

DATE: September 21, 2021
TIME: 9:11 AM

Belmont Energy Committee Minutes - SEPT 2019

Members present: Travis Franke, Marty Bitner, Roger Colton, Yvonne Brown, Don Mercier, Erin Lynch.

Guests present: Phil Thayer

Date: Sept 18, 2019

- June meeting we didn't have a quorum
 - May minutes approved as corrected.

Last Oct/Nov we talked about having 2 warrant articles: energy disclosure at time of sale and establishing some green building standards. On tracts to be Town Meeting 2020 warrant articles.

- Roger: Met with Spencer from the planning department and Glenn Clancy from Office of Community Development in summer of 2018 and received feedback. This summer went through bylaws and again met with Glenm and Spencer. Not sure when we want the bylaws to be made public. How should we work this as a process? Home energy disclosure bylaws. The seller would put the audit together. Identical to disclosing miles per gallon on a car. Standardize is the goal.
- Don: Not in favor, irrespective of what the bylaw might say. As a property manager, two people who live there are different. We shouldn't require it. Maybe the broker should suggest they do an energy audit. The buyer should be looking for themselves.
- Marty: But measurement wouldn't be based on bills, but the house itself. Quantify (perhaps via energy audit) the house and what is it capable of performing at. It might also motivate sellers to put money into improving the energy efficiencies (eg insulation).

Public, not public, how do we proceed? Roger will distribute both for the October meeting.

Two draft bylaws: home energy disclosure of energy rating at time of sale of a covered unit. Other is set of green building standards which promotes the roadmap. Doesn't require putting in solar panels but would require people to have new homes be wired sufficient to support solar panels and charge electric vehicles and roofs to be solar-ready in the future. Set forth emission free building standards. It follows the roadmap right down the line. Addresses elec, use of fossil fuels for heating, water heating, solar, electric vehicles.

Don: Why aren't we focused on electric appliances. Travis: lead the EV campaign on an electric appliances. Feel free to broaden that.

Roger: When we review the emission free building bylaw we will review it with Don's comments in mind.

Phil: Wanted to make sure we all knew the board of building regulations and standards (BBRS) sets for all MA buildings, John Cotucre, encouraged them to develop the ZNE code over the next year. This might bolster the warrant articles. Also Watertown has the ordinance to require solar on houses and one legislature is taking it up at the state level.

Roger: In conversations with Glenn, having received input from MAPC, Marty and I have been told to work hard to make this look as different from a building code as possible because building codes are set at the state level and local governments don't have an authority to adopt their own building. So these are emission free green building standards. And evidently towns are authorized to regulate the buildings outside the building codes. It's considered a general health and safety bylaw instead of a building code. We had language originally about heat pumps, we shouldn't tell people HOW (like Watertown) we will let people get to an emissions free building however they wish to do it. New construction would need to be emission free. That means no gas furnaces. We mean carbon emissions here.

Marty: tone was very receptive to working with us to figure out something that's tractable. I think it is good to include them in the conversation since they're the ones who will need to enact this. What is enforceable at the planning / community development level.

Erin: what does town meeting have to do with it? Roger: First opportunity to present this is first annual meeting 2020 in May. At the special meeting this fall there wasn't room so the first one where this can be presented. Unless there's a special meeting in Feb/Mar. This is our charge - the reason this committee exists - to do as much as we can to push the town towards a 80% reduction by 2050. The information that James and Jenny showed in the chart presented to 2019 TM- the way it's going we're not going to make it unless we start doing bylaws like this. Takes roadmap + emissions inventory (% of emissions from residential) and we said at town meeting if we don't crack that we won't meet the climate action goals. We gave them the data if we don't address emissions from homes we're not going to make it. 196 to 14 vote. We know how to get there, now we have to translate that into steps.

#3 Report on current projects

a) Belmont Drives Electric (Marty)

Joint event end of Aug (Phil was there) - went well. It's remarkable how much cross-pollination there is. People are interested in carbon reduction or solar or heat pumps and it was marvelous to direct people to the other tables. Great synergy. Aiden likely has the new signups.

This is national drive electric week.

State \$1500 rebate ends at the end of Sept. If thinking of getting electric car for maximum financial benefit. Doesn't look like its coming back.

Phil: head of More EV said the funding is running out but he's going to try to push Baker administration to come up with some other way to incent EVs.

Star Market in Waverly two charging stations and they are wired for 8. And it's free. New company, don't need an account. Big billboards there. Give you a boost, cover your drive 25miles/hr of driving usually. 2 hour max.

Some people are looking at induction charging but not ready yet.

b) Heat Smart (with Belmont Light) (James)

Campaign going relatively well. The latest we had 23 installs that are registered. Mostly completed. A few more contracts are signed. A big push with Sept 26th event - a speaker from MGH talk about health benefits (children's etc). After she speaks, Muirfield electric will answer questions about the system themselves. Muirfield have empirical tests of how these function in New England.

Overall people are pleased with the progress. Goal is to get 50 by end of year. With contracts we might be up to 30.

Open houses - 3 this past weekend, Adien James and Roger filmed (on the news this Friday). 2.5 hours long, there was always someone there, a steady stream 10 different people. All people had looked into it to a point, no one was just wandering in. Likely leaning this way anyway.

Meet Belmont went well (up at Belmont Day School). 3 tables for various things (Drive Elec, Energy Committee, Belmont Light, Belmont Sustainability, Belmont Goes Solar). Belmont Citizens forum could point to the pile of the article written.

c) Belmont Middle and High School

Marty: Another round of value engineering, cut \$19million from budget. Things like solar in crosshairs. Efforts by Jacob and other SMEs how to convey to building committee hopeful they can use numbers of the cost of solar and what cost savings they are looking for. Hopefully it doesn't reduce the number of panels. Can they handle adding it in the future.

Phil: Sent to google group for high school (100 email addresses) with an update. Meeting tomorrow at 630pm. Idea is Jacob and Dave Beavers and John Abbe will convince the building committee that they shouldn't reduce the capacity b/c solar pump panel prices have come down and every panel we don't put up will increase the operating cost. Just Bob McLaughlin proposed this idea, doesn't seem that anyone else on the committee in favor of it. Will save town \$1million over 30 years. From day 1 you're cash flow positive.

d) Ice rink (Phil)

RFP is in fast track mode and the public hearing on Monday, 3 of the 4 school committee members were supportive of making sure the building is as energy efficient as possible. Public/private partnership because owner of ice rink is not town. Sentiment of group was to go slow and understand the implications of lease, public/private partnership the town loses control over energy efficiency, programming, traffic. Wellesley residents just want through it with their ice rink, the RFP needs to be written tightly. RFP must be approved by town meeting in November. People want to limit usage of rink from 7am to 11pm at night because noisy.

Roger: what this group should do, Energy Committee should step up and say the ice rink also has zero net energy implications, has emissions implications and we want to be and expect to be part of that process.

Travis: Motion we vote that EC believes we have an institutional interest in what goes on with the ice rink and that interest should be communicated to school board, John Phelan and Patrice. All yeases.

Marty will get in touch with John and Patrice and coordinate with Jacob and the select boards especially Tom Caputo.

e) Library

Design of a new library is proceeding. Mike Widmer appointed a sustainable building person to that building committee. They are consulting with us.

#4 Report on new building codes (Marty)

Upcoming vote for IECC on building codes. International Energy Conservation Code. This set gets voted on every 3 years. There's a tension between builders who want more lax codes vs sides wanting more stringent codes. Glenn Clancy is rep from Belmont. Vote in late Nov. Watched a webinar a group put together. There's a residential and commercial committee and moderate improvements and elimination of loop holes. Nothing extreme nor was it backsliding. Incremental. Committee puts forward recommendations and there's a 50% requirement in terms of voting (town reps, builders). Need simple majority to go with their recommendations. Then need $\frac{2}{3}$ majority if you want to overturn. There was an EV ready put forward (not recommended). In addition, a zero energy appendix is an example of things not recommended by committee but if overwhelming ground swell of support they might adopt. Push to make sure towns register to vote and engaged on how they should be voting. Lobby Glenn on aspects of the proposed code worthy of his attention and what we recommend his vote should be. In next month or so there will be more specific recommendations from energy groups on what we should be focused on. Should be a regular agenda item.

#5 Report from Zoning review workgroup (Roger)

Might remember last fall Roger suggested the EC convene a work group of folks from various committees around town to review the zoning bylaw from a climate change perspective. When we went to the Board of Selectmen in Jan/feb they said yes multiple committees working together sounds great. Now have a zoning review work group convened for sustainable building: reps from housing trust, historic district commission, etc. Had one meeting at end of Aug (just organizational) and next mtg is a week from tomorrow night (likely substantive conversations, eg sustainable building elements to add). Whatever proposed would go through Planning Board process before going to Town Meeting. One example is this outline these two architects have developed on what sustainable design elements should be included in a bylaw. Example of what we might look at is the number parking spaces that are required

in a minimum zoning law. From climate perspective, we'd want it to be fewer (and we know that's in our interest b/c that chart shows vehicles as the biggest generator of emissions).

#6 Discussion of McLean Hospital development - emissions perspective (Roger)

Like the ice rink, there was a proposal to build 120/140 new housing units. Proposal was withdrawn from planning board when affordable housing folks objected that not a sufficient number of affordable units. The negotiations between Housing Trust and Mclean developers have been proceeding. When energy committee talked about last spring, as a body we don't have an interest. But when someone builds that many new units of new housing that development could undo of years of work on emissions reduction. Would like Energy Committee to express an interest in McLean. When there are negotiations going on we want emissions specific negotiations with McLean developers regarding how they will control. Communicate that to Patrice soon because otherwise on the outside looking in.

Travis: motion that any new development at McLean should be emissions free. It could really set us back and this timing is right. We need to motion this before the bylaw is brought to town meeting.

Move that any development within McLean should be emissions free. All in favor.

#7 Report from Light Board Advisory Committee (LBAC) (Travis)

So much action! Travis is now vice chair. From May, there was a variety of different contracts nuclear, solar, wind - signed 2 separate chunks of solar to long term contract. 33% clean in 2018. On track to be 50% renewable in 2019. 100% by 2022. Chris took the roadmap as his guideline and town meeting. Purchase power revised, voted on and passed by Light Board. Our target of 100% by 2022, 23, 24, 25 as well. Power supply policy used to say 100% on ongoing basis without limit. Now the Power Supply Policy says beyond 2025 to be decided.

Spark plug power gave a presentation to LBAC, a battery storage firm out of Somerville. His perspective on incinerator site. Connection with Dave Beavers. Mostly informational. Could be a provider of a storage project. Will likely go through an RFP process anyway. Independent numbers put the project in line with our previous estimates: \$300K benefit to the town annually. Small capital outlay, ~under 10 year payback period. Behind the meter program discussed, possible to do a pilot program and has a different purpose in the grid.

Payment-in-Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) payment is discussed within the context of the town's usual fiscal constraints, Patrice is looking over entire budget and reasonable chunk is from this PILOT payment. PILOT from Belmont Light and hasn't changed since 2005/2006. Seems to be very generous (#3 of 40) relative to what other municipal lights contribute to town budget and overall suggestion that it stays at \$650K. If the payment would rise it would take funds away from meeting its climate goals. Town can't generate revenue from the municipal light department. Light Board has to make the final choice, next Monday.

#8 New business

Don: our articles should have mentioned appliances alongside heat pumps.

Roger: one of subsidies provided is to convert to electric appliances.

Marty: I got a \$500 rebate from heat pump water heater from Belmont Light.

Motion to adjourn.