

February 28, 2024

Subject: Strategic Growth Council December 14, 2023 Meeting Minutes
Reporting Period: December 2023 – February 2024
Staff Lead: Alex C. Walker, Executive Fellow, SGC

Recommended Action

Approval of the December 14, 2023 Strategic Growth Council Meeting Minutes.

Strategic Growth Council December 14, 2023 - Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item #1: Call to Order

Chair Sam Assefa called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM.

Agenda Item #2: Roll Call

Council Members and Representatives Present

Sam Assefa, Director, Governor's Office of Planning and Research

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency

Yana Garcia, Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency

Sasha Kergan (Designee), Deputy Secretary, Housing and Consumer Relations at the Business Consumer Services and Housing Agency, on behalf of Secretary Lourdes Castro Ramírez

Darwin Moosavi (Designee), Deputy Secretary, California State Transportation Agency, on behalf of Secretary Toks Omishakin

Rohan Radhakrishna (Designee), Deputy Director, California Department of Public Health Office of Health Equity, on behalf of Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly of the California Health & Human Services Agency

Karen Ross, Secretary, California Department of Food & Agriculture

Juan Sanchez Munoz, Public Member

Frank Cardenas, Public Member

Agenda Item #3: ACTION: Approval of Minutes

Approve the October 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Secretary Ross and seconded by Public Member Cardenas.

Motion passes (9-0-1*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Agenda Item #4: Council Elections



Elect Council Chair and Council Vice Chair

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Council Comment

Ross: Nominated a slate for Chair and Vice Chair: Sam Assefa as Chair and Frank Cardenas as Vice Chair. Appreciates Chair Assefa's leadership and appreciates Cardenas' engagement and passion for the work this Council does.

Assefa: Thanked Secretary Ross for her work and passion in this space, enjoys working with her on the Council.

Crowfoot: Expressed that Council supports Chair Assefa's leadership and that it is exciting for Public Member Cardenas to move into the Vice Chair position.

Garcia: Thanked Secretary Ross for her time as Vice Chair, passion, and service.

Cardenas: Expressed deepest appreciation to Secretary Ross for her leadership, judiciousness, earnestness, and service, as well as for nomination for Vice Chair and her confidence in him.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Motioned by Public Member Munoz and seconded by Secretary Crowfoot.

Motion passes (9-0-1*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote.

Agenda Item #5: Executive Director's Report

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Council Comment

Assefa: Expressed his excitement to hear the Executive Director's updates. Emphasize two things: 1) SGC's site visits are so valuable and informative. Being on the ground is a meaningful experience to learn what is working and what isn't, so SGC can continuously improve. 2) The Virtual Power Plant concept showcases SGC's innovativeness and brings tremendous benefits for communities across the state.

Ross: Expressed her appreciation for the good work of staff and SGC's Executive Director.

Public Comment

John Witchel

Agenda Item #6: Consent Calendar

Motion to move the Consent Calendar.

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Council Discussion

No Council Discussion.

Public Comment

Suzanne Kim, Justin Smith, and Akiko Nishino.

Council Comment

Kergan: Responded to a public comment. Expressed that SGC cannot commit to a timeline, but that she is available to meet to discuss review of guidelines further.

Munoz: Expressed appreciation for Deputy Secretary Kergan, raised two points for consideration; 1) consideration for innovation, and 2) that innovative community-based developers, are intuitive. This dynamic informs projects.

Motioned by Munoz and seconded by Moosavi.

Motion passes (9-0-1*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote.

Agenda Item #7: ACTION: Transformative Climate Communities Round 5 Awards

Approve Staff Recommendations for TCC Round 5 Planning, Project Development, and Implementation Grants.

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Jerry Rivero, Acting TCC Program Manager

Council Discussion

Munoz: Thanked TCC staff for their support and time reviewing and scoring the applications. This round effectively demonstrates an equitable lens applied in this process. Applauded efforts to invest in underinvested and historically overlooked communities in San Joaquin Valley.

Kergan: Expressed appreciation for TCC's attention to Tribal communities and values how TCC has been responsive to what Council is looking for.

Garcia: Echoed thanks to staff, is proud to see success. Wanted to nod to initiatives like Connecting Communities and acknowledge need to seek further funding to continue work, such as federal funding sources. Further acknowledge efforts that brought us to where we are today and look forward to awards going out.

Moosavi: Expressed appreciation to TCC staff. Building off of Secretary Garcia's comments regarding leveraging funds, such as IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) and other federal opportunities as a conduit to build connections to further support communities.

Cardenas: Excited to see investment expanding in the Central Valley and elsewhere. TCC investments have been multiplied by private investment as well, it is truly transformative, improving people's lives. Appreciates the implementation team and hard work of TCC staff.

Assefa: Applications were very impressive. It is great to see disadvantaged and unincorporated communities applying and being awarded. It is not only the volume of applications, but the quality of the review process. Clear that care was center in the process. Echoed praise and appreciation to TCC team.



Radhakrishna: TCC reflects the three catalytic concepts presented by Executive Director earlier. TCC is an impressive model that California is proud of. Honoring the process, signaling to other applicants, past, present, and future, how seriously the Council considers and takes on these multifaceted issues. Looks forward to future partnerships.

von Koch-Liebert: Congratulated TCC awardees. Addressed those not awarded that their work on this grant is transferrable to other opportunities, such as US EPA dollars. SGC will play a supporting role in helping translate this work into federal programming, which is the first time SGC has ever done this. Thanked everyone again for their partnership and work in the TCC program.

Public Comment

Jason Cater, Ben Goger, Kevin Kalman, Stephanie Virgen, Dr. Frank Figueroa, Steve Haze, Denise Delgadi, Emprezz NontziKelelo, Jake Whitaker, Olivia Seideman, Fabiola Moreno, Kyle Heiskala, Andre Gonzalez, Everett Au, Steven Hernandez, Genaro Bugarin, Ashwin Manthripragada, Carmina Paz, Devon Deming, and Geoffery Ross.

Motioned by Crowfoot and seconded by Cardenas.

Motion passes (9-0-1*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote.

Agenda Item #8: ACTION: Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Round 9 Awards

Approve Staff Recommendations for SALC Round 9 Planning, Capacity, and Agricultural Conservation Acquisition Grants.

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Shanna Atherton-Bauer, Land Conservation Programs Manager, DOC

Council Discussion

Assefa: Thanked the public for their comments, it is reflective of SGC's important work, impact, and benefits.

Crowfoot: Echoed Chair Assefa's comments. Proud the State can support this work and deliver many benefits to communities. Acknowledged importance of returning land to tribes as a component of this program, addressing historic wrongs by recognizing tribal leadership in these spaces and their stewardship of land. Secretary Crowfoot raised two questions:

Crowfoot: One – can you walk us through staff process to reach out to tribal communities for land acquisitions in their traditional homelands?

Atherton-Bauer: We do not have a built-in formal process to engage with Tribes in SALC, limitations faced. There are conversations internally; however, lacked capacity to communicate without a formal process, as it could carry potential ramifications to other grantees. Working to address this issue in Round 10 guidelines.



Crowfoot: Emphasized that a standardized outreach process and approach is important in the future. Second question, how might we address lack of formal access to the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation?

von Koch-Liebert: After awards granted, we begin a standard agreement for commitments, strategy, outcomes of applicant, serving as documentation for SGC to have contractual arrangement with awardee, that SGC monitors.

Crowfoot: Recommending an amendment to the agreement for guidelines is that the tribal nation continue to have access to this land.

Ross: Expressed appreciation for staff on this program. Acres protected count toward state's 30X30 goals. Remarked on the *America the Beautiful* event, expressed that working lands are part of SGC's climate strategy. Showcasing what California is doing and being an example for others is important. Expressed support for Crowfoot's amendment.

Kergan: Supportive of Crowfoot's amendment, timeline for next proposals, encourages staff to revise to improve access and inclusivity for tribes, request time at next council meeting to discuss a revised timeline to give attention and time in this effort. Helpful to explore farmworker housing in guidelines, reflecting on promoting infill and compact development, complimenting other efforts.

Garcia: Appreciates comments brought to Council. Expressed there is a need for best practices for consultation for Tribal engagement, and a need for a long-term effort to address this area.

Assefa: Expressed support for Secretary Crowfoot's amendment.

Read: AMENDMENT PROPOSED LANGUAGE: Uphold commitments to maintain access contained in application with continued effort to ensure ongoing access for the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation.

Crowfoot: Wanting to formalize ongoing legal access to land between the North Fork Mono Tribe and the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation.

Read: AMENDMENT PROPOSED LANGUAGE: Move to approve SALC Grant with the condition to formalize access to the land to any Tribe with historical interest in the given parcel.

Crowfoot: Believes this amendment language would satisfy the intent of the proposed motion, deferred to Secretary Garcia for her insight.

Garcia: If specific amendment language is not available now, expressed openness to voting on the item on a conditional approval status.

Munoz: Will any language developed be brought back to Council for approval?

Read: If a conditional approval is the direction Council decides to go, if conditions are being met, SGC would not return to Council.

Garcia: Preliminary language right now would be beneficial, as direct access will need to be discussed further, detailing what it entails.

Moosavi: Expressed to Council that the reservation option is available, entailing approving the other awards, and reserving funding for this specific grant, and tabling the award regarding the North Fork Mono Tribe and the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation for a future meeting.

Crowfoot: Expressed that reservation option would work well, given Council is set to meet again in February 2024. Allows time to have appropriate space to develop a legally viable approach.

Read: Motion language would be to approve staff recommendations for SALC Round 9 Planning, Capacity, and Agricultural Conservation Acquisition Grants, reserving the award for the North Fork Mono Tribe.

Public Comment:

Jason Landers, Paul Dunbom, Heidi Krolick, Tracy Ellison, JT Reiser, Scott Lathrop, Judy Schulz, Lynn Overtree, Janet Voris, Marc Del Piro, Lauren Miller, Steve Shweigerdt, Jared Aldern, Robert Haswell, Tessa Blevins, Mike Khus Zarate, Jose Baer, Trina Cunningham, Tera Fouch-Moore, Gurumantra Khalsa, Kim Morucci, Arielle Goodspeed, Amy Holmen, Ed King, Mel Figueroa, Ali Meders-Knight, and Bettina Rosmarino.

Assefa: Entertained a motion including the reservation of the award regarding the North Fork Mono Tribe.

Motioned by Secretary Crowfoot and seconded by Secretary Garcia.

Motion passes (9-0-1*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote.

Agenda Item #9: DISCUSSION: SGC Racial Equity Action Plan Annual Update

Overview of racial equity action plan implementation highlights from 2022 – 2023 and commitments for 2024.

Lynn von Koch- Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Michael Jimenez Health & Equity Program Analyst, SGC

Council Discussion

Assefa: Thanked staff for their presentation. The first meeting of the Racial Equity Commission will be January 24, 2024. The Racial Equity Commission is charged with exploring what it means to truly embed equity in state government, and SGC a leader in this space. The Commission would be an excellent resource to collaborate with, taking from experiences on the ground, advising and informing SGC's work.

Ross: Expressed they are inspired by SGC's work, public listening session to come on our work in racial equity. We are learning, reflecting on the importance of our work, and listening. SGC benefits from cataloging its work and collaborating with others.

Cardenas: As a public member, breathtakingly encouraging to see commitment of the Secretaries sitting on the Council have, their passion and interest in advancing racial equity. Individual commitment is profound, expressing appreciation.

Crowfoot: Reflecting on the shift of talking the talk, walking the walk, SGC is a hub and leader in this space. What are the best practices we can emulate and institutionalize. Will share resources from their agency to support this effort. SGC institutionalizing practical elements and work in this space.

Kergan: Thanked staff and the Racial Equity Resource Hub, it is a wonderful resource to point to for lessons learned. Looking forward to exploring improvement to resource hubs, preventing redundancy and replication, and filling gaps. Civil Rights Department's Commission on State of Hate may be a good resource and partner.

Radhakrishna: Justice 40 as an example, examining more sources, more ambitious goals to overcome with historic challenges. Generative AI may be an element in this, as there are benefits and risks. Upcoming Catalyst Conference and other spaces may be good for discussion for AI's role in racial equity, both the guardrails and benefits that derive from the technology.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda Item #10: Public Comment

Public Comment

Joseph Scriven, Arnab Pal, and LeRoy Candler.

Agenda Item #11: Meeting Adjournment

Assefa: Before closing the meeting, I want to thank SGC Staff, Council Members, and the public for engaging in today's meeting. Directly thanked SGC Staff, Camille Randolph, Agustin Arreola, Lois Kim, Melissa Quintero, and Alex C. Walker, for their support. Wished everyone a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season.

Meeting adjourned at 4:34 PM.

