Commission on Climate, Energy and Sustainability
Wednesday, May 13, 2026, 2-4pm
City Council Ward 6
3202 E 1st St
Tucson, AZ 85716

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Quorum established and meeting called to order at 2:03pm by Commission Chair Stormont.

Commission members were requested by the Chair to briefly share their backgrounds during roll call since several new Commissioners had been appointed recently.

Present:
Commissioners:
Dan Stormont, Representative, City Manager, Chairperson (in-person)
Adriana Bachmann, Representative, Ward 2, Vice-Chairperson (in-person)
Camilla Martins-Bekat, Utility Representative, City Manager (online)*
Garrett Weaver, Representative, City Manager (in-person)
Joseph Rocky Rivera, Representative, Ward 5 (online)
Katy Brown, Environmental Org Representative, City Manager (in-person)
Moises Gomez, Representative, Mayor (in-person)
Natalie Shepp, Representative, Ward 6 (online)
Ojas Sanghi, Representative, Ward 3 (online)

Staff Members and Guests:
Michael Catanzaro, Energy Manager, Environmental & General Services Department (in-person)
Fatima Luna, Chief Resilience Officer (online)**

Absent:
None

* *Commissioner Martins-Bekat joined the meeting at 2:20pm.*
** *CRO Luna joined the meeting at 2:15pm.*

2. Call to audience

Comments were made by Rick Rappaport, Bruce Plenk, Lee Stanfield, and MJ Watz.

3. **Public feedback on Energy Collaboration Agreement: Lee Ziesche, Tucson DSA and No Desert Data Center Coalition**

Lee Ziesche shared her background: climate justice organizing, opposing fossil fuel extraction and infrastructure, advocating for affordable rates and publicly-owned utilities, organizing with the Tucson Democratic Socialists of America and the No Desert Data Center coalition. She emphasized her experience talking with individuals in the community about these topics and gathering signatures on petitions in support of public power.

Thanks to the City of Tucson for town halls and negotiating for ECA in a difficult situation.

Feedback:

- There is a lack of reporting about the dissatisfaction with TEP, affordability, and how unpopular TEP is based upon her contacts, against data centers, concerns on affordability
- 1986 signatories for public power letter and over 4000 petition signatures
- The ECA sets ambitious goals with a long list for the $2,000,000 a year.
- Would like to see a breakdown, a projection, of what is actually possible to do with this money. It would be helpful to voters to have a better understanding of where money can be used. What would staff costs be under the ECA?
- Noted that one major priority for people is affordability. Her calculations show that if the full $2,000,000 were to be put toward reduced bill payments, it would not go far enough to make a significant difference. $20/month x 12months x 8333 people would take the full $2,000,000.
- Could not find COT numbers, but in Pima County, 60,000 qualify for low-income assistance. This does not include middle income who may also need assistance.
- Feels that $2,000,000 is insufficient and 'pennies' to TEP in comparison to the need and to the amount that Fortis is planning to spend in support of the projected data center and would gain as a rate of return from that investment.
- TEP customers indirectly pay the franchise fee which in total is much larger than the amount received in the ECA.
- TEP is opening new gas power plants and converting coal to gas. ECA does not show TEP full picture and should do more
- Would like an ECA that would help to facilitate a move to public power. Referenced Winter Park, FL. Feels that the current COT/TEP ECA disincentivizes a move to public power.
- Would like confirmation that customers will not pay for the $2,000,000
- Feels that the 25-year timeframe is too long.
- Projects that the Nov 2026 vote on the Franchise will be controversial. Information about the ECA possibilities will be important to have available

before November. Be sure to schedule sufficient times and opportunities for a wide variety of people: those who work, those who speak different languages.

Chair Stormont commented that his personal opinion was that Lee brought up a good point about the difficulty of getting the Franchise Agreement renewed. TEP is not very popular with many Tucsonans and the failed franchise vote last time shows that this election will probably be a close vote. That's why the messaging about the ECA is so important and why the Commissioners need to have a good idea about what will be possible with the ECA funding.

Commissioner Brown commented that this Franchise agreement may say 25 years, but it can be abandoned by either party if there is a move toward municipal power or other need. So, it is less binding and could be understood to have the option of shorter time frame (5, 10, or other).

Commissioner Weaver noted that in comments to the Commission last month Lee had mentioned Hudson Valley and a move toward municipal power.

Lee Ziesche replied that Central Hudson is a Fortis company also and affirmed that it would be useful to reach out to the people working on the Hudson Valley Power Authority Act which is intended to acquire Central Hudson and run it as a publicly-owned utility.

Commissioner Brown asked if it would be helpful for this Commission to check back with Lee to see if sufficient public feedback and information times are available?

Commissioner Stormont noted that it is not the role of this commission to set times for these events, but, yes, we could make recommendations.

Commissioner Stormont requested a written copy of information from the presentation for distribution to the Commissioners.

4. Approval of minutes from previous commission meeting

Suggested corrections to Draft May 8, 2026 minutes submitted by Commissioner Weaver.

Commissioner Stormont moved, Commissioner Shepp seconded to approve as updated.

Updated minutes approved unanimously by voice vote: 9-0

5. Report from the Chair

Update on topics before Mayor and Council:

- Chief Resilience Officer Luna presented the quarterly report on Tucson Resilient Together implementation at the April 21st M&C study session.
- CRO Luna and Energy Manager Catanzaro presented the Tucson Renewable Energy Enterprise (TREE) at the April 21st M&C study session. The City Manager was directed to initiate a pilot program.
- Mayor and Council unanimously voted to express formal opposition to the Copper World project and the state trust land sale associated with it in the April 21st study session. The resolution was passed unanimously in their regular session on May 5th.
- Fare-free transit continues to be a discussion topic for M&C. At present, there is a slim majority supporting continued fare-free transit.
- On May 5th, M&C voted unanimously to direct the City Attorney and Staff to negotiate with other Arizona water users in response to upcoming Colorado River water shortages.

Commissioner Weaver asked about the possibility of not posting an ending time on our agenda to allow the Commission to end early or stay longer if the discussion warranted it.

Chair Stormont replied that he would prefer to keep a posted ending time because the commissioners and support staff are planning their schedules around a fixed time and it could be too easy for meetings to extend far beyond the planned ending time.

No action taken.

6. Discussion of Public Power Options (Mayor & Council tasking: March 3, 2026)

Chair Stormont read the following description of the tasking from the Mayor and Council on March 3rd.

- *It was moved by Vice Mayor Santa Cruz, duly seconded, and CARRIED by a voice vote of 7 to 0, to direct staff to bring in the Commission on Climate, Energy and Sustainability to take lead on a public process that investigates the City's long-term options that align with the Mayor and Council's climate goals, and the exploration of long term opportunities for a public power option.*
- *Furthermore, the City Manager shall provide regular reports to the Mayor and Council for updates on:*
    - *Resilience Hubs*
    - *The nexus of public power with Tucson Resilient Together*
    - *The City's Climate Action & Adaptation Plan*
    - *The Commission on Climate Energy and Sustainability*

Commissioner Rivera discussed a memorandum that he had submitted for our review (not yet shared) that was in response to a Ward 5 meeting. It concerns a framework for public power options. Noted that there is a July deadline for federal funding under the IRA bill that would allow the City to apply for direct reimbursements of up to 50%. It was noted that this timeline would likely not be feasible for COT now.

Commissioner Rivera will provide notes from his report on public power options to Energy Manager Catanzaro for distribution to the Commission for discussion at the June CCES meeting.

Commissioner Weaver noted that he has additional suggestions to pursue while looking at public power and community choice options. He is willing to reach out to some specific groups for research. Commissioner Weaver will send any information gathered on this topic to Energy Manager Catanzaro for dissemination to Commissioners.

Chair Stormont stated that it is a good idea to bring more people into the Commission meetings to get more information.

7. Discussion of Energy Collaboration Agreement (Mayor & Council tasking: April 7, 2026)

Chair Stormont read the following description of the tasking from the Mayor and Council on April 7th.

- *Article 11 of ECA: Transparency and Accountability. City and TEP shall regularly update the City's Commission on Climate, Energy and Sustainability (CCES) on major project planning, right of way use and construction practice coordination, and community education on TEP service options, plans, and utilization of efficiency and low-income assistance programs. CCES shall serve as an advisory body for the Mayor and Council on the implementation of this Agreement and City's use of the payments identified in Article 10 of this Agreement.*

Commissioner Brown would appreciate having a discussion of high-level priorities and approaches for accomplishing the goals of the ECA. A systems thinking approach that would note areas that might offer the most impact for money spent.

Chief Resilience Officer Luna has created draft fliers (Spanish and English) highlighting the two main priorities which have been identified: affordability and reducing greenhouse gases.

The recommendations of the CCES will need to be guided by the ECA and the constraints of the money provided. Learning what will have the biggest impact will be a goal.

Commissioner Shepp mentioned Pima County action plans and Tucson Resilient Together - two different plans that each have identified priorities. She thinks that these plans will help the Commission with ECA priorities and determining impact. On emissions reduction and affordability, she suggested that PimaCAN! could be helpful.

Commission Chair Stormont tasked CCES Commissioners to review PimaCAN! (pima.gov/pimacan) before the June 11th meeting.

Chief Resilience Officer Luna is working on an end of May deadline and she would like Commission feedback on ECA priorities.

- The Outreach and Communication subcommittee will meet with CRO Luna before the deadline to discuss the ECA
- Commissioner Martins-Bekat was appointed to the subcommittee

8. Discussion of Distributed Capacity Procurement (DCP) report

Commissioner Sanghi thanked Commissioners Weaver and Brown for feedback on the report.

Chair Stormont requested clarification about the task that led to this report.

Commissioner Sanghi would like the Commission to consider submitting it to Mayor & Council for their information and possible action.

Commissioner Brown asked how we get these reports into a repository of information that is kept as a resource for Mayor & Council and CCES. We have submitted other reports that are not readily available.

Chair Stormont asked if it made more sense to keep sending reports to Mayor and Council piecemeal or to combine them into a package with recommendations. Is the Commission overwhelming M&C with a constant stream of reports and memos? When submitted individually, is there a risk of primacy or recency dominating the way M&C act on these communications?

Commissioner Shepp noted that the report has important information relevant to all items we are tasked with. It mentions items which could be addressed quickly rather than slowly. She wanted to see it voted on to send now.

Commissioner Sanghi noted that some of the reports we have sent have appeared to have an impact. We cannot be certain what M & C do with them. We do need a central repository for our reports, but we don’t have control over how or when they are used. He suggests that as we get high quality information we send it on rather than wait to send it as a group. We are not a fast-moving body, so we offer the messaging as we develop it.

Commissioner Martins-Bekat asked if the Commission could have a meeting to discuss our tasking and strategize, prioritize the different options, maybe sequence them?

Commissioner Brown would also like a systems thinking approach to help with strategies.

Commissioner Gomez asked what is our responsibility? If there is a good report, can we/should we hold on to it?

Motion was made by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner Shepp to send the Distributed Capacity Procurement Report presented by Commissioner Sanghi to Mayor and Council for their information and possible action. The motion was passed unanimously in a 9-0 vote.

Commissioner Sanghi was tasked to send a final copy of the report and a cover letter for Mayor & Council for approval at the June meeting and distribution afterwards.

9. Data Center Report progress update

Chair Stormont asked Commissioner Weaver about a reference to a 2007 California data center in the Energy section of the report. Was the comparison still valid given changes in server technology over the last nearly two decades?

Commissioner Weaver stated that he will ensure the data validation is documented in the report.

Commissioner Brown sent the Chair a draft report from the Data Center Water subcommittee.

Chair Stormont stated that the full report still needs to be compiled before it will be ready for consideration by the Commission.

10. Climate Resilience report

This report was covered during Agenda Item #7.

11. Energy Manager report

Energy Manager Catanzaro discussed TREE, the project proposed by Council Member Cunningham. It includes three ways to look at how the City could offer the energy to the community. The City Attorney is reviewing the proposal.

12. Subcommittee reports

None.

13. Future agenda items and meeting dates/times

Starting in June 2026, the Commission meeting will move to the 2nd Thursday of the month from 4-6pm to accommodate Commissioners' work schedules. The location will remain hybrid: in-person at the Ward 6 Office and online with Teams.

14. Adjournment – 4:00pm

Meeting adjourned by Committee Chair Stormont at 4pm.