

**Belmont Energy Committee Meeting Minutes  
December 5, 2019**

2020 FEB 18 AM 9:29

Present: Adrienne Allen, Marty Bitner, James Booth, Yvonne Brown, Roger Colton, Cabell Eames, Travis Franck, Don Mercier, Greg Piotrowicz. Guests: Betsy Lipson, Phil Thayer.

Discussion of proposed bylaws

Roger and Marty informed the committee that they had met on Dec. 4 with people from the Harvard Law School Environmental Law Clinic to ask whether there would be students interested in reviewing our proposed bylaws about 1) requirements for new housing construction and 2) home energy ratings. The goal would be to obtain some analysis of possible legal pitfalls. There was interest, though there will be a question of whether there are students with bandwidth to take on the project. They have our documents, and a student may be assigned in January.

There was discussion of the question of whether there should be an exemption in our proposed new construction bylaw to allow cooking with gas, as this was part of the recently passed bylaw in Brookline. Several members of the committee noted the growing awareness of direct air-quality-related health impacts of gas usage as a reason to push for not having gas for cooking.

There was also discussion of whether the committee should move forward with proposing the new construction bylaw at Town meeting this spring, or instead wait until the Attorney General has ruled on the legality of the Brookline bylaw. Don was of the opinion that we should wait; other members thought we should proceed. In favor of the latter course of action, it was noted that the legal issues may well be different for a town with a municipal light plant like Belmont compared to one served by an investor-owned electric utility like Brookline.

Proposed new development at McLean Hospital

Betsy Lipson, co-chair of the Affordable Housing Trust, presented to the committee about a proposed new development of housing units by Northland Development on a parcel of land at McLean Hospital. After consultations with the AHT and other town stakeholders, Northland is proposing a development that includes income-restricted rental units and units for purchase that could cater to people on fixed-incomes. In a meeting with Marty and Roger, the developer expressed his willingness for the development to have all-electric buildings (no fossil-fuel heating) and be solar- and EV-ready; the committee welcomed this very promising news.

One thing that the developer thought would, however, be desired is to have gas for cooking. It was proposed that a meeting be set up between Adrienne and Yvonne and Northland (with Betsy Lipson to attend) to discuss the advantages of avoiding gas hookups altogether, particularly from a health perspective.

The development will be the subject of a special Town Meeting on March 16<sup>th</sup>.

Other business

There has been a request for someone from the EC to ask the Select Board to endorse the Future Act (An Act for a Utility Transition to Using Renewable Energy -- H.2849/S.1490) currently before the state Legislature. Cabell will look into this.

Due to the late hour, other reports from the agenda were pushed to the next meeting.

New meeting Time

It was decided to move Energy Committee meetings in the future to the **2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays of each month.** Next meeting will be January 9<sup>th</sup>.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.