



**SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION - REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
 Tuesday, October 15, 2019 Palm Springs City Hall, Large Conference Room

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Clark called the meeting to order at **5:00** p.m.

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

**AGENDA APPROVAL:** The agenda was presented by Chair Clark. A motion to approve was posted by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Goins and unanimously carried by an open vote.

	This Meeting	Present to Date	FY 2019/2020 Excused Absences	FY 2019/2020 Unexcused Absences
Roy Clark, Chair	X	38		
Robert McCann, Vice Chair	X	36		
David Freedman	X	48		
Jennifer Futterman	X	34	1	
Greg Gauthier	E	28	1	
John Goins	X	24	1	
T Santora	E	14	1	
Carl Baker	L	16		
Jim Flanagan	X	7	1	
Lani Miller	X	7		
Sandra Garratt	X	3		

X = Present  
 L = Late

E = Excused (notified Chair and Staff of absence)  
 U = did not notify of absence

**CITY STAFF PRESENT:** Patrick Tallarico, Manager, Office of Sustainability; Daniel DeGarmo, Program Coordinator; Gary Calhoun, Recycling Coordinator.

**CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** Christy Holstege

**CITY MANAGER / STAFF COMMENTS –** Manager Tallarico reported on the following:

- At the September 18, 2019 Council meeting the purchase of the Downtown trash containers was approved unanimously. There was also a first reading of the “No Dogs Allowed on Trails” ordinance.
- At the October 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, Council Member Middleton asked that we do all we can to expand our EV charging network. Council Member Holstege asked that the Committee look into the implementation status of the Climate Action Plan and consider adopting a Climate Emergency Resolution. At the second reading of the “No Dogs Allowed on Trails” ordinance, one member of the public asked whether dogs could go on the lower parts of the trails based on a previous environmental study. The Council agreed to revisit the ordinance at the next meeting after conducting additional research.
- At the October 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting the Desert Protection Act resolution will be put forward on the Consent Calendar and there will be a brief presentation on SB 1383.
- At the November 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Solar Zoning Ordinance and building code changes are to be included on the agenda.
- Manager Tallarico attended a meeting with staff from the Agua Caliente Cultural Center to coordinate on sustainability issues. They suggested that if the Commission would like to meet with the tribe on the arena, we should coordinate with the Mayor and Council Member Roberts. It was suggested that this should include a discussion of trash and recycling, parking, and plastics.
- Manager Tallarico also met with the new Sustainability staff that will oversee the Convention Center and agreed to follow up on potential best practices for meetings.
- The business cards were updated based on feedback from the last meeting.
- ONE PS Brown Bag is planned for October 17<sup>th</sup>.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS –**

Peter Maietta – Palm Springs. Mr. Maietta is running for City council in District 2. He emphasized the importance of sustainability issues to the city. He also provided an overview of his platform.

Bob Ballard - Courageous Resistance Climate Crisis Committee Co-Facilitator. He announced a November 9<sup>th</sup> Climate Crisis Forum event that will be held from November 1-3 PM in Coachella at the Veterans Park. Students have been invited to speak. He emphasized the importance of raising the alarm level for the climate crisis and encouraged the Commission to continue to do important work to address the impacts of climate change.

Kim Floyd - Palm Desert. Mr. Floyd strongly supported the recognition of a climate crisis. There are opportunities at the local level to do something about it. He offered the assistance of the Sierra Club. He will send fliers about the Climate Crisis Forum to Manager Tallarico to distribute to the Commissioners.

**A. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS –**

**B. MEETING MINUTES**

September 17, 2019 Regular Meeting minutes approval: A minor editorial change was suggested by Commissioner Freedman. Motion by Commissioner Freedman to approve with correction, second by Commissioner Goins. Motion passed 7-0-1 with Commissioner Futterman abstaining. (Commissioner Baker arrived after this vote).

**C. RECYCLING REPORT, Recycling Coordinator Gary Calhoun reported on the following:**

1. Special events – The City will hold an e-waste and shredding event and bulk waste collection on October 19, 2019.
2. Site Visits – Mr. Calhoun and Manager Tallarico visited about 12 businesses to discuss compliance with recycling and organics requirements. There are approximately 140 businesses on the list to contact.

The Commission agreed to reverse the order of Old Business and New Business to discuss the two New Business items while Council Member Holstege was present.

**D. OLD BUSINESS**

Commissioners discussed the following items. Key points are highlighted.

1. Student rep from Palm Springs High School or Desert Learning Academy.
  - Manager Tallarico confirmed that only Desert Learning Academy and Palm Springs HS have high-school level students. He also checked with other Commissions and confirmed that there were no student reps on other commissions. Parks & Recreation expressed interest in adding one. He will work with Parks & Recreation staff to issue a request for interest.
2. Fountain grass eradication.
  - Manager Tallarico will follow up with Maintenance on City practices.
3. Community garden naming plan.
  - The group discussed the plan to have a naming ceremony and tree planting ceremony in honor of Michele Mician. Commissioner Futterman will work with Commissioner Garrett and an arborist to identify appropriate fruit trees and will bring recommendations to the Commission at the next meeting.
4. Leaf blower enforcement
  - Manager Tallarico has started to send letters to homeowners to inform them of complaints about gardeners on their properties. He is also going to bring forward potential changes to the enforcement program to the ONE-PS Code Enforcement Committee and back to the Sustainability Commission. This includes potentially fining the homeowners if they are aware of the violation, and increasing fine amounts.

## E. NEW BUSINESS

### 1. Single-use Plastics Ordinance Draft

- Manager Tallarico solicited additional interest in surveying local food service establishments to determine the type of foodware they use.
- Manager Tallarico reviewed the key elements of the ordinance including the focus on reuse because disposables are not a long-term solution.
  - The group discussed the option to require reusables. Members felt that reusables should be required for everyone instead of having a business size cutoff. Hardship should be determined on a case-by-case basis. Addressing tourist traffic may be a challenge. It might provide an opportunity for a reusable cup service or a remote dish washing service.
  - The ordinance would allow for rapidly biodegradable disposables or foil containers that can be recycled.
  - It allows for paper wrapping for food for in-house dining.
  - It also requires accessories on demand.
  - It also allows for bio-based plastics that meet the biodegradability standard.
  - It includes a requirement to allow customers to bring in reusable containers.
  - It does not include a fee for disposables if the money comes back to the city because that would constitute a tax.
  - The group discussed the broader restriction on the sale of polystyrene food service ware. Commissioners were generally supportive of the broader ban. Commissioner Miller suggested expanding that ban to include coolers and containers made from polystyrene that is not fully contained due to health and environmental concerns. Commissioner McCann suggested we broaden the foodware ban to only allow rapidly biodegradable products to be sold in stores – not just limit the restriction to polystyrene.
- Additional comments:
  - Consider adjusting pricing for waste materials versus recyclables and other materials.
  - Consider having a fee for disposables in retail spaces that could be used by vendors to offset costs of preferred products.
  - Monitor state requirements on cannabis packaging for impact on single-use plastics.
- Council members visited the School Board, and they expressed an interest in supporting the City's direction.
- The development time frame will be dependent on how rapidly the additional outreach and research can be conducted.

### 2. Climate Action Plan and Potential Additional Efforts to Address Climate Change

- The group discussed the potential next steps for doing more to address climate change. Commissioner Freedman noted that if we do a resolution, it should be concrete. He noted a few things that are under development through the Solar and Green Building Subcommittee. Chair Clarke noted that some of the things in the Climate Action Plan and the Sustainability Plan have been done, including the ban on gas powered leaf blowers. Commissioner Miller also noted the important role of waste in the generation of greenhouse gas emissions that needs to be accounted for and addressed.
- Commissioner Goins emphasized the importance of promoting basic activities such as walking and biking to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Council Member Holstege provided some background on the request. In particular what we are doing to ensure accountability on the Climate Action Plan. Reporting is not coming back to City Council or to the public.
- The group discussed what a product would look like that could convey progress and what resources would be needed. Vice Chair McCann suggested that one concrete thing that Council could do is advocate for more resources for sustainability to do the kind of assessment needed to understand where we are in relation to our goals and to identify potential opportunities for action. He also suggested that the City could get more aggressive in its targets.
- Manager Tallarico suggested developing a memo or roadmap that acknowledges that we know this is a problem, document what we have done, what we plan to do, and what resources we need to go further. The group agreed to try to have a draft at the next Commission meeting and have further discussions on how to engage with Council and the public.

- Council Member Holstege suggested that the group consider whether Sustainability needs a Council Subcommittee or whether a Council member needs to make more regular appearances at Commission meetings.
- Manager Tallarico will look into how other commissions and committees regard student reps.

## F. COMMITTEE AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioners discussed the following items. Key points are highlighted.

1. Standing Subcommittee on Solar and Green Building - Commissioners Freedman and Flanagan  
Commissioner Freedman reported on the following:
  - The Energy Code Training Program will be held on Wednesday, November 6, 2019. Commission members were encouraged to attend.
  - Solar Zoning Ordinance will go to Planning Commission on October 23<sup>rd</sup> and then on to the City Council on November 6<sup>th</sup> if things go as planned.
  - Sol Smart suggested including a statement about requiring that the area under ground-mounted systems should be used to promote pollinators. Commissioner Freedman will work on language to potentially include in the Solar Zoning Ordinance.
  - We will do a session on sustainability and historic preservation in the Spring.
  - Home Energy Label Pilot program. Residents would be encouraged to conduct an audit to identify opportunities for energy efficiency. The program will provide them with a rebate of up to \$100. Commissioner Freedman proposed a motion to approve the program at a budget of \$10,000. Commissioner Flanagan noted that it will require additional staff resources to administer and monitor. DCE may be able to provide subsidies to residents to make improvements. The motion was passed unanimously by the 9 members present.
2. Standing Subcommittee on Waste Reduction – Vice Chair McCann, Chair Clark, Commissioner Miller
  - Manager Tallarico reported on the following:
    - Signage is being developed for trash and recycling containers.
    - The pilot is moving forward with the Cultural Center. They are looking at alternative materials for the café and new recycling receptacles.
3. Standing Subcommittee on World Environment Day – Commissioners Futterman, Gauthier, Santora
  - No meeting this month, no report.
4. Standing Subcommittee on Water Conservation – Commissioners Freedman and Miller. Commissioner Freedman reported on:
  - First committee meeting in October.
  - The Committee discussed increased compliance with water waste rules.
  - DWA reported an 11.5% reduction in potable water use.
  - DWA reported that there was some testing for PFAS in groundwater, but it did not appear in Palm Springs wells.
5. Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Earth Day – Commissioner Baker
  - The group has not met. There was some discussion of having a tree planting on Earth Day. Concerns were raised about the timing of the planting and whether that was an acceptable time frame.
6. Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Walkability & Pedestrian Planning - Commissioners Wilson, Gauthier, Futterman
  - Manager Tallarico stated the consultant proposals will be reviewed in October and selected in early November.
7. Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Crosswalks and Pedestrian Safety – Chair Clark noted that he had not been able to meet yet with city staff.
8. Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Bicycle Routes and Cycling – Commissioner Flanagan
  - Commissioner Flanagan and Mr. DeGarmo will be working on the Bicycle Friendly Community designation application with the assistance of Vic Yepello. Engineering has already done some work on collecting biking route information.
9. Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Night Sky – Vice Chair McCann and Commissioner Flanagan
  - Commissioner Flanagan stated that the Subcommittee is looking into incentives for promoting better night sky practices and working with new construction projects to inform them about best practices.

10. Big Horn Sheep Habitat Protection – Commissioner Flanagan

- Manager Tallarico met with members of the public to develop a volunteer trail monitoring team that would help inform people about the no dogs on trails ordinance and other helpful hiking information. There is a call for volunteers on the Save Oswit Canyon Facebook page. The plan is to have volunteers at major trail heads in the morning to serve as a resource.

11. Wellness – Commissioner Baker

- Top of the tram race, Desert Aids Walk, and Desert Regional Wellness Fair will be held the weekend of October 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Roundup is no longer being used by the City. Commissioner Garratt suggested it should not be allowed anywhere. Commissioner Baker noted that the chemical companies are presenting data that it is not harmful which is why there has not been broader action.

12. Desert Community Energy, Community Advisory Committee – Commissioners Baker, Freedman, Miller.  
There was no meeting since the last Commission meeting.

**G. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND UPCOMING AGENDA DEVELOPMENT -**

Boards and Commissions Training is Monday December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Commissioner Futterman attended the Wild and Scenic Film Festival to gather information about how they do their festival. She will continue to follow up on potential partnering opportunities to hold a similar festival. Commissioner Garratt reported on the Salton Sea meeting at UC Riverside on October 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. She also noted that the State of California banned all new furs.

Vice Chair McCann reported on the efforts of save Oswit Canyon and requested that Commissioners get in touch with him if they know of people that would host a house party or if they want a lawn sign.

**H. ADJOURNMENT** - The meeting of the Sustainability Commission adjourned at 7:14 PM by a motion from Commissioner Flannigan and seconded by Commissioner Garratt and approved by a unanimous vote. They adjourned to the Regular Meeting of the Sustainability Commission to be held at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 19, 2019, in the Large Conference Room at the Palm Springs City Hall. The Sustainability Commission's regular meeting schedule is at 5:00 p.m. the third Tuesday each month except August unless otherwise noted or amended.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patrick Tallarico, Manager, Office of Sustainability