



Commission on Climate, Energy and Sustainability
Annual Report 2020
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City of Tucson Commission on Climate, Energy and Sustainability (CCES)

Annual Report 2023

Chair James Sell, Ph.D.

Designated number of members: 11

Actual number of members: 8

Current Vacancies: 1- City Manager (Open since March 2022)
1- Ward 4 (Open since August 2023)
1- Ward 5 (Open since October 2023)

Designated number
of meetings 2023: 12

Number of meetings
Held: 8

Number of meetings
Canceled for lack
of quorum: 5

Election of Officers

James Sell, Chair, May 24, 2023

Adriana Bachmann, Vice Chair, December 14, 2023

Garrett Weaver, Secretary, December 14, 2023

Mission and Purpose of CCES

As stated in our bylaws approved in 2018, CCES mission and purpose is to “advise the Mayor and Council on:

- A. The most effective and efficient methods of meeting the climate, energy and sustainability goals outlined in the City's General Plan.
- B. Methods for improving the City's climate and environmental impact and adaptability in its operations: and
- C. Achieving the incremental as well as transformative systemic outcomes necessary to respond to climate, energy and broader sustainability challenges in our region.

2023 Activities

2023 was a rebuilding year for the CCES, adding four new members and electing a new slate of officers.

There was also work to be done on ongoing projects for the City of Tucson:

The Resilient Tucson Climate Action Plan

The One Water Plan

The Plan Tucson Update

Commission members offered comments and suggestions for improving all of the above plans.

Our commission was specifically asked by Mayor and Council to report on microgrids and their feasibility in the creation of a workable renewable energy system in Tucson, for transportation, resilience centers, and protection from energy blackouts, such as the one that occurred in July 2023. That report was completed and sent to the Mayor and Council in September 2023.

Microgrid Report Subcommittee:

Garrett Weaver, Chair

Ojas Sanghi

Camila Martins-Bekat

James Sell

In November 2023, the commission conducted a retreat, in which commissioners and the Climate Resilience Officer, Fatima Luna, discussed ways in which the CCES can support climate resilience planning in the community.

2024 Activities

For 2024, we have been engaged in the continuation of the Plan Tucson update, with commissioners in all the plan working groups.

We have also been involved in the policy issues at State level, which can greatly affect how climate planning is done locally.

Some issues under consideration for future work include:

1. Helping to create an outreach network to promote climate/energy/sustainability activism.
2. Supporting the City creation of resilience centers as heat shelters and education hubs to demonstrate and promote climate resilience.
3. Support for increased rooftop solar energy, especially for residences. This would involve examining solar permitting processes, expanding limits on private homeowners connections to the grid, or other action to make it easier for construction of rooftop solar power.
4. Examining how housing climate resilience can be improved without causing major financial pain to low-income residents.
5. Public awareness and education overlaps all the above elements, and the CCES has already established itself as the “go to” place for many citizens to present information on issues of importance to them. This is a primary role.

Appendix Individual Reports

Ojas Sanghi

Things I worked on in 2023

1. Served on Microgrid subcommittee

- a) spearheaded draft of the report and created a funding database
- b) produced report to Mayor and Council in October.

2 . Oversight of energy sourcing study

- a) asked for updates on the City’s execution of the energy sourcing study
- b) ensured this important ongoing didn’t get left by the wayside

Things I want to work on in 2024

1 .CAAP Implementation Oversight

- a. The City continues to implement the CAAP, an all-important document, with little oversight. This includes greenwashing the purchase of CNG buses as an act of “decarbonization”. CCES should provide input and oversight while remaining mindful of the political dynamics at play.

2. Increased public engagement

- a. CCES has an opportunity to function as a more functional bridge between citizens and the Mayor and Council than the Call to Audience sections at M&C meetings. If we conducted more public outreach, appeared at tabling events, and built a reputation for ourselves, we could be more respected in the community

and elevate the importance of our work, thus also increasing our influence with the M&C.

3. Expand connections with policy experts

a. CCES ran into numerous issues trying to tap expertise when creating the important microgrid report last summer. CCES should engage in some unified manner to build out the Commission's networks and relationships with political and policy experts at places like UA and ASU.

Garrett Weaver

Things I have worked on in 2023

1. Chaired microgrid subcommittee, produced report to Mayor and Council in October.
2. Attended Plan Tucson - Land use, housing, urban design working group meetings.

Things I want to work on in 2024

1. Solar permitting process consistency. Friends recently got solar panels and they experienced issues with the permitting process where communication between the city and TEP did not occur to enable export of electricity to the grid. Although this was cleared up through proactive interactions between the four parties involved, the contractor said that in 1 out of 20 cases the city does not send necessary documents to TEP. I would like to look at what happened, and see if there is anything the City of Tucson can do to increase permitting process reliability.
2. Climate Action and Adaptation Plan public engagement. There is opportunity for the city to engage with the public on the implementation of TRT and to have our Tucson community support that work. We have had members of the public speak about this at call to the audience and listing opportunities for the city and community members to work together on CAAP implementation is something that I can document and CCES can support.
3. Public Awareness and Education. With policies being proposed at both the State Legislature and Arizona Corporation Commission that impact sustainability here in Tucson, it is important to engage and educate the public about these measures, their potential impact, both to individuals and the community, and what the public can do in response to them.

Adriana Bachman

Things I worked on in 2023

May 2023: Joined the Commission

Have since been listening and learning about what our role is in terms of advising Mayor and Council (M&C).

November 2023: Attended the CCES Retreat

Worked together to further clarify our expectations as a commission and how we can better serve the Tucson community through advising M&C on Plan Tucson and Tucson Resilient Together. Left with marching orders to better understand how Plan Tucson and Tucson Resilient Together relate to each other.

December 2023: Accepted the Vice Chair Position

Helped form the Executive Committee, which meets regularly to plan and finalize meeting agendas and discuss other matters of importance to the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary.

Things I want to work on in 2024

Community Engagement and Communications:

Actively network to make connections with local climate and sustainability experts who we can look to for assistance with research for reports to M&C and invite to meetings as guest speakers and subject matter experts

Work to increase public engagement and solicit feedback from the Tucson community to inform research and project proposals to M&C

Build and maintain an ongoing relationship with local media to encourage public awareness and participation with our work

Look into creating a website and social media presence for our commission to:

- Build awareness of the commission's work

- Help the City disseminate information to the public

- Educate local companies, organizations and everyday citizens on how they can respond to climate, energy, and broader sustainability challenges in our region

Work together with the City Manager and the Chief Resilience Officer to inform, guide, support and track progress towards climate targets in Plan Tucson and Tucson Resilient Together, and promote transparency

Create, and possibly publish, a database of local (city, county, region) companies and non-profit organizations who work to support positive climate and sustainability efforts

Propose the creation of a subcommittee called “Engagement and Communications” to support work on the above projects

See also The CCES Report on Microgrids, posted separately on the report website

