

2018 APR 12 AM 9:26

Belmont Energy Committee 14 February 2018 Minutes

Start: 8:00 am

Attending: Roger Colton (Chair), Don Mercier, James Booth, Marty Bitner, Jenny Marusiak

Guest: Town Administrator Patrice Garvin

- The Committee approved the minutes from the January 10, 2018 Energy Committee meeting.
- The Committee approved the minutes from the January 18, 2018 Joint Meeting with the Light Board Advisory Council.
- Belmont Light Supply Policy: The Light Board asked for Energy Committee approval, although it's not required, of the amended copy of the Belmont Light Supply Policy resulting from the meeting. The Committee approved the policy, contingent on two minor changes:
 1. The Committee added a phrase to Item IX about reducing emissions in other sectors to clarify the point about the possibility of electricity demand rising as part of attempts to reduce emissions from non-electricity sources.
 2. The Committee suggested alternative language to clarify that reviews in future years would be to determine any renewable procurement beyond the state RPS, rather than revisiting whether or not to meet the RPS each year.
- Belmont's Climate Roadmap: Marusiak introduced the draft roadmap document that she is developing along with Franck and Booth for review by the Energy Committee. The document will serve as an outreach tool for general discussion and stakeholder engagement, and it will embed the interim targets and carbon reduction measures currently being modeled.

Booth described the spreadsheet model he developed to look at different scenarios for carbon reduction, which generally focus on switching electricity to renewables while ramping up adoption of electric vehicles and cold climate heat pumps.

Booth noted that in some of the more gradual scenarios the final target (of 80 percent reduction) is reached, but with much higher cumulative emissions than in more aggressive scenarios. In the spirit of mitigating climate change, we should set ambitious interim targets to reach the final target as soon as possible and minimize cumulative emissions.

Bitner suggested that we should stress the importance of hitting interim targets, because missing those can make reaching the final goal much harder.

Colton summarized our proposed efforts as addressing: 1. EVs, 2. Carbon-free electricity, and 3. Conversion to heat pumps for building heat.

Marusiak suggested that we add another item; the Climate Action Plan and Roadmap need to be embedded in decision-making processes throughout the Town and in ways that go beyond the three measures listed.

Mercier suggested that Belmont should look into the feasibility of using more hydroelectric energy. Colton will pass on the suggestion to the Light Board Advisory Council.

Colton noted that it would be good for Belmont Light to study what sort of emissions reductions the town could get for various levels of increased rates/bills--as discussed in the January 18 meeting.

Bitner recommended following up with the Belmont Light survey results, which said that more than half of respondents are willing to pay extra for renewable energy. He added that this is where an opt-out plan would be far more effective than an opt-in plan.

Booth noted that some programs are already in place to work on the areas listed above: Belmont Drives Electric, the Belmont Light procurement policy, and a modest heat-pump rebate program.

Colton asked that we consider how to best use our limited time and resources.

Marusiak noted that while the Energy Committee focuses on the three strategic electrification measures, we could seek out champions amongst other stakeholders and committees who can work on emissions reductions specific to their area of interest and/or obligation. She also pointed out that the state senate's new omnibus bill could have a big impact on these efforts, depending on the final form of the bill.

Mercier recommended that we better define what we mean by clean energy (i.e. does it include biomass?). The response was that we are using the state's definition for simplicity.

Colton stated that continuation of the Belmont Drives Electric program was an obvious next step.

- Town Administrator: Garvin introduced some of the ideas she has for small, but effective measures to reduce energy use (such as sensors for lighting in town buildings). She noted that Belmont has to complete a previous Green Communities Program-funded project before we could apply for additional funding, but she is continuing to look for opportunities--particularly when a new facilities manager is in place. (The facilities manager will also be key to making progress on the Chenery solar project.) She noted that the Town needs to take the lead and demonstrate commitment to carbon reduction if we are going to ask residents and business to act. She also noted that the Town could run into technical difficulties once it begins improvements to the police station and DPW building.

Conversions to heat pumps: Marusiak suggested the Town have information in place at opportunistic times such as when people's systems break down. Booth suggested we need to raise awareness much earlier than that. Mercier asked if heat pumps

work in the cold. Bitner responded that the new generation of cold climate air source heat pumps work perfectly well in the cold.

Booth stressed that we need to decide the interim targets and key points to move the roadmap forward.

Next steps: Marusiak will send a copy of the draft roadmap with stakeholder engagement plan for inclusion with the minutes. Committee members should evaluate it for its usefulness in answering several stakeholder questions: Why are we doing this? Why this approach? And what actions should we be taking?

Next meeting: March 14th at 7pm. ***This is an evening meeting to give the Committee time to discuss both the stakeholder engagement plan and the interim targets.**

Adjourn: 9am.