



## Commission on Climate, Energy and Sustainability

Saturday, November 4, 2023 9 AM - 1 PM

### Retreat Minutes

This meeting was held at the City Parks and Recreation Meeting Room, 900 S. Randolph Wy

Approved November 16, 2023

#### Call to Order, 9:15 am.

##### Present:

Vanessa Gallego  
Adriana Bachmann  
Ojas Sanghi  
Jim Sell  
Garrett Weaver  
John Eisele

Representative, Ward 1  
Representative, Ward 2  
Representative, Ward 3  
Representative, Ward 6  
Representative, City Manager's Office  
Representative, City Manager's Office Environmental Organization Combating & Adapting to Climate Change  
Representative, City Manager, Tucson Electric Power

Camila Martins-Bekat

##### Retreat Facilitators:

Tahnee Robertson  
Colleen Whitaker

Southwest Decision Research  
southwest Decision Research

##### Absent:

David Garcia  
Alma Anides Morales

Representative, Ward 5  
Representative, Mayor's Office

### Member introductions and shared values

*Members introduced themselves and shared responses to two questions:*

- 1) What makes you feel hopeful about the future of climate and sustainability?*
- 2) How are you trying to have a positive impact? (re: climate and sustainability)*

*Responses to questions were clustered on whiteboard.*

Ojas

- UA Sophomore – Computer Science and Future Earth Resilience.
- Hopeful: got involved at first because felt unhelpful. Hard sometimes to be hopeful. Increased awareness among general population makes me feel hopeful. IRA investment is hopeful. Rise of climate as major political issue that can win elections is hopeful.
- Efforts: joining with others in AZ Youth Climate Coalition. Working with TUSD. U Arizona Divest. Went to DC over summer and lobbied at federal level. Doing research in climate tech.

#### Vanessa

- COO of her family's scrap metal recycling company. Working right now on Tucson Zero Waste event. Chair of Sierra Club in AZ (Nopales Chapter). Works with FUGA.
- Hopeful: local officials working to make Tucson a leader in climate action for frontline communities. Youth – our future generations.
- Efforts: as above, FUGA, Sierra Club, etc.

#### Camila

- Works for TEP on the transportation electrification strategy. Focusing on strategies for diversity of community. Born in Brazil and was surprised by all the consumerism and wasteful behavior in the US.
- Hopeful: struggling with these efforts, because we are focusing on the noise instead of the inherent behaviors that need to change. It requires us to make personal sacrifices. Hopeful that the right people are attempting to have a serious conversation and take associated actions.
- Efforts: no plastic, composting, gray water, etc. EP work and focus on policy change.

#### Adriana

- Corporate communications in Tribal casino. Growing up family was focused on sustainable behavior, but not necessarily because it was “environmental.” Finishing up Going for her master's degree – focus on climate literacy and media literacy.
- Efforts: trying to start a green committee at work to get recycling and composting. Volunteer work (Sustainability Tucson, CCES, Green Latinos)
- Hopeful: Young people that are loud and proud and doing the work. More federal government buy-in (IRA) and Climate Corp.

#### John

- Retired from IBM. Got in touch with environmental passion around 2000. Began marketing an alternative building product, rainwater harvesting items, etc. Previous ED of Tucson 2030 District (focused on getting people to decrease their energy consumption by 50% by 2030)
- Efforts: All above, and advocating for positive solutions. Member of Climate Reality Project (Al Gore's group) – advocacy at local, state and federal level. New Rotary Club in town is focused on environment (Tucson Rotary Verde).
- Hopeful: It's hard. Believe there are many people like us that are interested in doing things about climate change, but don't feel there is political will worldwide. There are many viable solutions. Hopeful there are more people getting involved. M&C in Tucson are oriented towards climate solutions. IRA is hopeful.

#### Garrett

- Southern Arizonan. City manager appointee. Raytheon. Joined in May. Have observed subtle changes in one place over time. Got motivated to participate more in 2020 (fires, drought). Involved in a citizens climate group – voter outreach, etc.

- Hopeful: Technology is making it economically feasible to make a carbon-free economy. Public opposition to climate action is dropping. Taking action in the community gives hope and helps combat despair. Everyone working and doing what they're good at is what will make a difference.
- Efforts: converting house to electric, insulation, etc. Talking to congress members, organizing community. Using knowledge as programmer to help develop solutions (envelope modeling).

#### Fatima

- Chief Resilience Officer for City of Tucson. Born in Zacatecas, MX surrounded by nature and living sustainably – taking care of the land was directly related to survival. Learning from elders – seeds, seasons, rain, etc. Has 3 kids. Got scholarship for master's at UA, and had never been here before. Previous to this work, mostly nonprofit environmental work. Passion for the work comes from lived experience, academic background, and professional work.
- Hopeful: Very hopeful because of youth leading the way. Also unprecedented climate investments at federal level. Tools and resources becoming available. General public awareness. Commitment of local leadership.
- Efforts: implementing the Climate Action Plan – it is a big responsibility and a commitment not taken lightly. Honor to have this role. Working to implement solutions in new house (compost, water harvesting, etc.). Continued learning.

#### Jim

- Got involved in 1968. In undergrad realized many of our problems were environmental, and got involved in geography (interface between people and environment). Became interested in field of Environmental perception and behavior (PhD at UA). Worked on environmental disasters (e.g. Mt. St. Helens Eruption. Tucson 1983 flood). Taught at UA and NAU. Worked in landscape architecture. Worked to get Civano established. Metro Energy Commission. Oral history work (Bisbee mining and Louisiana Offshore Oil).
- Hopeful: difficult; has been watching this happening for 40 years. Climate change is happening and it's killing people, and it can't be denied. Awareness among public is growing. Tucson is good example of community taking action. Hope comes from action.
- Efforts: work is important. Policy and grassroots levels are both important. Rainwater harvesting with Wright Elementary. Continue work as educator.

#### Observers

- John Salvatierra – retired from railroads. Has joined all 5 Plan Tucson Working Groups. Focused on solution-oriented work. First Responder, EMT. Volunteered with TMC. Studied at Pima College. Interested in adaptive technology. TEP is an impediment Has a proposal that he wants to discuss with Tucson leadership.
- Jim – no introduction.

**Tucson Resilient Together** – *Fatima Luna, Chief Sustainability Officer City of Tucson*  
*Fatima provided an overview, focusing on opportunities for collaboration and roles for CCES.*  
*Main points are captured here:*

- Development of the plan was a community-driven process with over 45 events engaging over 150 groups and over 5,000 people.
- 122 actions are included over 5 categories
- Governance category: Includes equitable engagement guidelines – how can we lead by example. E.g., divesting from fossil fuel companies is an action for this.
- Transportation and Land Use category includes – multi-modal, public transit, reduce single vehicle trips, smart growth, etc.
- Resource, Recovery and Management category – achieving Zero waste and waste diversion goals.
- Community Resilience – community benefits, services and programs, nature-based solutions
- Implementation – M&C has adopted implementation plan to advance 77 specific actions.
- City efforts:
  - Developed the Climate Action Team and Fatima’s position. Looking to hire another person to help implement the plan and focus on community engagement, communications, and analysis. Hoping to advertise soon.
  - Funding: Part of Fatima’s role is to apply for possible funding opportunities, not just City, but community wide. Working to build coalition to be able to apply for funds – energy retrofits for residential (including Justice 40 Framework and workforce development).
  - Have SOW for Greenhouse Gas Inventory. Benchmarking City buildings. Work with TEP. Developing energy source study – how can we achieve energy neutral goals, what is role of community choice aggregation, etc.
  - RFQ for Landfill Gas Recovery Project
  - Transportation: EV Readiness Roadmap. Identify opportunities to decarbonize the bus fleet. Prop 411. Partnering with TEP to explore car share programs and increasing charging stations with equity in mind.
  - Working on Heat Mitigation Plan. Gov Hobbs has declared a heat emergency. This will include development of a statewide Heat Mitigation and Readiness Plan. The initial meeting was Phoenix focused, less people from Tucson. Have considered replicating the workshop in Tucson.
  - Community Resilience Hubs – have a FEMA grant to develop hubs appropriate for Tucson. Community-guided process to develop plan. Also developing Community Resilience Leadership Academy. Working with health department.
  - Zero Waste strategies
- Funding secured: Have secured about \$33M in federal funding for: decarbonizing bus fleet, water infrastructure, urban nature-based solutions. \$3.5M to work with coalition of cities in AZ and NM to develop desert-adapted building codes. Over \$90M in applications are submitted

- Working to revamp the Climate Action Hub – working with ESRI and exploring the possibility of them creating the public-facing dashboard over a 4-month period. Dashboard will help with reporting (good way to communicate progress to community and identify deficiencies).
  - Will there be community input on the metrics? → Yes
- CCES work on microgrid proposal was great – lots of time and expertise. Next steps: Can we work together on opportunities for funding and apply for these? Funding a battery would help us create our first Resilience Hub.
- A positive communication campaign will be helpful – spread hope and useful resources (e.g., LA heat awareness campaign at bus stops).
- If CCES has suggestions for what to include in the regional climate action plan (with county) please share these. Natalie Shepp is the county lead
- The Climate Action Team has about 16 people representing all departments (Michael is on the team).

Opportunities for collaboration with CCES, areas where support is needed: (see document Fatima shared)

1. Develop funding opportunities – e.g., battery storage, microgrid
2. Development of culturally competent, multi-lingual climate action toolkits
3. Educational resources on behavioral change
4. Tours of sustainable infrastructure/design projects; public education
5. School partnerships
6. Identify opportunities for nature-based solutions at City faculties and community-wide.
7. Research for sustainable procurement policy
8. Regional Climate Action Plan – specific actions to include (energy, transportation, waste).

Discussion/questions

- Ojas identified over 30 opportunities for funding in the microgrid report. Garrett is interested in helping to write grants for this. Pima County has just offered community outreach grants. What are opportunities to work with the county?
  - City is working with County. This is a planning grant. County is working to create a climate action plan; a more regional effort. (Pima County, Tucson, Tohono O’odham, Oro Valley, South Tucson).
  - City and county meet bi-weekly. They are sharing experience and elements of the City plan.
  - Phase 2 funding will include implementation. CAT is identifying opportunities. The timeline for these applications is tight.
  - State also received money to develop a statewide Greenhouse Gas Inventory

## Goals, and strategies

Pre-retreat survey review (see survey summary)

Members noted:

- Seems we are mostly on same page
- There is consensus on getting more staff involvement and development of subcommittees to do work

Criteria for identifying potential priorities for CCES:

- Measurable impact (carbon, people)
- Improves quality of life
- Cost benefit analysis is positive
- Opportunity cost for CCES is positive
- Aligns with City priorities
- Uses an equity lens
- Timing/opportunities
- CCES work has meaningful impact – coordinated and not duplicative with City

## Goals, strategies

The group discussed overall role and overarching goals. There was a lot of deliberation on what the role of the commission should be. The group feels this has not been well-defined in the past.

- What is the value in doing things that are not already outlined by the City? Don't re-invent the wheel – identify where there are real needs/opportunities for CCES contribution.
- Perhaps the overarching goal should be focusing on Tucson Resilient Together – everything we do should leverage and help this. We have little time, need to be strategic and make sure our actions have an impact.
- Need a better understanding of what the City is already doing and really needs in any of these lists. Need to work to refine this overall list with Fatima.
- Is accountability part of CCES role?
- May need to talk to M&C about redefining the role. The mandate from M&C was created before Tucson Resilient Together. An updated mission could be “Support successful implementation of the TRT.”
- It's too early to outline any specific actions related to the TRT goals. Need to first do an assessment.

Next steps:

- Initial assessment:
  - Start with list of opportunities from Fatima - Meet with City (CAT) and learn more about what is already being done, and what needs to be done.
  - Individual member research and education:
    - Camila/John – EV Readiness
    - Jim – Building and weatherization

- Vanessa/Garrett – Greenhouse Gas
- Ojas – schools
- Adriana – nature-based solutions
  - Possibly host series of topical education meetings.
  - Assess role and actions for CCES in each of these.
- Prioritize CCES actions based on assessment (February)
- Set up subcommittee(s) to address specific needs

Shorter-term actions to make progress on now:

- Input on dashboard (KPIs)
- Input on County/regional plan
  - May need meeting with Pima County lead on plan (Natalie Shepp).
- CAT – find out more. Who are the members? When do they meet. Are there minutes?

November meeting agenda items:

- Dashboard KPIs
- CAT – meetings? Minutes?
- Officer nominations

**Call to audience**

Jonathan Salvatierra

- Focus on environment, health and public safety.
- Providing a sign-up sheet for a presentation he will give to city leaders.
- What he heard today: not hammering away at the City, but helping them. Create a singular report. Focus on timely, solution-oriented priorities and meet COT deadlines. Identify options to reduce climate change locally as a model. Engage public awareness. Options to get into open study groups?