restaurants have the chance to purchase produce grown from their compost

Shivka listed the project's next goals:

- Circularity: to close the loop and move toward circularity in the food economy
- Recruitment: Onboard 5 more businesses between January and March
- Recognition of Participating Businesses: Organizing events or 'cash mobs'

Swisher asked the commission to think of restaurants that would be interested in the pilot and opened the floor to questions.

Questions:

- Commissioner Conley asked what the process is for recruiting businesses.
  - o Shivka answered that he visits restaurants in person and introduces himself or uses previous connections to get in touch.
- Commissioner Winburn asked if a logo would be developed for restaurants to use as marketing material.
  - o Shivka answered that it is a future consideration, especially as more restaurants are recruited.
  - o Mercer stated that the project is also looking into incorporating participating restaurants into the Tempe local food asset map that is currently under development.
- Commissioner Winburn asked for a clarification of the term 'water impact.'
  - o Shivka explained that water impact is water that is used throughout the entire food cycle and that water impact is compared between food going to waste versus it being composted.
- Vice Chair Jung wanted to know:
  - o the percentage of this project in comparison to Tempe's total waste stream
  - o cost savings associated with participating restaurants and how they are offsetting the investments Tempe makes.
  - o how the project correlates with nationally recognized organizations
- Commissioner Paulat what feedback from participants has been received and if they are choosing to continue past the 6-month trial.
  - o Shivka explained that they plan on conducting a survey to collect qualitative data.

### **Agenda Item 5 – 2024 Neighborhood Awards – Call for Nominations**

Eric Iwersen shared to the commission that applications for the Neighborhood Awards are due February 15. Chair Swisher asked if commissioners have to recuse themselves if they nominate someone. Iwersen stated he would look into getting an answer. Vice Chair Jung suggested that future awards pivot away from singling out individuals to celebrating collective efforts such as a collaboration of individuals or groups. Chair Swisher noted that the current nomination process uses flexible terms that could allow that type of nomination suggested by Vice Chair Jung and then have the language amended for next year's awards. Iwersen noted that they can have a recap of the process in March, and it can be added as an agenda item.

Commissioner Winburn noted that last year's application asked nominators to let nominees know ahead of time that had been nominated and this year's application does not reflect that. Iwersen noted that nominators should go ahead and let nominees know of their nominations.

Iwersen suggested that the commission think of the work SRO is currently working on when nominating people for an award.

### **Agenda Item 6 – Sustainability and Resilience Commission Dates of Interest Calendar**

Iwersen gave a preview of the dates of interest for the calendar year 2024 so the commission is aware and prepared ahead of time. Commissioners may weigh in on the calendar and add additional events to the calendar. Vice Chair Jung encouraged the commission to attend events in person. Iwersen added that these types of extra steps elevate the commission's effectiveness with council. Commissioner Burke asked commissioners to share the calendar with neighbors.

Vice Chair Jung made a note to the commission to focus on the upcoming resilience hub initiative.

### **Agenda Item 7 – Sustainability and Resilience Office Updates and Housekeeping**

Iwersen gave a recap on the January 20 Local Food event and the recently announced SRP Solar Choice partnership. Vice Chair Jung asked Iwersen to provide numbers on GHG emissions reduction.

Iwersen announced that changes to the commission composition will go through a public hearing process with the first hearing on February 1 and the final hearing on February 15. Chair Swisher asked sustainability staff to provide updates throughout the public hearing process. Swisher asked for an update IgCC, specifically the timeline for hiring a staff member. Iwersen announced that the FTE role is approved by council and that he is working closely with Community Development, the department the new hire will be housed in. The job posting is currently open and accepting applications.

Vice Chair Jung expressed nervousness about the position's title change and Iwersen agreed. Vice Chair Swisher asked if it would be appropriate to write a letter to Community Development leadership about the name change. Iwersen said no but SRO can invite the new staff person to answer questions from the commission about how the position supports sustainability and SRO.

Chair Swisher asked for an update on the Apache Central Development to be added to a future agenda item.

**Agenda Item 8 – Future Agenda Items**

Vice Chair Jung pointed out that the upcoming events calendar does not reflect the continuation of the adoption of the General Plan 2050. Iwersen said it can be included in February agenda for possible action. Swisher would like it to be added to the February agenda. Commissioner Burke asked for a LEED certification status update. Iwersen will keep an eye out on when an update can be given.

**Motion: Vice Chair Jung**

**Second: Commissioner Burke**

**Decision: Approved 8-0**

The meeting was adjourned at 6pm.

Prepared by: Andy Escobar

Reviewed by: