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Minutes

Town of Belmont

Board of Selectmen

Town Hall Auditorium

Thursday, October 18, 2018

7:00pm

APPROVED
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
DATE: 12/10/2018

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 7:03pm by Chair Adam Dash. Vice Chair Mark Paolillo and Selectmen Tom Caputo were present. Town Administrator Patrice Garvin was present.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

[There were none]

COMMENTS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS:

[There were none]

ACTION BY CONSENT:

Community Media Day Proclamation

Jeff Hansell (Executive Director, Belmont Media Center) and other members of the Belmont Media Center appeared before the Board. M. Paolillo read the proclamation recognizing the work of the Belmont Media Center and declaring October 20th as Community Media Day.

Policy regarding electioneering and campaigning at In-person Early Voting and In-person Absentee Voting sites, Discussion and Vote – Requested by Town Clerk

Ellen O'Brien Cushman (Town Clerk) explained that the policy was to ensure parity for those participating in early voting or absentee ballot voting, to have a buffer zone of 150 feet around the polling location that is free from electioneering and campaigning. The same buffer zone is in place and enforced on Election Day, but no policy is currently in place for early/absentee voting.

Motion: To adopt the policy regarding electioneering and campaigning at in-person early voting and in-person absentee voting sites. (Vote passed 3-0)

Sign Town Meeting Warrant for the Fall Town Meeting

A. Dash explained this was not a debate about the content of the articles but rather a vote to put the articles on the Warrant.

A. Dash noted for the record: A citizen's petition was filed to extend the marijuana moratorium to June 30, 2019. Under Chapter 40a Section 5 of the Massachusetts General Laws, citizen's petitions which are zoning amendments must be submitted to the Planning Board by the Board of Selectmen, and the

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Planning Board must hold a public hearing before Town Meeting can take up such an amendment. The Board of Selectmen has 14 days to submit the amendment to the Planning Board, and the Board of Selectmen would not be meeting subsequently within this time window. Therefore, the Chair had deemed it an exception to Open Meeting Law to vote to submit the petition to the Planning Board, given that the matter could not have been reasonably anticipated and cannot be deferred to a future meeting.

Motion: To submit the citizen's petition on extending the marijuana moratorium to the Planning Board for their review. (Vote passed 3-0)

Motion: To approve the Town of Belmont Warrant for the 2018 Special Town Meeting to be held on November 13, 2018. (Vote passed 3-0)

Discussion of Remaining Feasible Ideas for the Possible Future Use(s) of the Former Incinerator Site

Bruce Haskell, the Town's environmental engineering consultant, gave a presentation reviewing the features of the site and providing an overview of the five remaining potential options: 1) passive use / open space; 2) solar photovoltaic (PV) / PV with storage; 3) ice rink; 4) bike and skate park; 5) anaerobic digestion facility. All of the options must accommodate the continued use of the site for DPW materials storage and processing.

M. Paolillo asked if multiple uses could be implemented in combination and B. Haskell confirmed.

T. Caputo asked for a review of the timeline for capping the site. B. Haskell explained the process that was based on State regulations. He noted that in order to submit the closure permit application it was important to have made a decision regarding the future use, because the application included engineering plans; the goal was to submit the closure permit application in May/June 2019. Construction to cap the site could begin roughly one year following, but the timeline was ultimately dependent on the choice for post-closure use.

[A. Dash opened the meeting to the public. He stressed the Board would not be taking a vote tonight, but hoped to make a final decision by end-of-year to keep to the mandated schedule for capping the site.]

- *Evan Harris:* Presented a package he had prepared to the Board, which included information on solar and recycling sites at Sudbury and Wellesley. He encourage the Board to visit these sites to see a solar farm in operation.

Chris Roy (GM, Belmont Light) stood to discuss the solar option. He reiterated that solar was a common use for former incinerator sites and a straightforward process to install/operate. His rule-of-thumb estimate was that the site was suitable for a 2MW array, and that this would occupy the entire site meaning that no other use could be integrated.

T. Caputo asked about sources of revenue from solar. C. Roy explained revenue would come from: 1) a ground lease and tax document, both of which would be deposited to the general fund 2) a power purchase agreement with Belmont Light, so that solar generated power would become a part of Belmont Light's power portfolio. From his experience in Concord, C. Roy shared that the ground lease was ~\$1,000 per year and the tax payment, based on the value of the array, was ~\$46,000 per year.

A. Dash asked who would maintain the site in terms of landscaping, plowing, etc. C. Roy said a third-party developer would be required to maintain the site as part of any agreement to develop the site.

T. Caputo asked how the storage aspect changes the economics of the solar option. C. Roy stressed that revenue streams from solar change very rapidly, whereas storage helps to balance out the financing equation and would improve the economics.

- *Doug Koplow (Precinct 6)*: Asked if benefits from storage would flow to the Town or be captured by the vendor. C. Roy said that the benefits would flow to the power supply component of Belmont Light; this could potentially be turned back to the Town as PILOT.

Re: the digester, D. Koplow was concerned that the facility would only be one step in a complicated process, and therefore the economics would not be sustainable long-term. He encouraged the Board to study the transportation impacts of getting materials to/from the site.

T. Caputo asked B. Haskell to comment further on economics of the digester. B. Haskell said that it was largely based on the volume of material that could be brought in (to obtain the tipping fee) relative to other potential locations, but he could not give much more detail.

- *Karen Sapolsky (Precinct 1)*: Was concerned about solar being close to wetlands and the resulting impact on the bird population. She argued that the Town has enough athletic facilities and she preferred to maintain open space, which would also keep options open for the future.
- *Lucia Wille (Precinct 5)*: Part of the group advocating for the bike and skate park with integrated solar farm. The group has produced drawings for utilizing Area B on the site, including a 1MW solar array in addition to a sizable park. She viewed the site as part of the larger area of conservation/trails; a bike and skate park would complement the area and its existing uses. Incorporation of solar would help contribute to the Town meeting green energy goals.

The Board discussed with L. Wille the following issues: the potential level of utilization, given that it would be in a remote area; the amount and type of maintenance required; security concerns; assessment of the proposed 1MW of solar.

L. Wille clarified that the park was intended to be used during daylight hours and for 3 seasons.

- *Travis Franck*: Viewed the anaerobic digester option as having many hypothetical aspects that would depend on the developer. This was risky for the Town, in terms of finding someone who would offer favorable terms under the given time constraint. He noted that the digester was likely not compatible with other uses; B. Haskell confirmed the digester would limit other potential uses.

Re: solar + bike/skate park option, the group had not realized that Area A was available for potential use – this could allow for a larger solar array to accompany the park, compared with what was previously proposed. He also argued that the solar option enables the benefits from the project to go directly to Belmont Light and its rate-payers, i.e. to the Town. Finally, he highlighted the contribution of solar to the climate action plan.

T. Caputo asked whether Belmont Light would develop and own the solar farm or a third-party developer; C. Roy said that both options were viable and could be explored.

- *Doug Koplow*: Noted that digesters had been implemented and studied in other places and encouraged the Board to look at these studies.

With respect to solar storage, D. Koplow asked if there would be transmission lines connected to the site to allow it to serve as storage beyond for just the solar array. C. Roy said the infrastructure

is determined by the peak output of the generation source, e.g. for solar or digester, and that the storage could be used more broadly.

A. Dash asked C. Roy to run-down additional details about the solar and solar-storage options and make recommendations to the Board.

T. Caputo followed on D. Koplow's point by asking if there were existing studies that could be used to help determine the order of magnitude of potential revenue from the digester. B. Haskell said that other towns have different constraints that would not necessarily apply to Belmont.

- *Donald Mercier (Precinct 8)*: Advocated to keep solar panels off the ground to conserve land area, e.g. put them on the DPW buildings. He thought the skating rink was a good idea but only if a private developer was used. He expressed concern about continued reliance on CPA funding for Town projects.
- *Andrew Poulsen (Precinct 2)*: Was concerned about additional truck traffic related to the digester. As he lived nearby, he also expressed concern that there would be odors since the operation of the facility would depend on humans with the potential for error; whereas solar was odor free and would require less resources to operate. He didn't think the bike/skate park would be well utilized based on an abandoned bike park in Waltham. Roger Wrubel replied to A. Poulsen that the park he was thinking of was an illegal/unofficial park, and that the actual skate park in Waltham was well used.

[The public comment portion of the meeting was closed]

A. Dash summarized that the Board would like C. Roy to provide additional details about the solar and storage option. M. Paolillo asked whether additional due diligence should be done for the bike/skate park option; P. Garvin would contact other town administrators to get details.

A. Dash queried the Board on whether it should move forward with the anaerobic digester study. T. Caputo expressed that he was still unclear on the order of magnitude of the potential revenue. The Board agreed to review the scope of work for the proposed study and make a decision at an upcoming meeting.

TOWN ADMINISTRATORS REPORT:


[None]

BOARD OF SELECTMEN COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS:

[None]

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: To adjourn. (Vote passed 3-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator