

DATE: October 22, 2020
TIME: 2:57 PM

Belmont Energy Committee Meeting Minutes

September 16, 2020

Present: Adrienne Allen, Claus Becker, Marty Bitner, James Booth, Cabell Eames, Travis Franck, Brian Kopperl, Don Mercier, Greg Piotrowicz, Alex Thurston. Guests: Phil Thayer, Yvonne Brown.

The meeting, held by Zoom, came to order at 7 PM. The committee welcomed new members Claus Becker, Brian Kopperl, and Alex Thurston. Yvonne Brown, who is leaving the Committee, was thanked for her hard work and dedicated service to the Energy Committee.

Time for future Energy Committee meetings

The evening of the third Wednesday of the month was decided as the time for future Energy Committee meetings.

Committee Co-Chair

Marty Bitner noted the desire to have another member join him as co-chair of the Committee following the departure of Roger Colton. James Booth volunteered to take on this role, and was approved by the Committee. Claus Becker expressed interest in serving in this role in the near future.

Electric Vehicles in Belmont

James Booth presented findings on vehicles in Belmont derived from analysis of Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINs) from Belmont tax records. Some key findings:

- Of the vehicles in the first tax commitment period of 2020, there were 344 electric vehicles in Belmont (2% of all vehicles). 193 of these were fully electric and 151 plug-in hybrid.
- Multipurpose Passenger Vehicles (MPVs: SUVs, wagons, and minivans) represent about half the vehicles in Belmont, but only 14% of electric vehicles.
- Of the 2020 model year vehicles in the available records, 8% were electric vehicles, with most of these being fully battery electric. This rate of adoption of EVs is consistent with the goals of the Committee's Roadmap, though it is still early along the adoption curve.

LBAC

Travis Franck reported that LBAC is working on design of time-of-use pricing (TOU), seeking to align rates with a number of policy goals including strategic electrification.

Follow-up on Attorney General's ruling on Brookline gas bylaw

Marty Bitner described possible options for moving forward with efforts to promote fossil-fuel free new construction in the wake of the AG's ruling that Brookline's bylaw conflicted with state law. These include:

- 1) Seek a non-binding resolution from Town Meeting asking the MA legislature to take action, e.g. by asking them to give permission to towns to do bylaws like this, or by asking the state to adopt stretch energy code.

- 2) Introduce changes to zoning to positively incentivize electrification.
- 3) Seek a Home Rule Petition from the legislature for Belmont.
- 4) Green Communities Act. For buildings larger than 3000 sq. ft., there is a requirement to minimize energy cost. Can the case be made that electrification is necessary under this stipulation?

Marty noted that there was going to be an upcoming meeting with Rep. Dave Rogers, at which his advice could be asked re: effective courses of action.

Don Mercier expressed the view that the Committee should be promoting replacement of appliances in existing buildings when they reach the end of their lifespan and increasing use of electric dryers.

Reports

McLean development

It was noted that Town Meeting will be having a final vote soon on the proposed overlay for the McLean site. At this point the developer still has not engaged with Belmont Light.

Website administration

Greg Piotrowicz offered to take over updating of the website from Yvonne. Adrienne Allen noted that we should add increasing visibility for the website to the next meeting.

Belmont Drives Electric

Marty noted that Aidan Leary at Belmont Light is putting together a virtual ride-and-drive event for National Drive Electric week.

HeatSmart Belmont

James noted that the HeatSmart Alliance is a fledgling organization of which he is a member that seeks to continue the efforts made in local HeatSmart campaigns for promoting heat pumps. Also, MassCEC has launched a helpful new website about heat pumps and other ways for households to move to clean energy solutions: <https://goclean.masscec.com/>.

Chenery Solar project

Despite having received votes in support of the project from the School Committee, LBAC, Town Meeting, and the Energy Committee, this project is still not moving forward. It was characterized as having been put on the backburner. It was noted that the installation needs to happen by August to avoid the town losing \$30,000.

The following motion was made:

The Energy Committee renews and reiterates its support for the Chenery solar project.

The motion passed unanimously.

Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee

Brian Kopperl and Phil Thayer noted that while PV is not going to get built as part of the school project until 2023, Bill Lovallo (Chair of the Building Committee) has confirmed that it is still in the budget.

Ice Rink

An RFP went out several months ago that contained wording that aligns with the EC's goals. No other updates are available.

Belmont Composts!

The town put out an RFP for a preferred provider.