

**Belmont Energy Committee Meeting Minutes
May 15, 2019**

2019 SEP 23 PM 2:06

Present: Adrienne Allen, Marty Bitner, James Booth, Yvonne Brown, Travis Franck, Erin Lynch. Guests: Kate Bowen, Phil Thayer.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.

Review of Belmont Climate Action Forums

The committee discussed the two forums that were held before Town Meeting. Yvonne noted that at the first meeting many of the people in attendance were "familiar faces", and also that there was a relative dearth of younger people; James noted that at the second meeting there were both more people who he hadn't seen at climate-related events before and also some younger people. Travis noted re: the HeatSmart Belmont Meet-the-Installer event that he thought it was something that should be held again, and that lots of good questions were raised. Erin suggested having an event structured more like a workshop (come and move between tables to learn about all the various different things you can be doing). Adrienne suggested having more outreach at events that people are already at (e.g. having a table at Saturday soccer) and signing people up right there. Travis asked whether there is a goal to build an Energy Committee mailing list; Erin said that that could be one of the social channels.

Town Meeting action on Roadmap resolution:

Marty noted that the vote at town meeting was around 87% in favor of the Energy Committee's resolution. It was noted that speakers had expressed some concerns around cost. Marty noted that talking proactively about the possible financial benefits to ratepayers of electrification is important. Adrienne noted that bringing health impact (e.g. asthma, Lyme disease, COPD) into the discussions can also help mitigate cost concerns.

There was discussion of next steps after this vote. It was noted that the Committee had talked at earlier meetings of the next item to bring to a future Town Meetings being addressing building codes/zoning in the context of the Roadmap. It was noted that we should begin building awareness on those initiatives well in advance, and actively seek out people who may be opposed to such actions.

Travis noted that there was a comment made at Town Meeting that the Energy Committee should be represented on all new building committees.

Safe Routes to School Anti-Idling policies

Kate Bowen of Safe Routes to School described her research on opportunities to reduce idling, and in particular to ensure that town employees know about and are complying with the relevant state anti-idling laws. The Committee voted unanimously to authorize Roger Colton to work with Safe Routes to School to further develop this work.

A question that arose during the discussion was who is currently doing reporting for Green Communities.

We're Still In

Travis will send around to the committee the spreadsheet of possible activities that Belmont Light is considering in regards to the We're Still In campaign, and the committee members will provide their opinions to him as to whether this framework is sufficiently helpful to justify putting time into discussing it at a future meeting.

Advocating for Better Building Codes: Mass Climate Action Network

Marty noted that Glenn Clancy, Director of the Office of Community Development, is registered to vote on pushing for better building codes at the IECC in the fall. It was felt that this is something we should keep an eye on (MCAN will likely be providing further information), and put our case to Glenn with recommendations for this vote. Phil noted that one way to formalize this would be to have the Select Board endorse a resolution.

Belmont Climate Action Website

Adrienne raised the question of what sources are appropriate for inclusion as content on the website (an example was a recent New York Times op-ed article on gas stoves that is relevant to strategic electrification). The general consensus was that the website should focus on information about campaigns within Belmont, but that the social media channels were a good place to post more topical and short-lived information such as interesting newspaper articles.

There was also discussion about how broad the content of the website should be, and whether it should stretch beyond the core elements of the Roadmap: strategic electrification and clean energy. The consensus seemed to be that strategic electrification should remain the focus of the website, but that the website should also include links to other climate-relevant initiatives in town, such as Belmont Composts!

Erin, Yvonne and Adrienne volunteered to maintain updates to the website.

Outreach

Adrienne suggested that we should organize an event for children for Earth Day 2020 and has ideas about people/groups we could partner with. This should be a topic for future discussion.

"Meet Belmont" was also discussed as an event at which we should have a presence and the various town campaigns (HeatSmart, BDE, BGS) should be featured.

Belmont Citizens Forum newsletter

It was noted that the deadline for submission of our articles for the Belmont Citizens Forum issue is June 1, but that it would be good to have them submitted well before that to allow time to ensure consistency between them.

Report on Roadmap outreach to other committees

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

Discussion of McLean housing proposal

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

Report on current projects

- a. Belmont Drives Electric. Marty noted there will be a presence at Town Day
- b. HeatSmart. James said HeatSmart will also be at Town Day, and there will be an Open House event on Saturday June 8. Over the last two weeks the installer, Muirfield Mechanical, has been conducting site visits and contracts are already beginning to be received.
- c. Green Power campaign. Adrienne noted that this will be promoted at various events.
- d. Chenery Solar. At the February School Committee meeting, Superintendent Phelan had said that the next step was to obtain guidance from Town Counsel about the legal set-up required for Belmont Light to manage the project of a solar installation. Town Counsel had expressed an opinion to a Town Meeting member that a simple memorandum of understanding between Belmont Light and the School Department would suffice for this. To expedite the process, James sent a draft MOU this week to Patrice Garvin, who has sent it on to Town Counsel; she will let James know when she hears back from him.

Report from LBAC

A main topic of the last LBAC meeting was the power supply policy, which was co-developed by the Energy Committee and LBAC last year. Belmont Light had been approached about contracts that included nuclear, biomass, solar, and wind as possible carbon-free or carbon-neutral sources of electricity, which prompted the question of what the relative preferences should be for these different sources. There was discussion of hosting a public forum on this topic to receive input from residents.

There was also discussion around loosening timeframes of targets for carbon-free electricity in the power supply policy. Given that the power supply policy was a joint EC/LBAC document, Travis raised the point that the Energy Committee should be involved in discussing such revisions.

New Business

Erin has ordered 200 postcards for promoting Belmont Climate Action. Yvonne noted that there would be an upcoming charge for renewal of the website.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:44 PM.