



## Minutes

# City of Tempe Sustainability Commission August 21 23, 2023

Minutes of the Tempe Sustainability Commission meeting held on Monday, August 21, 2023, 4:30 p.m. at a virtual meeting on MS Teams, through City Hall, 31 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Tempe, Arizona.

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

Kendon Jung (Chair)  
Barbie Burke (Vice Chair)  
Natalie Mendoza  
Katja Brundiers

Jake Swanson  
Shawn Swisher  
Erin Boyd

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

Morgan Winburn

### **City Staff Present:**

Andy Escobar  
Maddie Mercer  
Eric Iwersen  
Mike Baxley  
Erin Kirkpatrick  
Shauna Warner  
Mercedes Payne  
Tom Duensing

### **Guests Present:**

Greg Kinkel - Quest Energy

## **Agenda Item 1 – Welcome**

## **Agenda Item 2 – Public Appearances**

No public appearances.

## **Agenda Item 3 – Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Meeting minutes could not be approved as the commission did not reach a quorum.

## **Agenda Item 4 – Voluntary IgCC Adoption**

Eric Iwersen, Mike Baxley, and Greg Kinkel gave a presentation on IgCC adoption. Iwersen noted that the code is being presented as a voluntary option for developers, with the prospect of future discussions about making the code mandatory.

Mike Baxley explained the many benefits of IgCC such as helping reduce a building's GHG emissions, increasing the life span of a building, reducing the Urban Heat Island effect, and reducing water consumption, among other benefits.

Iwersen provided a summary of the process. Tempe staff drafted the code with internal stakeholders, held two public meetings and have presented to Council. Once the code is reviewed it will go back to Council for approval and codification.

Currently, Tempe staff and Quest Energy, the hired contractor for this project, are looking into certain chapters and practices of IgCC that can be integrated into practice while creating a cost-effective analysis. Clark Park and Fire Station 2 have been studied, the former for renewables and the latter for site vehicle provisions.

Iwersen reminded the group that Council's first review will be October 12, 2023. City staff will ask Council to make a commitment for resolution on November 9, 2023.

### Questions:

- Chair Jung asked how the theme of flexibility applies to project cost overruns.
  - o Iwersen responded the city wants to ensure that tax dollars are being used the best they can and there will be anticipated conversations around project priorities and what practices of IgCC should and should not be used for cost purposes. The commitment is to later build a full IgCC code but currently the city wants to give flexibility on cost containment for all capital projects.
  - o Jung explained the reasoning for his question is the code cannot be seen as extra but rather just how Tempe constructs its facilities.

- Swisher was curious to know about the public reception to IgCC due to some of the feedback received about the 2050 General Plan. Swisher also asked what the timeline was for post-adoption of the code.
  - o Iwersen noted that feedback has been mostly positive. Some comments have stated that a mandatory code should be adopted. There has also been pushback related to the possibility of increasing the affordability of housing and the return of investment for green buildings. As far as the post-adoption timeline, the current goal is getting the code adopted and hiring a green buildings code specialist. Staff will then work on more next steps.
- Chief Deputy City Manager, Tom Duensing, explained that residential rental impacts will not impact Tempe's CIP program unless they decide to cash fund a project. That issue will not impact city facilities. Contingencies are built into all projects and does not see the adoption of IgCC impact CIP.
- Mendoza asked if there would be any guidelines or recommendations on how builders can create architecturally unique buildings while also being green.
  - o Iwersen noted that all new construction goes through a process at the city and that Tempe is more rigorous than other cities due to development projects going through public hearings, staff meetings and council meetings. These processes that are in place help to get a better architectural product and IgCC will further help with that.
  - o Greg Kinkel explained that IgCC is written with prescriptive options and code options, but this allows more flexibility on the design of the buildings.
  - o Baxley explained the planning process of buildings in Tempe and looking into the design of the buildings to ensure it is architecturally appealing are part of those decision-making processes. The code will give builders the opportunity to enhance unique designs.

### **Agenda Item 5- Making Spaces – Parks Equity Study**

Erin Kirkpatrick and Mercedes Payne presented updates from the Community Services Parks Equity Study. Kirkpatrick explained that the study is looking at how their system is accessed and experienced, who is using the services and where they're used well and not used well and how the city may be able to adjust its programming and staffing to address real and perceived gaps in service.

Kirkpatrick and Payne gave an overview of the equity study process, a summary of the analysis and engagement and an introduction to the draft StoryMaps. Overall, the goal is to remove barriers, be inclusive and accessible for diverse groups of people. To hear gather community feedback, surveys were dispersed to residents and Temps staff held focus groups, neighborhood pop-up events, and organized a making space festival. Questions around

socio-economic inequities, urban heat and shade, use and experience, and distribution, condition and investment were asked to gather data needs.

The study had 6 guiding principles:

- Spaces and programs for all
- Customized experiences
- Expanded parks and recreation access
- Vibrant, active, and diverse parks and recreation
- Safe environments
- Equitable prioritization process

Staff are using a StoryMap format to collect all the information collected in the study that allows people to navigate through it. StoryMaps has been organized into three sections: background overview, basic guiding principles and evaluation.

Staff have created a specific feedback form for board members and commissioners. The link was shared with the commission. The public review process of the studies' findings will begin in October 2023.

Questions:

- Chair Jung asked how the feedback form created for board members and commissioners differentiate from general members of the public.
  - o Kirkpatrick explained that the feedback form commissioners are just for those seeing the Making Spaces presentation. General public outreach will start in October.
- Chair Jung asked how the Parks Equity Study staff's understanding of the Climate Action Plan manifest in the Equity Study document.
  - o Kirkpatrick noted that Parks Equity staff have similar goals to the CAP in terms of who they are engaging with and making sure improvements are sustainable long-term and ensuring communities are able to stay where they're at in terms of climate change impacts. Staff are being considerate as to the type of material that is going into parks, where equipment is being placed and how they're connecting to pedestrian and bike corridors.

### **Agenda Item 6- Downtown Tempe Streetscape Project**

Iwersen gave a presentation on the Mill Avenue streetscape improvement focusing on the sidewalk materials. Iwersen walked through the 3 sidewalk concepts. Streetscape Concept 1 includes lithomosaic artwork paving, concrete unit pavers, lithocrete accent paving, and salvaged brick paving. Streetscape Concept 2 includes lithomosaic artwork paving, salvaged brick paving, and concrete unit pavers. Streetscape Concept 3 includes salvaged brick paving and concrete unit pavers.

Iwersen went over the proposed tree palettes and noted Silva Cell Systems would be installed to provide additional storm-water management, support tree life span and assist tree growth rate. Proposed Street Trees Concept One includes 50% Indian Laurel and 50% Tipu as primary street trees and Ghost Gum and Mastic Tree as Median/Accent Street Trees. Concept Two includes 70% Indian Laurel as the primary street tree, 30% Tipu as the secondary street tree and Ghost Gum and the Fruitless Olive as Median/Accent Street Trees. Iwersen reinforced the reason behind the tree selection as that the listed trees are more resilient, drought tolerant and climate appropriate.

Iwersen asked for feedback on the hardscape/sidewalk concept and street tree concept. An online forum is open where residents can rank each concept. Construction will start in early 2024.

#### Questions:

- Chair Jung noted that none of the proposed trees were native to the Sonoran Desert and asked. He asked about the material composition from a cooling standpoint and asked which concept design cools the place more effectively?
  - o Iwersen responded that some native trees come with issues due to maintenance issues and keeping areas clear for pedestrians. Staff are engaging SRP-MIC for the opportunity to include a landscape near the Butte that is respectful of the Indigenous culture which would include native plants integrated into the design.
  - o Iwersen noted that porous material to help with cooling is not possible for Mill Ave, but staff is looking into Green Stormwater Infrastructure for cooling. He also noted that darker brick will be able to retain heat more than lighter brick.
- Swisher suggested that the city introduce a long-term transition plan to include more Sonoran Desert trees to Mill Avenue as current trees reach the end of their lifespan. As for the GSI components, he suggests looking into curb cut opportunities. He also noted that Concept 3 is the strongest due to lithomosaic material being susceptible to wear and tear.

#### **Agenda Item 7 – USDA Grow Local Tempe Grant Update**

Maddie Mercer gave an update on the Grow Local Tempe USDA grant. Mercer reminded the commission that the goal of the grant is to promote food access, economic mobility, and community resilience by creating opportunities for urban agriculture, education, and workforce development in the Alegre, Escalante, and Victory Acres neighborhoods.

The current phase of the project included creating a Current State Analysis by developing a Tempe food asset map, a community food needs report and drafting a current state analysis

report with recommendations. Next steps of the grant include planning neighborhood-level interventions by piloting 3 city-owned sites and 3 school sites and organizing educational events. The last phase is strategic city planning by asking Council for direction, drafting a local food roadmap (with youth education and workforce development components) and applying for a USDA implementation grant.

Questions:

- Chair Jung asked commissioners to send their questions over email.

### **Agenda Item 8 – Housekeeping**

Chair Jung reminded the commissioners that the General 2050 Council vote will be on Thursday August 24, 2023. Jung asked the commissioners to submit a public comment.

Chair Jung congratulated commissioner Swisher on organizing the design competition being held on Thursday, August 24, 2023.

Commissioners were also reminded about the City Manager Open House on Tuesday, August 22, 2023.

Jung announced that commission meetings will be alternating between in-person and virtual meetings. The commission will discuss their availability with each other offline.

### **Agenda Item 9 – Future Agenda Items**

**Motion:** Vice Chair Barbie Burke

**Second:** Jake Swanson

**Decision:** Approved 6-0

#### **Voted to Approve:**

Kendon Jung (Chair)

Natalie Mendoza

Shawn Swisher

Katja Brundiars

Jake Swanson

Barbie Burke

#### **Absent:**

Morgan Winburn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Prepared by: Andy Escobar

Reviewed by: Brianne Fisher

### Addendum:

[8/21 4:34 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

Hi, sorry I'm a few minutes late. My computer keyboard was not cooperating with me. Hopefully I haven't missed anything important.

[8/21 4:53 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

Will we also be looking at the areas/cities in the intermediate and advanced stages that we saw on the earlier slides?

[8/21 4:59 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

When you said "multiple different types of buildings", I thought of more architecturally unique buildings, such as the Gammage building at ASU. Do we have any building guidelines or recommendations for how builders could create architecturally unique buildings while also being green? Are any special considerations or solutions needed for a new building project that aims to create a more architecturally unique buildings?

[8/21 5:05 PM] Barbie Burke

Energy Efficiency Day is Oct 4th

[8/21 5:09 PM] Barbie Burke

Council member Joe Navarro will be talking about housing issues in Tempe On Sept 13th at 5:30 pm at the Tempe Public Library

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[8/21 5:16 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

Awesome, thank you so much.

[8/21 5:16 PM] Katja Brundiers (Guest)

As part of future work, would special engagement with or provision of information to the community of developers be useful and something that our commission could support?

like 2

[8/21 5:16 PM] Katja Brundiers (Guest)

Thank you for your presentation and the committed work!

like 1 heart 1

[8/21 5:18 PM] Erin Boyd (Guest)

Katja - I was thinking the same thing. I'd love to see a checklist of how developers can be educated about the code and how they might consider implementing parts of it.

like 3

[8/21 5:20 PM] Katja Brundiers (Guest)

**Erin Boyd (Guest)**

Katja - I was thinking the same thing. I'd love to see a checklist of how developers can be educated about the code and how they might consider implementing parts of it.

This is a great idea! Maybe the other cities, which had been contacted in the process already, could share their experiences with us on that specific outreach.

like 1 heart 1

[8/21 5:20 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

Erin: Perhaps also focus on adding a time component to the checklist. For example, what can developers be doing during the planning phase of building, what can they be doing during the financing phase of building, and so forth. That may make things easier to break down into manageable tasks.

[8/21 5:20 PM] Iwersen, Eric

good ideas. i think we need to develop a list of next steps and expectations with the code and with timelines

[8/21 5:21 PM] Erin Boyd (Guest)

it was amazing!

[8/21 5:22 PM] Erin Boyd (Guest)

The Making Space festival was a great model. I love that the City of Tempe is creating events that add value to the community and allow neighbors to provide feedback on multiple projects at once.

heart 3

[8/21 5:23 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

One thing I would like to note is that I really like the Women's Club Park here in Tempe, because it combines accessible elements, xeriscaping, and short trails. I really enjoy hiking and taking a walk on an actual trail, but I found it ingenious how that park combined my desire for a more nature, trail-based park with paved sidewalks that enable people with other needs to also enjoy the park. There is also a small playground, which makes it enjoyable for kids, but the trails and interesting desert plants provide older teens and adults something more interesting and engaging as well.



Sustainability Commission, August 21, 2023

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[8/21 5:42 PM] Katja Brundiars (Guest)

Thank you for this informative presentation! Is the equity-based decision-making rubric to identify priorities a tool that could be used city-wide, too?

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[8/21 5:44 PM] Katja Brundiars (Guest)

Indeed - a wealth of information! I look forward to look into the feedback and recommendations related to extreme heat. Thank you!

[8/21 5:46 PM] Kendon Jung

I can also shave some time on my items as well

[8/21 5:47 PM] Kirkpatrick, Erin

**Natalie Mendoza (Guest)**

One thing I would like to note is that I really like the Women's Club Park here in Tempe, because it combines accessible elements, xeriscaping, and short trails. I really enjoy hiking and taking a walk on an actual trail, but I found it ingenious how that park combined my desire for a more nature, ...

Thank you, that park is definitely a gem.

heart 1

[8/21 5:59 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

I would like to note that fruitless olive trees are not always fruitless. I have a fruitless olive tree in my backyard that started producing a large quantity of olives approximately seven years after it was planted. As a result, we have a lot of birds (pigeons) in our backyard that eat the olives and we have had to train our dog to not eat (and later barf) the olives that drop onto the ground. I have no problem with this olive tree because it is a wonderful source of shade, but I would the city of Tempe to consider the risks of having a fruitless olive tree produce olives after many years, since it would affect everyone.

[8/21 6:00 PM] Jake Swanson (Guest)

One question, I know that during streetcar implementation there was support provided to the local businesses on navigating impact to business due to construction. During this project, is there going to be similar outreach and support to businesses impacted during this process?

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[8/21 6:00 PM] Erin Boyd (Guest)

Will the sidewalk concepts help with the usability of the sidewalk? (movement of pedestrians, how to look for traffic at intersections, etc.) or is purely artistic?

[8/21 6:00 PM] Katja Brundiars (Guest)

Sustainability Commission, August 21, 2023

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Thank you for the presentation! Re sidewalks: what criteria help to decide which materials to use? I heard: storage/costs, aesthetics. What about eco-footprints - e.g., compatibility with the IGCC, ability to deal with rain and heat, and reuse (like the salvaged bricks)?

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[8/21 6:01 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

Palo Verdes are a very good source of shade as well.

like 1

[8/21 6:02 PM]

Barbie Burke (Guest) was invited to the meeting.

[8/21 6:07 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

To what Shawn is saying about not recreating other cities, absolutely! I have particularly noticed that Palm Trees are in so many locations in Arizona (including Tempe), and it does not make sense to me that we are trying to look just like California. Especially when many Palm Tree species require a lot of water to survive.

[8/21 6:07 PM] Katja Brundiers (Guest)

To Shawn's comment of making e.g., GI visible, this visibility could be enhanced through arts-based information/education about it ... like street-art-infographics....

[8/21 6:08 PM] Katja Brundiers (Guest)

Thank you for the presentation!

[8/21 6:09 PM] Katja Brundiers (Guest)

Congratulations, Maddy! This is super amazing!

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[8/21 6:09 PM] Katja Brundiers (Guest)

Thank you, Eric, for sharing this important success with us.

[8/21 6:09 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

Katja: What do you mean by GI? I only think of the gastrointestinal system when I hear the abbreviation GI, but I do not think that is what you mean.

[8/21 6:09 PM] Kendon Jung



laugh 1

[8/21 6:11 PM] Katja Brundiars (Guest)

**Natalie Mendoza (Guest)**

Katja: What do you mean by GI? I only think of the gastrointestinal system when I hear the abbreviation GI, but I do not think that is what you mean.

Oh my! Thanks for that clarification question. I meant Green Infrastructure Solutions. Is the acronym for that also "GIS"?

[8/21 6:12 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

Katja: Thanks for the clarification, that makes a lot more sense.

[8/21 6:14 PM] Iwersen, Eric

**Natalie Mendoza (Guest)**

I would like to note that fruitless olive trees are not always fruitless. I have a fruitless olive tree in my backyard that started producing a large quantity of olives approximately seven years after it was planted. As a result, we have a lot of birds (pigeons) in our backyard that eat the olives ...

thanks and good feedback Natalie

[8/21 6:18 PM] Iwersen, Eric

**Natalie Mendoza (Guest)**

To what Shawn is saying about not recreating other cities, absolutely! I have particularly noticed that Palm Trees are in so many locations in Arizona (including Tempe), and it does not make sense to me that we are trying to look just like California. Especially when many Palm Tree species require ...

date palms have a great food element and do really well in our climate. California palms and Mexican palms are also very drought tolerant (one of them is actually native to AZ) but shade is not strong with palms . we generally have placed palms where we have tight space or where we are looking to have a sense of grandeur or arrival...

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[8/21 6:18 PM] Iwersen, Eric

**Natalie Mendoza (Guest)**

Palo Verdes are a very good source of shade as well.

ironwoods and mesquites are as well.

[8/21 6:19 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

**Iwersen, Eric**

date palms have a great food element and do really well in our climate. California palms and Mexican palms are also very drought tolerant (one of them is actually native to AZ) but shade is not strong with palms . we generally have placed palms where we have tight space or where we are looking to...

Sustainability Commission, August 21, 2023

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Thanks for the information. I did not know that---I usually consider palm trees to be larger water guzzlers, but I'm glad to hear that that is not entirely the case.

[8/21 6:22 PM] Iwersen, Eric

**Erin Boyd (Guest)**

Will the sidewalk concepts help with the usability of the sidewalk? (movement of pedestrians, how to look for traffic at intersections, etc.) or is purely artistic?

more variety of materials can generally lead to more maintenance, simpler is less o & m. all the materials proposed will meet ADA and be "usable", and i would say that the treatment options are really about aesthetics and installing materials that will be durable

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[8/21 6:25 PM] Jake Swanson (Guest)

 {standing ovation} 

like 2 heart 1

[8/21 6:25 PM] Erin Boyd (Guest)

Congratulations on this research and outreach.

The grocery store - Street Corner Urban Market - will open at Culdesac Tempe at the end of this month. 10% of the floor plan will be fresh produce from Sun Produce Cooperative. The store will accept SNAP/EBT.

It will be the closest grocery store located in the Escalante neighborhood. We'd love to support these efforts. I'll email you, Maddie!

heart 1

[8/21 6:26 PM] Jake Swanson (Guest)

Thoroughly enjoyed hearing about outreach. It sounds holistic and engaging at various levels, looking at an entire system. Really appreciate the work you are doing.

heart 1

[8/21 6:28 PM] Jake Swanson (Guest)

Thank you for all the hard work, Shawn. Really excited to see the visualizations!

[8/21 6:29 PM] Mercer, Madeline

**Erin Boyd (Guest)**

Sustainability Commission, August 21, 2023

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Congratulations on this research and outreach. The grocery store - Street Corner Urban Market - will open at Culdesac Tempe at the end of this month. 10% of the floor plan will be fresh produce from Sun Produce Cooperative. The store will accept SNAP/EBT. It will be the closest grocery st...

Yes, I'd love to connect about this! I was just on-site at Culdesac today to launch our Composting Program with Cocina Chiwas, and I'd love to learn more about the other food sustainability practices being incorporated into the Street Corner Urban Market!

[8/21 6:30 PM] Erin Boyd (Guest)

Fantastic. Thank you, Maddie!

[8/21 6:30 PM] Jake Swanson (Guest)

Sounds great to me.

[8/21 6:30 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

When will the in-person meetings start?

[8/21 6:32 PM] Kendon Jung

A house divided

[8/21 6:32 PM] Erin Boyd (Guest)

I'll need to excuse myself. Thank you all for an action-packed meeting

[8/21 6:35 PM] Natalie Mendoza (Guest)

Thank you.

[8/21 6:35 PM] Erin Boyd (Guest)

thank you

[8/21 6:35 PM] Katja Brundiers (Guest)

Thank you all!