



## Minutes

### City of Tempe Sustainability Commission May 15, 2023

Minutes of the Tempe Sustainability Commission meeting held on Monday, May 15, 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)	Shawn Swisher
Barbie Burke (Vice Chair)	Morgan Winburn
Erin Boyd	
Katja Brundiers	

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

Natalie Mendoza  
Jake Swanson

#### **City Staff Present:**

Brianne Fisher  
Andy Escobar  
Maddie Mercer  
Tina Sleeper

#### **Guests Present:**

Mike Hoffman  
Holly Hames  
Ronald Klawitter

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

Kendon Jung called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

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.

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

Mike Hoffman and Holly Hames were present but did not present themselves.

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

Boyd called for a motion to approve the minutes from April 17, 2023.

**Motion:** Erin Boyd

**Second:** Barbie Burke

**Decision:** Approved 6-0

### **Voted to Approve:**

Kendon Jung (Chair)

Barbie Burke

Shawn Swisher

Katja Brundiers

Morgan Winburn

Erin Boyd

### **Absent:**

Natalie Mendoza

Jake Swanson

The minutes were approved, with the requested edit that “Resilience” be added to the document header.

## **Agenda Item 4 – Ron Klawitter, Salt River Project Spillwater and Related Projects**

Tina Sleeper introduced Ron Klawitter, Manager of the Water Systems Project Group at Salt River Project (SRP), who presented on the SRP watershed, current projects, and planning for the resiliency of the water system.

Klawitter provided an overview of the Verde River and Salt River watersheds, which consist of about 13,500 square miles of “green infrastructure,” and SRP’s “hard infrastructure,” which includes 6 dams and reservoirs that supply Phoenix area. SRP’s reservoir system provides stability in water delivery and amount in response to variable rainfall. Klawitter then recapped the Winter 2023 season, which had record levels of inflow to the Salt, Verde, and Tonto systems and reservoirs due to the large snowpack. Reservoirs are at nearly 100% capacity, which required SRP to release water into the Salt River bed this winter.

Models predict that the SRP watershed will experience higher highs (inflows) and lower lows (rainfall) but will trend toward a dryer system overall; thus, SRP needs to have capacity to

handle quick inflows to capture water where they can. Klawitter also described three upcoming SRP Projects:

- 1) Roosevelt Dam Flood Control Space Operational Flexibility Project
  - This project focuses on flood control and involves working with Tempe & 30 other partners to modify operations to use water without sacrificing downstream safety (slowing down water during a flood event and putting it to use, minimizing spillage and expanding storage).
- 2) Bartlett Dam Modification Project
  - This project involves expanding the storage capacity of Bartlett Reservoir to better manage sediment, support habitat, and reduce spillage during big flood events. This year, there was a spillage of 300k acre-feet—this amount would serve about a million households for an entire year.
- 3) SRP → CAP Interconnection Project
  - While SRP has the ability to pull water from the Central Arizona Project (CAP) system into the SRP system, there isn't currently the ability to put water into the CAP system. This project will explore ways to physically get water to treatment plants along the CAP system, adding a redundancy that can increase the resilience of the larger regional water system.

#### Questions:

- Chair noted that, in the last commission meeting, the City of Tempe Budget Office shared that cities' credit rating agencies are increasingly taking climate risk into account when evaluating the long-term viability of a project. He asked how the ability for projects to demonstrate access to a secure water supply factors into this type of decision, especially for cities that are being developed more quickly.
  - Because Tempe is landlocked and most of its land falls within SRP's water service area, it has water rights to the Salt and Verde Rivers and a secure water supply. However, the region's water resiliency is only as strong as the least-prepared water provider, so SRP promotes water augmentation projects to support new developments and old developments that rely on groundwater.
- Chair asked how SRP works with developers in the areas that have fewer water conservation practices to disrupt growth patterns that contribute to water waste.
  - The Bartlett Lake project is a good example of adding capacity to water providers by better capturing water during flood events. The 23 funding partners of the feasibility study are interested in expanded capacity, and about ½ of these partners are looking to obtain renewable supplies to replace dependency on groundwater. This project will help make a renewable supply possible for providers located in areas without an existing source of surface water, which may have forced them to be groundwater dependent in the past.

- In the chat, Vice Chair asked if the upcoming projects are being funded through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).
  - The Bartlett Dam Modification Project was authorized by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) for study & 50% of the funding. There could be some opportunities within IRA (related to drought relief), but none have been identified yet.
- Brundiers asked what SRP sees as the role of demand management in navigating the projected patterns of more intense flood / heat events (especially considering population growth, business growth, and “hydro-ideological/illlogical” cycle).
  - From a demand management standpoint, SRP primarily works with cities that deliver water (since cities send bills to end users) to support their water conservation programs.
    - Urbanization is also a form of demand management, since all lands within SRP were formerly agricultural lands and urbanization results in an immediate reduction of water use. Further, newer homes are built using more water-efficient appliances, and the expansion of xeriscape landscapes has helped to reduce the overall demand for water.
    - Regarding public perception, people really remember dry years (e.g., in the early 2000s when they had to reduce water) and news coverage on the Colorado River shortage has made people more mindful of the need for water conservation.
- Chair asked what recommendations Klawitter has for groups like the commission to help promote water conservation in Tempe (and beyond) with an equity focus.
  - The commission can help by continuing to be forward-looking and advocating for this perspective in water management. Water infrastructure is large, costly, and takes a long time to build; instead of waiting for major issues to come up, we need to plan for future scenarios.
  - In terms of equity between cities, it is important to remember that we are endowed with water supplies we have because of prior appropriations; the commission can help educate others on why the system is this way and support solutions that connect partners outside of the service area to renewable water supplies, making the region as a whole more resilient.
- Brundiers asked in the chat if there will be more retention basins built to capture and store water, in addition to the proposed canals.
  - No new ground water retention basins are currently planned, as SRP is focusing on the Bartlett Expansion.

### **Agenda Item 5- Andy Escobar, CoT Energy Equity Programming**

Andy Escobar from Tempe’s Sustainability and Resilience Office (SRO) provided an overview of the Energy Equity Program Supplemental, which SRO received as part of the FY 22-23

budget cycle. The one-time, \$50,000 supplemental will be used to train residents on how energy policies are made and how to make energy decisions at home. These funds will go to frontline communities (those who will be impacted first and worst by climate change) to support energy investments in houses and apartments in the form of home energy kits and utility bill stipends.

- This supplemental request comes from the Climate Justice agenda, residents talked about their struggles with higher energy burden and higher heat exposure.
- Existing data maps on median income, poverty rate, median land surface temperature (LST), and social vulnerability informed our decision to focus on the northeastern neighborhoods of Tempe for the pilot program.
  - The heat maps were created by NASA Develop, and they demonstrate heat priority areas in Tempe. The areas selected have a high median LST.
  - Tempe Equity Data includes data on socio-economic factors (low median income and high poverty rate) that were used to determine project area.
  - The team is still gathering information to create a new GIS layer on energy burden (percentage of a household's income spent on energy) that identifies households with an energy cost burden above 3%.
- SRO hired RAIL CDC, a CBO that works in the area and has existing relationships with the neighborhoods, to lead this work in the identify pilot neighborhoods. SRO and RAIL CDC have developed a 2-phase scope of work:
  - Phase 1: Home Energy Kit and Utility Stipend Giveaway
    - This giveaway will include low-cost interventions that help improve energy efficiency (LED light bulbs, air filters, smart plugs, etc.). Community input will be used to select the giveaway items, and a series of events will be held to get feedback and generate interest in energy issues. The items will be distributed by the end of June.
  - Phase 2: Long-term Planning
    - RAIL CDC and SRO will establish a Climate Justice Advisory Group (~15 members, who will serve as a focus group for EnVision Tempe planning, long-term planning around energy equity and heat relief). The curriculum will be based on topics and interests identified at in RAIL CDC's initial community engagement efforts.
- Future of this work:
  - Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant (EECBG)
    - There's a need to address energy equity by both 1) reducing energy use within households and 2) working with utilities to better support customers (reduce energy burden).
    - CoT is receiving \$236k in EECBG funds; these funds will be used to launch a Residential Energy Retrofit Program.
  - SRP MOU

- CoT has an existing MOU with SRP to collaborate on issues relating to issues of social justice and heat resilience, including energy equity. SRO is seeking to partner with SRP on the Residential Energy Retrofit Program, but SRP's involvement is still TBD.

### Questions:

- Chair asked what SRP's involvement is in this work and what accountability there is for that involvement.
  - The MOU outlines several tasks that SRP is responsible for: 1) data sharing, 2) community feedback on M-Power program, and 3) mobile home outreach and education.
    - In terms of data sharing, SRO has asked access to data about where M-Power program customers live in Tempe and which areas of Tempe are high numbers of customers who are behind on their energy bills; SRP has yet to fulfill this data request.
- Chair asked Fisher if she can provide an update on this request and the upcoming meeting with SRP, and he asked how the commission can help SRO to support this work.
  - Fisher responded that she can provide an update and that the data sharing ask is going to be an on-going journey (for both Tempe and other municipalities). SRP has a similar MOU with City of Phoenix and City of Mesa with the same language, so there are multiple municipalities working with SRP to navigate these agreements. The MOU captures both parties' commitment to advancing these data needs, and having Andy as a new coordinator will help to move this work forward in the future.
- Boyd asked to hear more about the "resilience hub" concept and how it interacts with planning on mobility hubs.
  - Fisher noted that these are separate concepts but can have some overlap in terms of accessibility – mobility is a key issue in the resilience hub planning. The EnVision Center work is happening in the same neighborhoods as the energy equity work, serving similar purposes (increased resilience to extreme heat). SRO is working to integrate its work within northeast Tempe, building connections between energy equity, resilience hubs, and mobility hubs work.
- Swisher asked if there any plan within this program to provide rebates or incentives for weatherizing private residences.
  - Escobar noted that the last time EECBG funding was released was during the Obama administration. At that time, the majority of municipalities used funding for municipal energy retrofits; however, because of Justice 40 initiative and the priorities of SRO, we want to use this funding for the community. Further, because we're trying to support low-income households, we would likely set it up as a grant instead of a rebate to make it more accessible (without a high up-front cost).

- Fisher added that demonstrating the efficacy of this program could help to get additional funding; in the future, this could look like expanding the program to include a rebate or loan program for residents with additional income. However, the supplemental will be used to develop the building blocks for growing an energy program, starting with low-income households, then growing to multi-family, then expanding to the business community.
- Brundiers asked if there are other cities in the Valley that are engaging in energy equity work.
  - Escobar responded that there are no cities in the Valley that are doing this work, but Flagstaff used 2009 EECBG funds to start a residential energy retrofit program.

### **Agenda Item 6- Sustainability and Resilience Commission Composition**

Chair proposed removing member classifications for applying to the Commission. He noted that these categories once held a role in ensuring that different values were being included in the work being done by SRC. However, the Chair now believes that the classifications are restricting the SRC's ability to recruit and maintain a quorum. He called for a discussion on the classifications and the possibility of removing the categories.

- Swisher asked if the list of the current roles is included on the memo prepared by Fisher.
  - Chair confirmed that the current roles are included in the background section on the memo; the above is proposing what the SRC would be voting on the change the composition requirements. It will take 2 public hearings at regular City Council meetings to approve this change.
- Brundiers asked, in the event that the criteria is removed to facilitate broader participation, if the SRC could include an aspirational statement about wanting a diverse commission that includes commissioners of different ages, backgrounds, and stakeholder groups. This could reflect our commitment to getting participation from different community members without directly holding the commission to this commitment for recruitment requirements.
- Fisher asked a clarifying question about residency requirements – not all of the existing positions require Tempe residency (e.g., could work at ASY but not live in Tempe, MC resident at large), so she notes that it would be helpful to have firm ideas around residency requirements.
  - Chair suggests that all but one of the positions should be required to “live, work, or learn in Tempe.”
    - Fisher suggested that the commission communicate with Mayor and Council before the suggested changes goes to the first hearing, and she recommends that the commission be represented at council meetings.
    - Chair responded that he is meeting with Mayor Woods on Friday.

- Swisher asked much of the language are we looking to remove.
  - Chair clarified that the bullet points are to be removed, and that language will be added that reflects Katja's comment: (e.g., "We're looking to include a diverse representation of perspectives: youths, business representatives, ASU representative, etc.").
- Fisher said that staff can work on drafting up the language, which the SRC will need to approve before moving forward. This body would need to take action to draft new language and then approve it (could be done via email).
  - Swisher noted that he would like to approve the changes and that he would like to lock future commissioners into some set requirements; however, he is okay with some compromise.

Chair calls for a motion to direct SRO staff to rework the commission description, including Katja's suggestion of a statement with descriptors and ensuring that there's adequate language to cement commission's goals. Commissioners will share feedback via email and can address at future meetings.

**Motion:** Kendon Jung (Chair)

**Second:** Shawn Swisher

**Decision:** Approved 6-0

**Voted to Approve:**

Kendon Jung (Chair)

Barbie Burke

Shawn Swisher

Katja Brundiars

Morgan Winburn

Erin Boyd

**Absent:**

Natalie Mendoza

Jake Swanson

Passes 6-0

Chair and Katja agree to connect offline to discuss recruitment strategy.

### **Agenda Item 7 – Housekeeping Items**

- Chair notes that the Board and Commission Appreciation Event is coming this Friday. Chair, Burke, Winburn, and Boyd noted that they could attend, and Swisher, Brundiars,



and Swanson noted that they cannot make it. Chair said he will check in with Mendoza to see if she is available to attend.

- Chair noted that the next SRC meeting will be rescheduled because it falls on Juneteenth (a city holiday). Fisher will update the calendar to reflect the new date, June 12. Brundiers, Burke, Winburn, Swisher, Boyd, and Chair all agree to this new time.
- Chair asked Swisher to provide a General Plan Update.
  - Swisher shared that a draft of the General Plan is available for review. He mentioned that it highlights a lot of climate action priorities, which are embedded into the plan with direct language by referencing the CAP Update.
    - There was an effort to avoid replicating too much information from the CAP Update in the General Plan; they aimed to find a balance between including information and referencing the plan. However, city departments developing the plan have been operating with sustainability goals in mind throughout the process.
  - Fisher added that density and mixed-use development are big levers for sustainability change in cities, so including them in the General Plan with direct connections to sustainability will help us to advocate for improved access to resources connected to these topics. The draft references CAP Update highlight actions, and now includes Extreme Heat and Climate Change elements.
    - Swisher responded that the topics of density and mixed-use development had the most controversy and discussion about them; however, people ultimately understood that Tempe is a landlocked city and that we need to plan for future population growth.
    - Fisher noted that the SRC can advocate for these growth strategies.
- Chair asks each commissioner to review the draft General Plan and incorporate this discussion into their submissions for General Plan comments. He asked commissioners to note that they are a SRC commissioner in the comment as part of the feedback process. He also asked commissioners to find several other people to submit comments that support the draft General Plan and the values we discussed today.
- Fisher sent links to draft plan and noted that there are some upcoming public meetings.
  - Fisher will confirm deadlines for submitting comments in public meetings on the General Plan.
  - Burke noted several opportunities to make comments on the plan, including a Zoom meeting on the 17th at 12pm and at 5:30 pm at the Tempe History Museum.
- Swisher provided a design competition update, sharing that the competition launched on 5/1 and that it's been posted to AIA Phoenix Metro site, the City of Tempe site, and at

least one competition website. They are looking to post it on at least one more in the next week.

- So far, there are two registrations and the deadline to register is July 1<sup>st</sup>. Swisher asked the commission to continue to share the competition and get the word out.

### **Agenda Item 8 – Future Agenda Items**

Chair asked commissioners to send any future items to him or Brianne Fisher.

Shawn motions to adjourn the meeting.

**Motion:** Shawn Swisher

**Second:** Morgan Winburn

**Decision:** Approved 6-0

### **Voted to Approve:**

Kendon Jung (Chair)

Barbie Burke

Shawn Swisher

Katja Brundiers

Morgan Winburn

Erin Boyd

### **Absent:**

Natalie Mendoza

Jake Swanson

The meeting was adjourned at 6:09 pm.

Prepared by: Maddie Mercer

Reviewed by: Brianne Fisher

**Addendum:**

Chat record for Sustainability and Resilience Commission May 16, 2023, meeting: