

## Meeting Notes

# Solar on Multifamily Affordable Housing (SOMAH) Advisory Council Meeting

June 26, 2019

Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice, Jurupa,  
California

## Attendees

### SOMAH Program Administrators

**Chris Walker** | SOMAH Program Manager  
**Marisa Villarreal** | SOMAH Program Manager  
**Jae Berg** | SOMAH Program Manager  
**Hannah Warner** | SOMAH Program Manager

### SOMAH Advisory Council Members

**Allen Hernandez** | Executive Director, Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice  
**Agustin Cabrera** | Senior Community Organizer, Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy  
**Andrea Barnier** | Senior Asset Management Specialist, Self-Help Enterprises  
**Andres Ramirez** | Policy Director, Pacoima Beautiful  
**Cynthia Strathman** | Executive Director, Strategic Actions for a Just Economy  
**JB Tengco** | West Coast Director, BlueGreen Alliance  
**Kenneth Wells** | CEO & Founder, O&M Solar Services  
**Noemí Gallardo** | Senior Manager, Public Policy, Sunrun  
**Sochiata Vutthy** | Senior Asset Manager, Community Housing Works

### Meeting Facilitators

**Anthony Giancatarino** | Consultant  
**Strela Cervas** | Consultant

## Meeting Agenda

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## Meeting Notes

### Meeting Welcome

*Allen Hernandez, CCAEJ*

**Overview:** Allen Hernandez, Executive Director of the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAIEJ), welcomed the SOMAH Advisory Council (AC) and SOMAH Program Administrators to CCAIEJ, gave a brief acknowledgement of the occupied and native land that the meeting was taking place on, and provided a brief background and history of CCAIEJ.

#### Notes:

- Acknowledged the meeting was taking place on indigenous, colonized lands - 12 tribes resided and continue to reside in the area
- Origin story: Toxic waste/dump site affecting the community and making community sick. Penny (founder) through grassroots actions with the community helped to stop dumping and create one of CA's first superfund sites.
- Surrounding hills and this community space is very much part of the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice, which is dedicated to environmental justice with zero emission and clean energy technology

### Meeting Ground Rules

*Anthony and Strela, Facilitators*

**Overview:** Meeting facilitators Anthony and Strela asked AC members to offer meeting ground rules and best practices for this and future AC meetings.

#### Notes:

- Assume best intentions
- Be present and attentive
- Do not interrupt fellow members

- Stay ontopic

- Try to be succinct
- Speaking truth and being open (safe space)
- Bring active engagement
- Mind your technology

## SOMAH Program Status/Overview

*Chris Walker, GRID Alternatives*

**Overview:** Chris Walker, SOMAH Program Manager, presented an overview of the SOMAH program including goals (install 300 mW of solar between now and 2030; provide benefits to hundreds of thousands of affordable housing residents/tenants; and ensure equal access to solar and help reduce tenant energy bills) and key program components/requirements, as well as an overview of SOMAH Advisory Council roles and responsibilities (to inform program implementation and hold Program Administrator Team accountable to the communities they are trying to serve).

### Notes:

- SOMAH is an unprecedented program with regards to scope and scale, putting solar on multifamily affordable housing. Overseen by the California Public Utilities Commission, SOMAH ensures tenant benefits, and includes workforce development requirements that are baked in (i.e., each installation has to have at least one job trainee, and will help hundreds of thousands of people enter solar workforce over time). Program launches July 1!
- SOMAH Program Administration Team (PA Team) and Partners:
  - Program Admin Team: GRID Alternatives, Center for Sustainable Energy (CSE), Association for Energy Affordability (AEA), and California Housing Partnership (CHPC)
  - Other Program Partners:
    - Job-training partner: Rising Sun Center for Opportunity
    - Marketing, Education & Outreach partners: California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA), Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN), Environmental Health Coalition (EHC), Communities for a Better Environment (CBE).
- Program Goals:
  - Install 300 MW of solar between now and 2030, providing

benefits to hundreds of thousands of affordable housing  
residents/tenants

- To assure equal access to solar and help reduce energy bills primarily for tenants.
- Budget: Up to \$100 million/yr -- based off of GHG emission auction revenues.
- Program Incentives
  - Incentives will make up 90% of the budget (the remaining 10% has been allocated to admin costs)
  - Leveraging low-income housing tax credit
  - No cost technical assistance to property owners
  - SOMAH has market transformation aspirations -- incentive will step down over time, will publish cost data in aggregate, but multifamily affordable housing solar market still depends on incentives to work.
  - SOMAH is an important investment at this stage.
- Marketing, Education, and Outreach
  - Partnering with 4 community-based organizations on education and outreach: California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA), Asia-Pacific Environmental Network (APEN), Environmental Health Coalition (EHC), Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), to develop and execute the Marketing, Education, and Outreach (ME&O) strategy
  - SOMAH Program Administrator Team (PA Team) will release draft for public comment and AC feedback in coming weeks
  - 6 objectives:
    - 215 eligible applications and at least 15 MW completed this year
    - Initiate long-term strategies to ensure a strong pipeline of projects
    - Build and engage a robust and diverse contractor base
    - Job trainee participation
    - Educate tenants
    - Ensure other stakeholders are informed about the program and engaged.
  - Advisory Council meetings (quarterly) and public fora will help keep the program accountable to the communities that it is trying to serve.
- Property requirements
  - Units have to be individually metered, and from existing building stock.
  - 80% of property residents must have incomes at or below 60% of

area median income, and/or property must be located in a Disadvantaged Community (DAC) as defined by CalEnviroScreen

- Housing must be in an eligible utility territory: Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E), Southern California Edison Company (SCE), San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E), Liberties Utilities Company (Liberty), and PacifiCorp
- Project-based Section 8 are not currently eligible
- Application tracks
  - Track A -- applies for upfront technical assistance
  - Track B -- contractor already has a "deal" in-hand and brings property owner into our pipeline.
  - Either track can receive standard technical assistance after reservation request.
- Job training requirements
  - Contractors have to hire eligible job trainees for each project
  - # of trainees and # of hours required are dictated by project size
  - Trainees must either be currently enrolled in an eligible job training program, or have graduated within the last 12 months from an eligible training program, or be a tenant in the property.
- Energy Efficiency Requirements
  - Property has to hire credentialed energy auditor, or must demonstrate recent or active participation in existing energy upgrade or rehab program
  - Solar-sizing tool available to help determine requirements
  - Load growth is accounted for -- if property owner can demonstrate load growth aspects (like EV charging, or electrification of equipment)
- Key readings and resources
  - AB 693
  - SOMAH Program Handbook
  - [SOMAH website](#)
  - DRAFT Marketing, Education, & Outreach Plan for Year 1
  - Webinars (upcoming): July 16 -- [SOMAH Program Overview for Property Owners](#), and July 23 -- [Contractor Eligibility Training](#)
  - SOMAH Program Implementation Plan
- Questions/Discussion:
  - *On bidding process, how do you see contractors being able to gain edge with a property owner? → Salespersonship, demonstrating overall benefits and not*



*just the cost, SOMAH will do our part to encourage*

*property owners to look beyond total cost, and consider the overall benefits package through, for instance, the standard bidding form which tries to provide a holistic picture of a contractor's offering*

- *We will share bid template for AC review and feedback for future iterations.*
- *What if they're a tenant, but not part of eligible job training program?  
- Tenants are automatically eligible.*
- *How attractive will tenants be vs. trainees that have gone through an eligible program? → Unclear, but this is something that we will track over time.*
- *Is there formal encouragement for hiring locally? → We encourage it, but don't require it. "Local" = same county that thing is being installed. As we want contractors to retain trainees for multiple installs or for long-term or permanent employment, a local hiring requirement may have the effect of increasing turnover of trainees. Another important category of trainees are folks from "targeted" communities, such as residents of disadvantaged communities (per CalEnviroScreen 3.0), affordable housing residents, women, people of color, and other individuals who have faced or who have overcome at least one of the following barriers to employment: being homeless, being a custodial single parent, receiving public assistance, lacking a GED or high school diploma, participating in a vocational English as a second language program, or having a criminal record or other involvement with the criminal justice system.*
- *Are SOMAH and Rising Sun trainees eligible? → Yes, this hasn't been identified as a potential source of conflict. There is no financial gain to GRID or Rising Sun.*

## Advisory Council Governance

*Strela Cervas and Anthony Giancattarino, Facilitators*

**Overview:** The purpose of this agenda item was to decide collectively which process/method the AC will employ for decision-making (consensus, supermajority, majority) as a body, and to elect a Chair and Vice-chair. After a discussion, the AC decided to employ supermajority decision-making

with a caveat that every vote begin with a “Fist to 5” exercise, and a discussion to ensure all perspectives are voiced, recorded, and shared with the SOMAH PA Team along with any final recommendations provided by the Council. Ken Wells self-nominated and was voted

into the role of Chair unanimously. Noemi Gallardo was nominated by Ken Wells to serve as Vice-Chair, and voted into the role unanimously. Key outcomes include:

- AC will operate with supermajority decision-making.
- Ken Wells, CEO & Founder, O&M Solar Services was elected to AC Chair
- Noemi Gallardo, Senior Manager, Public Policy, Sunrun was elected to AC Vice-Chair

**Notes:**

- Decision-making
  - Options discussed: Majority, supermajority, and consensus
    - Consensus model: 100% must be in full agreement. "Fist to 5" approach. All AC members must agree
    - Supermajority model : At least  $\frac{2}{3}$ , or 7 AC members required to make a vote carry
    - Majority model: Over 50% or 5 AC members required to make a vote carry
  - All opinions (majority and minority) expressed during decision-making will be reviewed and considered by the SOMAH PA team
  - Supermajority was selected as governance/decision-making model -- with "Fist to 5" approach and discussion at the outset of decision-making process
- Advisory Council Chair and Vice-chair selection
  - Chair responsibilities:
    - Ensure general AC functions
    - Ensure all members fully participate in meetings
    - Set meeting agendas w/SOMAH PA team and facilitate meetings
    - Ensure collective principles and processes are carried through
    - Calling votes
    - 2-year term
  - Ken Wells self-nominated and was voted into chair unanimously. Ken Wells is the SOMAH AC Chair
  - Noemi Gallardo was nominated by Ken Wells for Vice-chair and was voted in unanimously. Noemi Gallardo is the SOMAH AC Vice-chair
- Questions/Discussion
  - *How does SOMAH PA team make decisions?* → 4 PA

*organizations wmake decisions together, based on  
recommendations from the AC and other stakeholders.  
AC acts as thought partners to help guide and*

*advise how the PA team is implementing the existing program requirements.*

- *Does the "Fist to 5" approach have to be explicitly mentioned in the bylaws? → Could be helpful to have in bylaws as a charter, or guide, so that it makes the process clear.*

## Advisory Council Bylaws

*Strela Cervas and Anthony Giancatarino, Facilitators*

**Overview:** The purpose of this agenda item was for the AC to review, discuss, and provide recommendations to amend and update the bylaws.

Key outcomes include:

- A set of recommendations for immediate updates and amendments to the bylaws
- A set of recommendations and topics that require additional discussion by the AC and SOMAH PA team for potential future amendments/updates
- We'll be
- Finalized bylaws will be posted to <https://www.calsomah.org/>

### Notes:

Blue = recommendation to adjust/amend existing language  
Green = recommendations that warrant further discussion

- "Purpose" section
  - "Community advocates" -- broad umbrella, or specifically CBOs? Do we need more stakeholder types like contractors, workforce dev orgs, others, etc.?
    - Add in the word "stakeholders" and replace "community advocates" with "equity-focused advocates" as well as "for the purpose of tenants"
    - "Disadvantaged communities" -- suggestion to add in word "impacted". Add in the word "impacted" or language from handbook about CalEnviroScreen to be clear on requirements.
- "Roles" section:
  - How are the program performance metrics determined? How will performance be measured? Can we track additional metrics?

- Metrics that we're required to track are listed in the SOMAH Program Handbook. At each AC meeting the PA team will present a dashboard of metrics status for each category. *Additional metrics could be developed to assess and evaluate program goals and objectives.*

- Where will records be input and how? Where is the data going to be stored and tracked?
  - The SOMAH PA is responsible for data collection and analysis.. Most of the data collected is required to be made publicly available.
- Clarification on the term “employment” -- would like to get perspective from contractors on what the jobs look like, i.e. full-time, well-paid, mobility towards career development. And have clear requirements on training, compensation, etc.
  - PA Team will be monitoring these outcomes via Handbook- prescribed surveys to relevant stakeholders
- “Community benefit” - what does it look like and how can we determine it? (for example, “diverse” contractor could check a box, but that doesn't mean they'll provide full benefits).
  - Recommend additional conversation with AC around how we're defining and measuring “community benefit” to ensure that it's actually being achieved.
- “Meetings” section
  - How are we engaging and informing the public about AC meeting outcomes?
    - The body is not governed by The Brown Act, and the PA Team will have public fora quarterly. AC Meeting notes will also be made available to the public.
  - Teleconference option for meetings?
    - There are tradeoffs with teleconference options (technology issues, distractions). Recommend that any ad-hoc meetings be teleconference, but that quarterly AC meetings require in-person attendance.
- “Members” section
  - Recommend future AC members represent other potential sectors, including the public sector

## Next Steps and Next Meeting

*Strela Cervas and Anthony Giancatarino, Facilitators*

### Outcomes:

- Next SOMAH AC Meeting will take place on September 10, 2019. Location, TBD
- SOMAH PA Team will follow up on key outcomes and action items



including: circulating ME&O plan and Bid Template for AC feedback  
and review; sharing

meeting notes and materials; and following up on travel reimbursements and other logistics.