

Belmont Energy Committee Meeting Minutes

19:00 o'clock on March 17, 2021

Opening

The regular meeting of the Belmont Energy Committee Meeting Minutes was called to order at 19:00 o'clock on March 17, 2021 as a virtual meeting and by Marty Bitner.

Present

- Marty Bitner – Co-chair
- James Booth – Co-chair
- Adrienne Allen
- Cabell Eames
- Travis Franck
- Brian Kopperl
- Don Mercier
- Greg Piotrowicz
- Alex Thurston
- Roger Wrubel
- Claus C Becker (note taker)
- Phil Thayer (guest)
- Mark Paolillo (guest)

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the February 24th, 2021 meeting was approved unanimously after minor amendments.

Updates

Structural Change Impact Group (SCIG)

Travis Franck described the work of the SCIG: Goal: reverse structural deficit by decreasing expenditures, increasing revenues. Mandate includes Belmont Light. Energy efficiency projects are prominent as they can pay for themselves. Among initiatives considered is a *Green Fund* (e.g. \$200k) that would be supplied by the town to be invested in crowdsourced projects. Also replacing expensive internal combustion engine cars with electric vehicles in the town fleets.

Another potential initiative would be to gain access to fresh money via grants. Belmont could hire an “energy manager” to write grants and identify projects. Alternatively, hire a company (such as ESCO) and ask them to identify projects which would have a suitable return on investment.

Mark Paolillo and the committee agreed that we should consider mandating that any new vehicles be EVs if possible.

A discussion of the feasibility of this mandate followed since work vehicles are often trucks and there are no electric trucks on the US market today. Several electric trucks will be launched over the next year, however, including an electric version of the Ford F-150. EV trucks would not only likely save on maintenance but would have other benefits such as being able to keep occupants warm without idling, and can provide onboard power to run tools.

<https://insideevs.com/car-lists/electric-trucks/>

Sources of revenue for the town considered includes rooftop solar and batteries for energy arbitrage which provide low-risk return.

Travis Franck reminded attendees that suggestions can be provided by citizens at <https://mapsonline.net/belmontma/forms/tablet.html.php?id=674437811>

Travis Franck also mentioned that LBAC time-of-use planning is ongoing. Vendors that create the necessary software are booked so implementation has been delayed. Aiming for pilot project by deploying to 150 households which is about 1.5% of Belmont housing stock. The sample will be composed to ensure diversity (EV owners, solar hosts,...).

The committee agreed that payments for kWh sold to Belmont Light by solar hosts should also vary by time-of-day in reflection of wholesale price.

Petition for town meeting

Discussion of best formulation for town meeting petition “Fossil-Free New Construction” followed. Discussed removal of the BBRS paragraph following recent action by state legislature. Working group was given discretion (decisions unanimously adopted) to make edits, including removal of passages to adapt to recent changes to MA law.

Virtual building electrification event

The public event is now scheduled for April 29th. Details to be decided later including whether we should pre-record or do live event.

This will be a virtual outreach event to provide background for the public for the non-binding resolution re emission-free buildings. Goal is to educate Belmontonians regarding performance of electrified utilities and to counter common misperceptions, e.g., that heat pumps do not work in cold weather.

Committee agreed with James B’s suggestion that we should provide use cases/ testimonials. Work was divided as follows:

Claus B: Solar Hot Water

Marty B: Heat Pump Hot Water

Roger W and Brian Kopperl: Induction stovetops

James B: Heat pumps

Adrienne: Propose three different dates for the event.

Suggestions to be discussed at next meeting.

Other business

- No news re McClain
- Long-term capital committee member, Claus Becker, reported that a process is being developed to collect proposals for projects of a significant size and to prioritize them according to various metrics, including adherence to strategies adopted by Town Meeting.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 20:20 o'clock by Marty Bitner.