

Belmont Energy Committee

Approved Minutes

October 20, 2021

Present: Claus Becker, Marty Bitner, James Booth, Travis Franck, Francesca Kitch, Brian Kopperl, Greg Piotrowicz, Alex Thurston, Roger Wrubel. Guests: Phil Thayer, Ben Thivierge, Dave Zipkin.

The meeting was called to order by Marty Bitner at 7:05 PM.

The committee welcomed its newest member, Francesca Kitch. Francesca is a senior at Belmont High who has been active in climate work in town, in particular as part of BHS's Climate Action Club. Welcome Francesca!

Approval of minutes from June and September meetings:

The minutes from the Energy Committee's June and September meetings were approved unanimously with one abstention, subject to correcting a misspelling of "Piotrowicz" and the omission of Roger's attendance at the September meeting.

Northland Development at McLean – Energy Committee Comments

Marty noted that the EC has been asked to present at the Planning Board meeting on Nov.2 at which the Energy Committee's input on the proposed McLean development will be discussed.

The committee reviewed the letter that was submitted to the Planning Board on behalf of the Energy Committee (the content of which was discussed at earlier meetings)

It was noted that the letter ends with a number of requests for information. This letter has been shared with the developer, but we have not heard any response.

- **Action Item: In the interest of streamlining the November meeting, Marty and James will reach out again to Northland in advance of the PB meeting to ask whether they have any answers to provide to the questions posed in the letter**

Belmont fleet electrification

The committee reviewed a spreadsheet shared with the committee by former Assistant Town Administrator John Marshall about Belmont's municipal vehicle fleets; Brian had identified a subset of vehicles within this that (based on moderate size) might be obvious initial candidates for electric replacement.

It was noted that there could be two distinct areas of research for the Energy Committee:

- Options for vehicle replacement. It was noted this would need to be something like a living document in that available options are changing rapidly.
- Charging infrastructure.

Vehicle replacement:

Ben Thivierge noted that there are rebates for vehicles through MOR-EV and COMM Buys (list of discounted vendors for state contracts).

There was discussion about reaching out to surrounding towns, e.g. to discuss coordination on requiring electric offerings as part of contract negotiations for buses. Travis noted that some of this is coming up in the Structural Change Impact Group (SCIG).

Charging infrastructure:

Ben noted that there are funds through MassEVIP and Green Communities for charging infrastructure. <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-massevip-workplace-fleet-charging-incentives>

He also noted that it is possible to set up municipal charging infrastructure that could also be used by residents (e.g. open to the public certain hours, with limits/fees as desired); the charger at Belmont Light is an example of this.

There was discussion of having a subgroup of interested members of the committee to work on both aspects of this project.

- **Action Items: Consult with the Town Clerk to clarify how subgroups of the EC can work on specific tasks like this while staying in compliance with Open Meeting Law requirements. Also check in again with Patrice Garvin, given recent departure of John Marshall (who had been point person on this)**

Reports:

Chenery Solar: Installation may occur as soon as November 15.

Middle and High School: Building Committee Chair Bill Lovallo has been asking for input from knowledgeable town residents about the solar RFP. Brian noted that including a long-term O&M contract as part of an RFP could be an efficient way to insure continued operational health.

Phil noted that it will be important for the School Department to have a line item in budget for purchasing the RECs necessary for the school to achieve Class D ZNE status (which will trigger a multiplier for the alternative energy credits (AECs) that the school will receive for its ground source heat pump system, making the ZNE status financially attractive). There was discussion of the possibility of purchasing RECs from other in-town projects (e.g. Chenery solar or the proposed development at McLean)

- **Action Item: Roger/James reach out in 2022 to the School Committee/Department to remind them of need for the REC operating budget item.**

Structural Change Impact Group: Travis shared that they are looking to have a report by the end of the calendar year.

Long-Term Capital Planning Committee: The committee is working on new bylaws for prioritizing investments in a way that supports town's strategic goals, e.g. such Town Meeting decisions that regard energy supply

Light Board Advisory Committee: LBAC has been discussing RECs (e.g. addressing concerns over additionality of Maine Class II RECs); the general sense of the committee is that they would rather move as possible toward PPA arrangements for procuring renewable electricity.

Ben noted that the Time of Use pilot program is still accepting applications through November 30th, and encouraged the committee to spread the word.

MAPC: James described that there have been meetings with MAPC staff re: the Belmont net zero planning project (i.e. the grant funding this effort). Interviews are being conducted with internal stakeholders (e.g. town staff/committees). The group is working to come up with a short list (around eight) of external stakeholders -- other groups in town, e.g. neighborhood groups, faith groups, etc. -- to prioritize. We are particularly interested in talking with groups that have not been effectively engaged in previous emissions reductions projects/campaigns.

- **Action Items: Members of the Committee can i) spread word about TOU pilot ii) send James suggestions of any groups in town (and relevant contact people) that should be prioritized for outreach for MAPC interviews.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04