**Sustainable Energy Utility Advisory Board (SEUAB) Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, July 12, 2022**

**10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

# Call to Order

Vice-Chair Marshall Duer-Balkind called the meeting to order at 10:03am on July 12, 2022. Vice -Chair Duer-Balkind called a quorum called of the Sustainable Energy Utility Advisory Board (SEUAB or Board) at 10:06. This was a Microsoft Teams video conference call meeting.

# Roll Call/Instructions

Roll call was taken at 10:03 AM and the following people were in attendance:

# Board Members

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **In Attendance?** | **FY 2022**  **Special Meetings**  **Attendance Record** | **FY 2022 Regular Meetings**  **Attendance Record** |
| Bicky Corman - Board Chair (Mayor’s Designee) | No | 2/2 | 11/12 |
| Marshall Duer-Balkind – Vice Chair (Councilmember Cheh) | Yes | 2/2 | 12/12 |
| Sandra Mattavous-Frye, Sarah Kogel-Smucker as proxy (OPC) | Yes | 2/2 | 12/12 |
| Cary Hinton (PSC) | Yes | 1/2 | 10/12 |
| Donna Cooper (Electric Company) | Yes | 2/2 | 11/12 |
| Eric Jones (Building Management) | Yes | 0/2 | 11/12 |
| Nina Dodge (Environment) | Yes | 2/2 | 12/12 |
| Jamal Lewis (Low-Income Community) | No | 2/2 | 8/10 |
| Matthias Paustian (Council Chairperson Mendelson) | No | 0/2 | 6/10 |
| Mishal Thadani (Economic Development) | Yes | 1/1 | 6/10 |
| Sasha Srivastava (Renewable Energy) | Yes | 2/2 | 10/10 |
| Vacant (Building Construction) | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Vacant (Gas Utility) | n/a | n/a | n/a |

# Other Attendees: Dave Epley (DOEE), Tosin Gbadegesin (DCSEU), Zoe Heller (DCSEU), Yohannes Mariam (OPC), Angela Johnson (DCSEU), Thomas Bartholomew (DOEE), Brandon Bowles (DCSEU), Crystal McDonald (DCSEU), Edward Brady (sub-contractor to peer consulting to DCSEU), Gary Decker (DC Green Bank), Dennis Jamouneau (Pepco), Lance Loncke (DOEE), James Pittman (Pepco), Ari Gerstman (DOEE), Andrea Harper (PHI), Patti Boyd, Theodore Trabue (DCSEU), Ashlei Williams (DOEE), Patti Boyd (DCSEU), Benjamin Burdick (DCSEU), Alex Fisher (DOEE), Thomas Bartholomew (DOEE)

# Approval of the Agenda

* Vice Chair Duer-Balkind led the discussion by asking if there are any changes to be made to the agenda.
* Dave Epley mentioned that there will be members of the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) in attendance who are knowledgeable about interconnection and asked that we shift/temporarily table our conversation to accommodate them. Vice-chair Duer-Balkind agreed and asked if there were any objections. There were none.
* Nina Dodge expressed appreciation that the rolling agenda items have been included in today’s discussion.
* Hussain Karim (DOEE) is out of office and will not be able to present on the legislative updates. Dave Epley suggested in the absence of the legislative updates that the group, specifically the Board, use the time to discuss things that they may be interested in knowing about for future reference. This would essentially be a broad legislative policy discussion and will be led by Dave Epley.
* Vice-chair Duer-Balkind moved to approve the agenda and was seconded by Nina Dodge. All were in favor, and none were opposed.

# Approval of the April, May, and June Meeting Minutes

* Change the text in the June minutes to:
  + Vice-chair Duer-Balkind provided language on the edits for the June minutes: The Board will designate a member of the Technical Working Group for coordination between DCSEU and Pepco when/if the PSC forms.
  + Nina Dodge made note that Formal Case 1167 did not stem from the Modernizing the Energy Delivery System for Increased Sustainability (MEDSIS). It came from the merger. Ari Gerstman (DOEE) agreed with Nina Dodge’s assessment of the origination of 1167.
* After looking over the edits made in tracked changes, the Board moved to approve the April and May minutes. Vice-chair Duer-Balkind made the official motion, and it was seconded by Sarah Kogel-Smucker.
* Vice-chair Duer-Balkind made a motion to table the approval of the June minutes until after the DOEE Interconnection and Solar for All discussion. The motion was seconded by Eric Jones and Donna Cooper. All were in favor, and none were opposed.
* Vice-chair Duer-Balkind later motioned to table to the discussion of the June minutes until we have a revised version at the August meeting. The motion was seconded by Donna Cooper; all were in favor, and none were opposed.

# EM&V Report Update/Next Steps

* Vice-chair Duer-Balkind opened the discussion with asking Lance Loncke to provide an update on the timeline for the revision and finalization on the Evaluation, Measurement, and Verification (EM&V) report.
* Lance Loncke stated that timeline is still fluid due to consultants being out of the office but hopes that it can be completed by July 15th.
* Vice-chair Duer-Balkind asked that Lance send an email to the Board once he has received the date when the report will be finalized.
* Vice chair Duer-Balkind thanked the Board for providing comments as well as Lance Loncke, his team, and the consultants for working on the report.

# Working Groups Updates

* Board Annual Report W.G., Marshall Duer-Balkind
  + The Board Annual Report group has had one call since the last meeting.
  + The document for the new proposed structure highlights the sections that regularly appear in the report as well as a few new additions.
  + The idea is to focus the Board Report on a concentrated section of the new material and then a very high-level review/summary.
    - A column specifying fiscal years was added for clarification.
    - It was agreed that societal cost test should be mentioned in the EM&V Annual Report being conducted by DOEE contractor, NMR Group.
  + Vice-chair Duer-Balkind stated that some discussion in the report be for Solar for All, the Accelerator Retrofit, and the other programs the DCSEU operates. Ted Trabue agrees with Vice-chair Duer-Balkind and can provide some draft information for it.
  + Lance Loncke recommended adding the DCSEU annual report as an attachment in the appendices as well.
  + Vice-chair Duer-Balkind moved to approved this as the outline for this year’s report, agreed upon by Nina Dodge, and seconded by Donna Coper. All were in favor, none were opposed.
  + There was some discussion about the timeline, but the exact dates have not been agreed upon.
  + Sections for the outline were assigned.
  + The Performance Review will still be on FY21, but the first sections would include more of the present, with FY21 and FY22.
  + Ted Trabue mentioned that the timeline may be a bit difficult as the DCSEU will be closing out the fiscal year and the requisite billing that will need to be done by the first week in October.
  + The SEUAB report is due 90 days after the EM&V report (the EM&V report will be finished before the next SEU Advisory Board meeting).
  + Vice-chair Duer-Balkind motioned to revisit the discussion on the exact deadlines until the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Nina Dodge. All were in favor, and none were opposed.
* Electrification W. G., Matthias Paustian
  + Matthias Paustian was not in attendance and was unable to provide any updates.

# Impact of PEPCO’s Interconnection Fees on Solar for All

* Vice-chair Duer-Balkind made note that this agenda item was requested by Chair Bicky Corman and himself to get some clarification about what is going on with interconnection fees from Pepco, the disputes that were happening with Pepco, DOEE, and the Office of the People’s Commission (OPC) in the case with the Public Service Commission (PSC). Overall, they would like to determine if there are any impacts to DCSEU programs operations as a result.
* The discussion was led by Dave Epley, and he reiterated that this agenda arose from the question of how the DCSEU programs are impacted? He mentioned that those answers would best be provided by Ted Trabue and Patti Boyd of the DCSEU.
* Ted Trabue mentioned that the interconnection process is critical to the DCSEU. He provided background on the matter to how funds are expended: the completion of systems, particularly the community solar projects, are through milestone payments made along the way. The DCSEU works with the installer and there are payments made upon the completion of certain activities, such as the procurement of materials. The final milestone payment hinges on interconnection. They work closely with Pepco and their interconnection team during this process and authorization comes after all the inspections have been done. Not all interconnections are made by the end of the fiscal year, sometimes they linger for various issues. Overall, the experience has been a collaborative one, and there has not been a problem for the DCSEU.
* Ted Trabue also noted that in the petition that was filed, there are concerns about payments to the subscribers of these systems and whether they are receiving their credits on a timely basis. There is also concern about whether the unsubscribed energy and the payments are going to Pepco. Once DCSEU finishes their portion, the subscriber process is handled by DOEE and its sub-contractors.
* Vice-chair Duer-Balkind inquired about stories in the press where large fees are being charged to people who are trying to sign up for solar, those needing interconnection, and those responsible for the upgrades to the distribution equipment. It is infeasible for some. Has that proved to be an issue for any of the single-family Solar for All programs? Who pays for the interconnection fees?
* Ted Trabue replied that he has not heard of any issues for Solar for All single-family programs. He also mentioned that they work with about four or five installers who install roughly 105 systems a year and those installers have not mentioned the interconnection fees being a barrier. The installations are currently on schedule.
* Sarah Kogel-Smucker asked if the overall issue is a ‘last person in the door’ scenario? Meaning that if enough of your neighbors get solar, then the last person ultimately gets saddled with the upgrade cost. It’s a poor timing issue?
* Alexandra Fisher (DOEE) discussed billing and crediting of Community Renewable Energy Facilities (CREF) which is discussed in Formal Case 1171. Formal Case 1171 is currently an open litigation, meaning that DOEE cannot discuss it at this time, but encourages everyone to look at that docket. Regarding the interconnection issues, DOEE has put forth several public positions in the interconnection docket (Formal Case 1050) and the related rule makings that impact the Solar for All projects. The links and documents were shared with Dave Epley who will distribute to the Board.
  + Some of DOEE positions:
    - Significant delays in getting approval to install and authorization to operate.
    - Lack of transparency in how the cost of interconnection facilities and distribution upgrades are calculated and assessed.
    - Changes to the operating requirements after the approval to install (ATI) has already been issued.
    - Deviation from how the regulations are written for interconnection.
    - There are certain minimum import requirements that can result in unjustified curtailment, especially in the circuits that employ network protectors.
    - Cellular cabinets that have been levied on several CREF projects that force developers to procure proprietary equipment from Pepco and a significant cost of ~$40,000 to enable remote monitoring of the ER parameters rather than off the shelf communication or technologies within the inverters.
  + In reference to the cost issue, the solar community has provided two reports that are publicly available. The links will be shared with Dave Epley, and he will distribute to the Board.
    - One report focuses on rooftop size of net metered projects and how the cost increase began last April for those interconnections.
    - The other focuses on the larger level 2 projects which is related to CREF interconnections.
  + The solar industry provided a report that looks at some of the costs that have been levied in that report. This is currently in a docket before the Commission. DOEE is working with the Commission, Pepco, OPC, and other stakeholders to come to some agreement about how best to move forward. There is also a working group.
* Andrea Harper began with some regulatory history:
  + Until last year (maybe the year before), the regulations for the commission stated that the ‘causer’, the person who causes the upgrade, pays the entire upgrade fee. Recently, the Commission has realized that doesn’t work well, and is trying to defray some of the cost that they have put in place for CREF. This includes a cost sharing of 50% up to $25,000 in regulations for upgrades. This measure is currently in place. For net-energy metering (NEM), they have cost sharing up to $5,000 for upgrades.
  + Andrea believes this is a good time for everyone to come together in front of the Commission for a policy position on this that is more favorable towards getting the distributed energy at a lower cost.
  + Additional loads to the grid to trigger upgrades. The upgrades need to be funded. The question becomes what is fair for rate payers and developers?
* Donna Cooper reiterated that working collaboratively from a policy perspective would be helpful.
* Sarah Kogel-Smucker mentioned that the sum of the issues is something that OPC is very concerned about in terms of undermining the success of programs, not just in the immediate program, but in the trust and participation in consumer programs.
* Ari Gerstman (DOEE) stated that DOEE prefers that the petition be referred to as one the OPC filed with Office of the Attorney General (OAG) and DOEE’s response was to OAG’s request.
* Alex Fisher (DOEE) stated that these issues taking place in the regulatory realm have an impact on Solar for All in the past and present, and are not simply a concern for the future.
* Lance Loncke (DOEE) clarified that the Solar for All program is two-folded. DCSEU does the delivery of the units, especially in the CREF realm, and DOEE takes on the responsibility enrolling subscribers and making sure the energy is correctly distributed and those credits are accounted for.
* The list of issues can be found on the first page on the first link in the files that Dave Epley has sent around.
* Nina Dodge referred a question to Ted Trabue regarding Solar for All: To what extent does Solar for All install community solar installations and do they go on single family homes or churches and other installations?
  + Ted Trabue replied that the single-family homes are not considered community solar projects whereas systems found on top of a parking garage or warehouse are community solar projects. The energy fed onto the grid and the credits from that energy are given to subscribers. The budget for the individual programs changes annually with the majority of the funding going to community solar projects. A budget of about 10 million/year would provide enough capacity on the grid to help about 2,000 subscribers (or meters) reduce their energy bills, and if coupled with the roughly 100 single family installations, that number raises to 2,100.
* Vice-chair Duer-Balkind mentioned that there aren’t 100,00 low-income household meters because a lot is master metered.
* Sasha Srivastava wanted to know if there was a DOEE/DCSEU report that publishes the billing credits that get paid monthly (the dollar amount)? It’s helpful to talk to residents about how much they can expect.
* Thomas Bartholomew (DOEE) stated that a report has not been published, but there is another set of filing that was done before the commission on CREF billing issues. There have not been regular receipts for Solar for All since the CREF began. Every subscriber is allocated a certain amount of capacity (~3.5 kW) that should generate $500 minimum, but some receive less because of lower usage. DOEE does not allocate over 100% of an electric bill. DOEE will send out a Request for Information (RFI) to ask non-profit organizations and master metered apartment buildings if they have interest in receiving an allocation of CREF in exchange for setting up a process where residents receive the benefits next week.
* Ari Gerstman mentioned that DOEE has cleaned up the clean energy reporting requirements that they give to council, and as council receives them, they can make them public. It may help to reach out to the committee staff in Environment and Transportation. There is also an annual report that might be beneficial. It can be found on the DOEE Solar for All website.
* Vice-chair Duer-Balkind raised the question: Is there a concrete roll for the Board or any way that the Board can be helpful to the DCSEU related to these issues?
  + Eric Jones wanted the reports that have been filed with the Committee of Transportation/Environment to be sent to the Board as well.
  + Nina Dodge mentioned that it would be good to get an update on these matters when the FY21 Solar for All Report has been filed, as well hearing about possibly allocating Solar for All benefits (community solar benefits) to mastered metered apartment holders.
* Vice-Chair Duer-Balkind motioned to revisit the Solar for All discussion and add a follow up to next month’s agenda with a focus on any updates from the 2021 Solar for All report, the RFI, and any other follow-up. Eric Jones seconded the motion.
* The motion was amended to table the Solar for All discussion and any updates at the meeting following the release of the 2021 Solar for All report. All were in favor, none were opposed.

# Legislative Updates

* No legislative updates.
* Moved to be discussed at the next meeting.
* Have a place holder for legislative updates and DCSEU relevant PSC formal cases as they are relevant to the Board.

# Additional Discussion (Bike Rack)

* How to incentivize the DCSEU to support projects in design stage for new construction and major renovations (suggested by Nina Dodge).
* The item will be moved to the August meeting since time has run out at the current meeting.

# Future Agenda Items

* Approval of the June minutes
* Discussion/decision on the timeline for the Board Annual Report
* 2021 Solar for All Report
* Legislative Updates
* Bike Rack discussion

# Actions Taken by the Board

* Approval of April and May minutes
* Approval of the Board Annual Report structure
* Assigned topics for the Board Annual Report

# Adjournment

* Vice-chair Duer-Balkind adjourned the meeting at 11:57am.

# Acronyms used during this meeting

* ATI – Approval to Install
* CREF – Community Renewable Energy Facility
* DCSEU – District of Columbia Sustainability Energy Utility
* DOEE – Department of Energy and Environment
* EM&V – Evaluation, Measurement, and Verification (EM&V)
* MEDSIS – Modernizing the Energy Delivery System for Increased Sustainability
* NEM – Net Energy Metering
* OAG – Office of the Attorney General
* OPC – Office of the People’s Council
* PSC – Public Service Commission
* RFI – Request for Information

*Minutes prepared by Ashlei Williams, DOEE*