



**Draft Minutes**

**Community Advisory Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

6:00 pm

**In Person:**

The Lake Merritt Room  
Cal State East Bay - the Oakland Center  
In the Transpacific Centre  
1000 Broadway, Suite 109  
Oakland, CA 94607

**Or from the following remote locations:**

4563 Meyer Park Circle, Fremont, CA 94536  
3602 Thornton Ave. Fremont, CA 94536  
Castro Valley Starbucks: 2720 Castro Valley Blvd. Castro Valley, CA 94546  
Starbucks at 1857 11th St. Tracy, CA 95376  
500 metros Este del Canopy, Calle, Montezuma-Delicias Rd, Provincia de  
Puntarenas, Montezuma, 60111, Costa Rica

**Via Zoom:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84794506189>

**Or join by phone:**

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):  
US: +1 669 900 6833 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 929  
205 6099 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or 877 853 5257 (Toll Free)  
Webinar ID: 847 9450 6189

*Meetings are accessible to people with disabilities. Individuals who need special assistance or a disability-related modification or accommodation to participate in this meeting, or who have a disability and wish to request an alternative format for the meeting materials, should contact the Clerk of the Board at least 2 working days before the meeting at (510) 906-0491 or [cob@avaenergy.org](mailto:cob@avaenergy.org).*

*If you have anything that you wish to be distributed to the Committee, please email it to the clerk by 5:00 pm the day prior to the meeting.*

**C1. Welcome & Roll Call**

**Present: Members:** Landry, Swaminathan, Lakshman, Souza, Kaur, Lutz, Vice-Chair Hernandez and Chair Eldred

**Not Present: Members** Hu and Pacheco

**C2. (2:13) Public Comment**

*This item is reserved for persons wishing to address the Committee on any Ava Community Energy-related matters that are not otherwise on this meeting agenda. Public comments on matters listed on the agenda shall be heard at the time the matter is called. As with all public comment, members of the public who wish to address the Committee are customarily limited to three minutes per speaker and must complete an electronic [speaker slip](#). The Committee Chair may increase or decrease the time allotted to each speaker.*

**There were no speakers for public comment.**

**C3. (3:23) Approval of Minutes from January 16, 2024**

**Member Lutz** stated that his name appears in minutes as both present and not present. Member Lutz was not present for the January 16, 2024 meeting.

**Member Landry motioned to approve the minutes pending the correction to Member Lutz's attendance. Member Souza seconded the motion which was approved 7/0/2/1:**

**Yes: Members Landry, Swaminathan, Lakshman, Kaur, Souza, Vice-Chair Hernandez and Chair Eldred**

**Not Present: Members Hu and Pacheco**

**Abstain: Member Lutz**

**C4. (5:27) CAC Chair Report**

**Chair Eldred** announced that this would be her last meeting as chair.

**Chair Eldred** provided the following updates from the January 17, 2024 Board of Director's meeting:

- The Board of Directors approved the Fiscal Year Budget Surplus Allocation to working capital and reserve funds, with specific portions designated for customer credits and community resilience initiatives.
- The Board of Directors approved the Workforce and Environmental Justice Project Selection Criteria with a slight correction to the language around local hiring preferences to guarantee hiring diversity.
- The Board of Directors approved five Long-Term Contracts, including the Ignis Wind Farm Project in Mexico. The Ignis Wind Farm Project was

approved with additional conditions to ensure that Ava would have the right to terminate the contract if the Board determines that labor standards are not being met.

Members thanked Chair Eldred for her leadership and contributions to the CAC and broader community.

**C5. (17:30) Selection of Chair and Vice-Chair, and Term Assignments (CAC Action Item)**

**Chair Eldred motioned to appoint Vice-Chair Hernandez as Chair and Member Souza as Vice-Chair. Member Landry seconded the motion which passed 8/0/2:**

**Yes: Members Landry, Swaminathan, Lakshman, Kaur, Lutz, Souza, Vice-Chair Hernandez and Chair Eldred**

**Not Present: Members Hu and Pacheco.**

*Member Eldred passed the gavel to Chair Hernandez.*

**C6. (26:46) Resilience Hubs (CAC Informational Item)**

Informational update about resilience hubs

**JP Ross**, Vice President, Local Development, Electrification and Innovation, provided an update on Ava's plans to support the development of resilience hubs. The program aims to utilize the 2023 budget surplus to fund the development of hubs, with a focus on supporting community-based initiatives through grants, technical assistance, and solar + storage incentive programs. Community Innovation Grants, amounting to \$300,000 over three years, will be issued to work with community-based organizations to define and identify potential resilience hub sites. A technical assistance program will support sites with design, bid reviews, and grant writing for federal and state funding opportunities.

**(36:19) Member Lutz** asked if the solar and storage incentive was exclusively for resilience hubs and about the relationship between technical assistance and community grant periods. **JP Ross** responded that the incentive program is available for resilience hubs, and that technical assistance is intended to start simultaneously with the community grants.

**(37:27) Vice-Chair Souza** asked if resilience hubs would primarily focus on commercial or residential sectors. **JP Ross** responded that resilience hubs are expected to be more aligned with community-based or non-profit initiatives rather than the commercial or private sectors.

**(39:36) Public Comment: Bradley Cleveland** spoke in approval of the program and asked about the number of projects that could be funded with the allocated \$40 million budget, the expected size of the resilience hubs, and the timeframe for the rollout of the program. **JP Ross** responded that grant and technical assistance proposals are expected to be issued in March, with the incentive program aiming for approval in April and rollout in the second half of the year.

**(46:11) Vice-Chair Souza** asked about the potential for using electric car batteries as an energy resource during off-peak hours. **JP Ross** responded that there are technical and regulatory constraints currently preventing the widespread use of car batteries as part of resilience efforts.

**(49:05) Chair Hernandez** asked if Ava is considering various storage technologies, such as lithium-ion and iron phosphate. **JP Ross** confirmed that they are evaluating the technologies proposed for resilience programs, with technical assistance aimed at offering guidance and ensuring that only viable and safe options are considered.

**(50:36) Public Comment: Audrey Ichinose** asked about the reporting requirements that will be expected from the selected community-based organizations for the grant.

**(51:56) Jessica Tovar**, representing the East Bay Clean Power Alliance, asked about the timeline for providing feedback on this initiative. She also suggested that the grant selection process should involve members from the Community Advisory Committee.

**(55:19) Cris Manickam-Shirley** asked if Ava's has leveraged either PG&E's Community Microgrid Enablement program or its incentive programs in its resilience hubs strategy. He spoke about the incentive program's benefits, including technical support and financial assistance for equipment.

**(1:01:06) Member Lutz** asked if the program was limited to net metering and if additional incentives would be provided to encourage the generation of surplus energy. **JP Ross** responded that the program uses net metering for its flexibility in energy utilization but he is not planning to incentivize production due to cost concerns.

**(1:05:01) Chair Hernandez** asked about the funding levels for community grants, technical assistance and storage initiatives. **JP Ross** confirmed that community grants and technical assistance were already approved, with the allocation of the surplus to be finalized by the end of the fiscal year in June.

**(1:06:59) Jessica Tovar** asked about the timeline for providing feedback on solicitation related to the \$300,000 grant. **JP Ross** responded that there is no

specific date set for feedback yet as they are currently collecting input from the community and the CAC.

**C7. (1:08:51) Long-Term Contracts for Approval (CAC Action Item)**

Requesting Intersect Easley PPA Approval

**Karen Lee**, the power resources manager, outlined Ava's process of soliciting long-term clean energy resources initiated in April 2023, with the goal to enhance energy hedging, provide resource adequacy, and secure environmental attributes.

The proposal involved contracting with Intersect Power for a 150 MW capacity from the Easley Solar Project located in Riverside County, California, under a 10-year term. This would diversify Ava's portfolio and comply with CPUC's midterm reliability requirement. The project emphasizes union labor, prevailing wage, and meeting environmental standards through a special permitting process.

**(1:35:05) Member Swaminathan** asked about the reasoning behind choosing a 10-year term for new energy contracts. **Karen** responded that the 10-year duration meets the minimum requirement set by the California Public Utilities Commission for long-term contracts under the midterm reliability requirement. She explained that while typically longer contracts might offer lower prices, Ava Community Energy opts for a range of contract lengths to diversify its portfolio.

**(1:38:39) Member Souza** asked about the reporting on the local hiring numbers associated with the Intersect Power project. **Karen Lee** clarified that while the project is based in Riverside County and not within the immediate local area of Ava Community Energy's service territory, efforts would be made to involve local businesses and workforce within the project vicinity.

**(1:51:15) Public Comment: Steve Scala** asked about the transmission capacity of CA ISO to deliver power from the Riverside project to Ava's service area. **Karen Lee** affirmed that the project would have deliverability without requiring additional upgrades to the grid.

**Member Lutz motioned to approve the staff recommendation. Member Landry seconded the motion which passed 8/0/2:**  
**Yes: Members Landry, Eldred, Swaminathan, Lakshman, Kaur, Lutz, Vice-Chair Souza and Chair Hernandez**  
**Not Present: Member Hu and Pacheco**

**C8. (1:55:08) Disadvantaged Communities - Green Tariff / Community Solar Green Tariff Power Purchase Agreement (CAC Action Item)**

DAC-GT/CSGT PPA approval

**Eleanor Smith**, Connected Communities Manager, and **Shannon Rivers**, Senior Manager, Virtual Power Plants, presented the Disadvantaged Communities Green Tariff (DAC-GT) and Community Solar Green Tariff (CSGT) programs and described how these programs will promote renewable energy development in disadvantaged communities.

**(2:05:58) Member Swaminathan** asked for the reason for setting the goal of 5.7 and 1.56 megawatts for the Disadvantaged Communities Green Tariff and Community Solar Green Tariff programs. **Eleanor Smith** responded that the goal came from a CPUC directive and that the amounts were maximum for which cost recovery would be granted..

*Member Lakshman left the meeting at 8:08pm.*

**(2:09:36) Jessica Tovar** asked about the reasons for challenges associated with the Community Solar Green Tariff program. **Eleanor Smith** acknowledged challenges in receiving developer bids due to geographic and eligibility constraints, which, she stated, have been addressed in the current round.

**(2:13:13) Member Swaminathan** asked if projects that are not selected for the DAC-GT/CSGT program could be integrated into resiliency center initiatives. **Howard Chang** stated that the selected DAC-GT/CSGT projects, due to being on private sector land and lacking public access, might not meet the criteria or offer the necessary community services to be considered for resiliency incentives. Howard said that while current DAC-GT/CSGT projects may not be suitable, further review of other projects could be considered for resilience purposes.

**(2:16:30) Jessica Tovar** asked about the potential for community-based organizations (CBOs) to become sponsors in the Community Solar Green Tariff (CSGT) programs in the future. **Eleanor Smith** responded by acknowledging the possibility for CBOs to collaborate in enrolling customers in the CSGT program, although she noted that the Disadvantaged Communities Green Tariff (DAC-GT) program is already fully subscribed.

**Member Eldred motioned to approve staff's recommendation. Member Lutz seconded the motion which was approved 7/0/2:**

**Yes: Members Landry, Eldred, Swaminathan, Kaur, Lutz, Vice-Chair Souza and Chair Hernandez**

**Not Present: Members Hu, Lakshman and Pacheco**

**C9. (2:19:34) CAC Member and Staff Announcements including requests to place items on future CAC agendas**

- **Cait Cady** requested adding an item about assigning staggered terms for CAC members, in line with the Board's December, 2023 action.
- **Member Lutz** requested to have a discussion about the best way for the CAC to provide advice to the Board. He suggested that the CAC should provide guidance for the Board to consider before the Board provides direction to staff, and prior to when staff starts developing plans. He stated that, currently, projects are driven by staff without the input from the Board or the CAC.
- **Member Lutz** also requested to discuss the creation of a ramped timeline of targets to achieve 100% locally-sourced energy from within Ava's service territory.

#### **C10. Adjourn at 8:35pm**

The next Community Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Monday, March 18, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

The Lake Merritt Room  
Cal State East Bay - the Oakland Center  
In the Transpacific Centre  
1000 Broadway, Suite 109  
Oakland, CA 94607