



## SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION - REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 20, 2022

Pursuant to Assembly Bill 361, by Governor Newsom, this meeting was conducted by teleconference and there was no in-person public access to the meeting location.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Barrett called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** A quorum was present for this Regular Meeting of the City of Palm Springs Sustainability Commission.

	<u>This Meeting</u>	<u>Present to Date</u>	<u>FY 2022/2023 Excused Absences</u>	<u>FY 2022/2023 Unexcused Absences</u>
Don Barrett, Chair	X	14		
Randy Evans, Vice Chair	X	11	1	
Carl Baker	X	42		
David Freedman	X	77		
Jennifer Futterman	U	50		1
Jake Torrens	X	12	1	

X = Present

E = Excused (notified Chair and Staff of absence)

L = Late

U = Unexcused (did not notify of absence)

**REPORT OF POSTING OF AGENDA:** The Agenda was available for public access at the City Hall exterior bulletin board (west side of the Council Chambers) by 5:30 PM Thursday, September 13, 2022, and posted on the City's website as required by established policies and procedures.

**CITY STAFF PRESENT:** David Newell, Assistant Director of Planning, and Lindsey-Paige McCloy, Director, Office of Sustainability

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA:** Chair Don Barrett stated that there has been a change to the Agenda: information for the Turf Conversion, section D2, was not posted in time for public review, so it was removed from today's Agenda and will be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting. Chair Barrett asked if there were any objections to the amended agenda for the September 20, 2022, meeting. There were no objections, and the amended agenda was declared accepted.

### WELCOME AND CHAIR'S COMMENTS:

- Due to the absence of a staff member (Tracy Sheldon) who usually manages procedures, Director McCloy and Chair Barrett pulled the essential agenda items together for posting; some items were missed, partly due to some confusion on the website.
- Today's meeting will cover: the General Plan's Safety Element, which the Commission commented on in June; and biking and mobility.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS – No comments

### STAFF COMMENTS

- Flinn Fagg, Deputy City Manager – Not present
- Director Lindsey-Paige McCloy introduced herself as this was her first Commission meeting. There is much public interest in the turf conversion rebates and this will be discussed in the next meeting with time for public review.
  - Airport Demonstration Garden – This will go before the City Council at the next meeting for approval so the relationship with the contractor can be closed as it is in a substantially completed

construction phase. Director McCloy is working with the contractor to add nutrient enhancements and do site cleanup. Signage is needed for interpretive information, plant identification, and to direct visitors to the garden area to assist in educating the public. An opening and ribbon-cutting is planned, and Desert Water Agency representatives will be invited as they provided funding for the project.

- Smoking Ordinance – This is planned to move forward at the October 13, 2022, City Council meeting. There have been no significant changes since the last Commission review, so the staff report is being completed for City Council.

## A. PRESENTATION

1. David Newell, Assistant Director of Planning, City of Palm Springs, and PlaceWorks provide an update to the General Plan Safety Element
  - Drafting of the Safety Element Process began with the Vulnerability Assessment in June. The draft document can be reviewed at [www.psgeneralplan.com](http://www.psgeneralplan.com), and click on Documents, then click on the Safety Element link.
  - Presentation by Jacqueline Protsman and Eli Krispi of PlaceWorks
    - The Safety Element is a mandated part of the General Plan
    - Identifies hazards and concerns
    - Shapes policies to protect Palm Springs – residents, economic drivers, infrastructure, and environment - in cases of fire, evacuation, seismic events, high winds, floods, and other topics
    - Current Safety Element plan is 15 years old. State laws requires updates every 8 years.
    - The Safety Element Plan is a high level, comprehensive public safety approach which includes sustainability, hazard mitigation, and emergency operations (internal) plans for a cohesive safety and resiliency approach.
    - There are several new laws in effect since 2007
      - SB 1241 – Increase requirement in flood and wildfires sections
      - SB 379 – Assess climate-related hazards - which are more frequent and intense – and evaluates policies to recover from impacts
        - Regional wildfires
        - Drought and extreme heat
        - Intense rainfall, which could trigger flooding
        - Poorer air quality from sandstorms and regional fires
      - AB 2140 – Incorporation of the local hazard mitigation plan, which makes the city potentially eligible for disaster relief funds
      - SB 99 / AB 747 – Evacuation routes and assesses evacuation-constrained areas
    - Key Vulnerabilities include households in poverty, outdoor workers, senior living alone, single access roads and home, outdoor recreation areas and parks, woodland, and energy delivery, public transit, water, and wastewater services
  - Safety Element topic updates include: prioritization of the Disaster Preparedness section and the addition of sections for climate change and multiple natural hazards identified in the vulnerability assessment; updates to data to meet requirements of the Government Code; and revisions to mapping to reflect best available data.
  - Updates to policies and actions
    - Disaster Preparedness Response and Recovery - the location of essential facilities outside of hazard prone areas, collaboration, and coordination between agencies, ensuring adequate evacuation routes and infrastructure for implementation, and establish resilience centers (community centers that can be used to provide emergency services and preparation)
    - Seismic Hazards - removal of seismic hazards and retrofitting of utility infrastructure
    - Geologic Hazards - geotechnical investigation for geologic hazards
    - Flood and Dam Inundation Hazards – minimize exposure to hazards, coordination between agencies and water districts; and the utilization of nature-based solutions and pervious surfaces
    - Urban Fire and Wildlife Hazards – minimization of risks, agency coordination, fire safe designs, obtaining a Fire Risk Reduction Community designation
    - Hazardous Materials and Waste – reduction of waste and coordination between agencies
    - Airport Safety – prohibiting incompatible uses in influence areas and the coordination of review with agencies

- Police and Fire Services – enforcing installation of fire protection water systems, ensuring adequate resources for new development, and maintain active service levels for police and fire services
- Climate Change Resilience, only SB 379 requirements and vulnerability assessment findings – coordination with agencies to increase resilience, supporting the weatherizing and protecting of structures, expanding drought tolerant green infrastructure, shifting work hours, and providing resources for outdoor workers, incorporating energy-efficient features into structures, and using natural features and ecosystem processes. Commissioner Freedman stressed the need to ensure that the Desert Community Energy network is fully integrated into the plan as they are the lead service provider for getting the electrons for electricity. Palm Springs Disposal would be included in services for solid waste.
- Multiple Natural Hazards – ensuring essential, sensitive, or high-occupancy facilities function during and after a disaster, minimizing risk by identifying hazardous areas, designating hazard zones as open space, collaborating with Caltrans to increase resiliency of roadways, and implementing warnings and evacuation plans in hazard prone areas
- Currently in the Public Review Period of the schedule, which includes the CAL FIRE review period; a general plan Steering Committee Meeting is planned for December 2022, CEQA Process in January 2023, and Approval Hearings in March 2023
- Commissioner Freedman requests that Director McCloy will send the Commissioners a copy of the draft plan for review and comments. Commissioner Freedman said he would work to ensure that plan fully integrates the work being done by Desert Community Energy and CVAG. David Newell would like comments in the next two weeks.

**B. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES** – Chair Barrett inquired if there were any objections to the Regular June 28, 2022 and July 19, 2022 meeting minutes.

- June 28, 2022 minutes accepted, Commissioner Baker abstaining as he was not present
- July 19, 2022 minutes accepted, Commissioner Torrens abstaining as he was not present

**C. OLD BUSINESS- NONE**

**D. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Biking and mobility

Question regarding the committee's approach to mobility, expanding it beyond biking and the shift away from motorized transportation, to look at mobility holistically, how that fits into climate strategies and additional sources of funding. Commissioner Torrens mentioned the need to eliminate silos and combine platforms, including pedestrian and mobility, for a reimagined mobility platform that looks at multimodal ways to address climate change. Question if this should be a subcommittee or examined by the entire commission; if it's a subcommittee, it would only be two people. Commissioner Torrens mentioned comments in the May City Council meeting to reduce the number of commissions and manage focus areas in different ways, but mobility would be appropriate for the Sustainability Commission; the biking survey was raised in January 2022 and any inaction needs to be addressed.

The need to educate the public is important but starts by learning what mobility choices citizens make. Language in the survey should be revised to distinguish biking as an exercise versus biking for transportation. Survey goals: to keep it short; provide directional insights into choices; frame questions to learn how citizens get around the city. It may be possible to launch the current survey with some tweaks and reorganization of its structure.

Vice Chair Evans is in favor of moving forward with the survey and for the commission to redefine what mobility means for sustainability and the commission. Commissioner Freedman states that the two levers that local governments can use to reduce GHG (greenhouse gas emissions) are mobility options, including CVLink, and EV Chargers; he is in favor of launching the survey soon. Director McCloy to resend June 4<sup>th</sup> survey to Commission members for review. The City does not have a Transportation department, but recently hired a Transportation Planner. Next steps for survey:

- i. Commissioner Torrens to share recent version of survey, and feedback; deadline of 2 weeks for comments

- ii. Give all the Committee members a chance to weigh in the survey, consolidate feedback
- iii. Commissioner Torrens to share the progress with the Commission

#### **E. SUBCOMMITTEE AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

1. Standing Subcommittee on Waste Reduction – Nothing to report.
2. Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Strategic Planning and General Plan Update – Nothing to report.
3. Solar and Green Building – Commissioner Freedman
  - In the last month, we've seen the most comprehensive set of Federal and State pro-climate legislation.
  - A number of opportunities for funding favored projects of the Sustainability Commission. How to stay abreast and manage those funding opportunities is a regional discussion at the CVAG level.
  - New SB 379 will require cities and counties to adopt SolarAPP+. Commissioner Freedman has been discussing this with city staff, particularly Taja Sims. The Governor signed legislation that requires Palm Springs to have adoption no later than September 30, 2024; under the CalAPP program, the California Energy Commission (CEC) will reimburse for all of the costs. Information will be sent to Director McCloy for discussion next week.
  - Working with Director McCloy and staff on various ordinances, timelines, and Commissioner Freedman will look at what CVAG resources are available.
4. World Environment Day – On hold
5. Bicycle Routes and Cycling – Commissioner Torrens reported earlier in the meeting.
6. Water Conservation – Commissioner Freedman reported
  - Palm Desert approved another \$1.5 million dollars; staff report will be sent to Director McCloy, and she can work with Ashley Metzger of DWA.
  - Rancho Mirage and Palm Desert approached it as providing funding for the CVWD program and they consolidated it into one application.
  - \$150,000 is available to be allocated from the City to DWA, with the goal of keeping administrative friction to a minimum. Residents apply to Desert Water Agency and say this is what the city will match.
7. Wellness – Commissioner Baker reported
  - Smoking Ordinance will go to the City Council next month
8. Desert Community Energy, Community Advisory Committee – Commissioner Freedman reported
  - Working on requirements from the California Public Utilities Commission for all of the energy providers to get additional energy.
  - On the upcoming board agenda is the renewable power purchase agreement for a geothermal project in Utah, so we will get more geothermal energy
  - Power Content Label is also on the Agenda
  - Council member Kors asked for an update on the amount of GHG reductions driven by Desert Community Energy. For those on the carbon free program, the amount of GHG is zero
  - Edison will release its power label next week for filing with the CEC by September 30<sup>th</sup>, so we will have it by early October. We will provide a memo stating the savings by Palm Springs residents and businesses.
  - The heat wave put strain on the electric grid, but not much of an issue in the Palm Springs area. Messaging should be improved for preparations as this is something we need to expect each summer.
  - Inland Regional Energy Network will launch programs by the end of 2022, early 2023, with \$11 million per year from ratepayers that's returned to Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Waiting for Councils of Government to approve agreements and a number of Request for Proposals responses are in hand.
  - The CVAG Energy and Environmental Resources Committee is looking into Valley Wide heat mitigation strategies.

- Question from Director McCloy, for institutional memory, of what the city has discussed or done to mitigate its own impacts during an emergency. Commissioner Freedman stated that it's something that needs to be investigated; it's a broader discussion and he will send back comments. Commissioner Freedman acted in the capacity of an Emergency Management Coordinator during the recent heat wave since he received real-time information from Edison on potential power outages and it's unclear if it was received by anyone at the city.

**F. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND UPCOMING AGENDA**

- Commissioner Baker stated that he did not see sustainability in food service items in the Casino and if this could be discussed with the tribes. Director McCloy recently met with members of the Tribes Planning Commission, and she will contact them.
- Commissioner Evans would like to revisit sustainable practices in food service with local restaurants
- Commissioner Evans would like to discuss the updating of the strategic plan
- Presentation regarding the rollout of SB 1383, and what messaging is going out to residents and businesses

**G. ADJOURNMENT** - The meeting of the Sustainability Commission adjourned. They adjourned to the Regular Meeting of the Sustainability Commission to be held at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 18, 2022, location to be determined. There is a possibility that the next meeting will be via telecommunication also. The Sustainability Commission's regular meeting schedule is at 5:30 p.m. the third Tuesday each month except August unless otherwise noted or amended.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lindsey-Paige McCloy, Director, Office of Sustainability