



Commission on Climate, Energy, and Sustainability Wednesday, January 22, 2025, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Conference Room
City Council Ward 6
3202 E. 1st Street
Tucson, Arizona, 85716

Meeting Minutes

1) Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 2:04 PM by Chair Jim Sell

Present:

Jim Sell (in-person)	Representative, Ward 6
Adriana Bachmann (in-person)	Representative, Ward 2
Ojas Sanghi (in-person)	Representative, Ward 3
Garrett Weaver (in-person)	Representative, City Manager
Dan Stormont (remote, Teams)	Representative, City Manager
Vanessa Gallego (remote, Teams)	Representative, Ward 1

Staff Members & Guests:

Amanda Smith (Remote, Teams) Planning and Development Services
Kris LaFleur (Remote, Teams) Environmental Services
Erick Bieber (Remote, Teams) Planning and Development Services
Katy Brown (in-person) Member of the Public
Gabriela McCrossan Ruiz De Somocurcio (Remote) Member of the Public

Absent:

Camila Martins-Bekat Representative, City Manager, Tucson Electric Power

2) Approval of Minutes (December 20, 2024)

Removed incomplete sentence "Chair Sell would like to see " from minutes.

Removed "Comm. Stormont commented to add "we" into "EM Catanzaro said we can encourage people to reduce their use. PAG gets the data to deliver community wide inventory. "

Inserted water in "capita consumption"

Comm. Bachmann motioned to pass as amended.

Comm. Sanghi seconded.

3) Report from the Chair

Chair Sell reported 2024 was the hottest year on record. We have the highest CO2 levels in 2 million years. The southwest Megadrought is continuing.

The US is passing out of the Paris agreement. Work being done on climate change is being derailed. Nature will correct. We are on our own local resources, we need to do what we can locally.

Annual reports are due.

Chair Sell requested commissioners give talking points to have a draft available for the next meeting in February.

Comm. Bachmann asked when the talking points should be due.

Chair Sell set a timeframe of about a week.

4) Discussion: PLAN TUCSON

Amanda Smith thanked commissioners for the work they are doing to stay connected to the city.

Plan Tucson is high level. The timeline in Phase 3 is that there will be public hearings, followed by Phase 4 for the election.

There are 14 goals, each with a set of policies, which includes ecosystems, culture, education, wellness and more.

Chair Sell Specifics on Environment, Environment 2 air, water, noise, solid waste pollution.

Encouraged commissioners to view the draft at:

<https://www.plantucson.org/plan-tucson-2025-preliminary-draft>

Amanda got into the climate goals of Chapter 3.

Chair Sell indicated that he did not want to read through the 15.

Chair Sell talked about greenhouse gas emissions reductions, heat resilience.

Indicates that we need to have a way to measure how the policies are working.

Amanda Smith addressed Chair Sell's comments that general plans do not get into specifics.

Chair Sell said that he wanted to look at ways to organize this. He pointed out that the subheadings look like goals. What he is looking for is intent.

Amanda Smith said she will look at organizing the goals to make them more thematic.

We cannot fit the policies into the narratives, but we can reorganize them.

Chair Sell commented that the narrative is where courts go to find intent.

Comm. Stormont said he has been involved in the Plan Tucson engagement. Commented that he would like to see a traceability matrix to map to specific policies and goals.

Comm. Sanghi asked about where the place is for Plan Tucson. Said there isn't guidance and substance and where the document fits in with Tucson Resilient Together.

Amanda Smith said that we are mandated by the state for cities to do a plan. Plans are an opportunity to look at planning in an interdepartmental way. It's a way to look at planning holistically. What would it take budget-wise. Departments can make these much more tangible.

There was discussion between Comm. Sanghi and Amanda Smith about a traceability matrix.

Comm. Bachmann asked about accountability, there are many plans that go into Plan Tucson. It would be good to have a single dashboard. I've heard from the public that there is frustration with getting feedback.

Amanda Smith thanked Comm. Bachmann for her feedback and is excited to see what implementation will look like.

Chair Sell commented that the City is concerned with reducing heat related deaths and illnesses. After the plan is approved, we'd like to look into this more closely.

Comm. Weaver commented that there is a weak linkage between the governance section of Tucson Resilient Together (TRT) and the Plan Tucson subgoals.

Amanda Smith said that there are other sections of TRT where they look at community engagement and she will look at making the connection between climate and community engagement more explicit.

Comm. Stormont said that the policies are unmeasurable and we need to link it to existing plans. Wanted to know how to provide a yearly status report on the plan if there is nothing measurable in the plan.

Amanda Smith replied that In previous plans, they would summarize reports of other plans in Plan Tucson reports.

Comm. Sanghi points out a typo on "US Greenbuildings Council".

Chair Sell said we need to work on connectivity and organization.

Comm. Sanghi commented that on Climate 5 that carbon footprint should be broadened to include all greenhouse gas emissions and that the lowest carbon footprint could be made more strong to say zero footprint.

Chair Sell commented that a lot of these documents are over-written and could be simplified.

Comm. Sanghi asked about the ordering of the policies.

Amanda Smith replied that generally speaking; useful to lead with topics with an equity lens, then group with similar ideas next to each other.

There was discussion about “heat exchange” in Climate Policy 7 and possible relation to pyrolysis. The conclusion of the discussion was that there should be a definition of terms.

On Climate Policy 12 there was discussion of carbon neutrality, Comm. Sanghi suggested changing “carbon neutrality” to “climate neutrality”.

Climate Policy 15 there was discussion on assessing and preparing infrastructure, and what “city” refers to.

Comm. Stormont commented on Ecosystems Policy 5, that with the Million Trees initiative, we should not just be looking at replacement.

There was discussion of deconstruction in Environment Policy 6, Comm. Stormont said that’s what the building and trades people call reusing the materials and that is the appropriate term.

Comm. Sanghi said he wants more specifics on how to tie this to specifics in other plans, know what it means to “promote”. Looked at the environment section, said that others also apply. How do you make the decision what to include in the climate section?

Amanda Smith said that climate has the most policies because of the interconnectivity element. There was a point in time when there was no hesitancy to have policies in other parts of the document. They have settled in having a policy show up in no more than two places in the document.

Chair Sell, there was a section on wellness. You’re looking at quality of life.

Amanda Smith said that In 2013, there was a section for quality of life, but was not specific, that’s where wellness came from.

Comm. Stormont asked if there would be an appendix that list terms.

Amanda Smith thanked Comm. Stormont for the suggestion.

Environment Policy 2, Comm Sell said that “cumulative negative impact” could be reworded to reduce pollution.

Amanda Smith replied that there are communities that have more impacts than others, and that's why the wording was added.

Amanda agreed to looking at adding "vulnerable communities" to Environment Policy 2 to see if that would make it more specific.

Amanda Smith presented on how to engage. Feedback should be collected by January 31st.

Comm. Stormont asked about the timeline for Plan Tucson, and when formal hearings will happen. Amanda Smith said hearings will happen in March.

There was discussion of where the commission can engage.

5) Energy Manager Report - None

6) Climate Resilience Report - None

7) Call to Audience

Gabriela McCrossan Ruiz De Somocurcio

Commented in her professional capacity she has found a lot of issues with "carbon neutral" and "net zero".

Katie Brown

Commented that she is interested in the process and has applied to be part of the commission. There is a need for specificity and the need for it to be more general. Felt that the response has been that it's supposed to be general. There doesn't seem like there is much of an opportunity to change the document. Asked how much can be changed. Has always worked with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely) goals. How much of that, how much of timeliness that the public is desiring can be brought to the plan. She always sees city with a capital "C", that could mean City of Tucson government, and lower case c means community, suggested putting that definition in the document.

8) Future Agenda items.

Chair Sell Next Month, in February, Michael is planning on having GDS Associates.

Comm. Bachmann asked if we need an agenda for the Heat Summit.

Comm. Weaver said that he posted a notice with Boards and Commissions for the Heat Summit and Environmental Day at the Capitol.

Comm. Weaver suggested inviting Leslie Ethen this year to talk about the building code update.

Chair Sell said that the Southwest Building Code project has gotten funding.

Chair Sell said his mission is to recruit more people to the commission and suggested Gabriela could apply to join.

Comm. Gallego said she would be happy to talk to Gabriela about what it's like to be on the commission and shared her contact information.

9) Adjournment - Chair Sell Adjourned the meeting 3:51.