

Minutes

Town of Belmont

2020 FEB 13 PM 2: 51

Belmont Municipal Light Board

Select Board Meeting Room, Town Hall

Monday, January 13, 2020

6:00pm

I-CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Light Board was called to order at 6:01pm by Chair Roy Epstein. Vice Chair Adam Dash and Board Member Tom Caputo were present. Belmont Light General Manager Chris Roy was present.

II-GENERAL MANAGER'S UPDATE

- a) Incinerator site: Belmont Light had been supporting the Town's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) filing for the site - approval of the DEP filing was required prior to moving forward with the solar project, and was expected within a year. The full capping process was expected to take 2-3 years, therefore solar on the site was still 3-4 years out.
Roy had recently received quotes for a utility-scale battery project based on a fee-for-service model, which did not require capital outlay; however, the quotes were not attractive from a financial standpoint, and Roy would now be looking into an ownership model more closely.
Epstein advised Roy to coordinate closely with Community Development Director Clancy and DPW Director Marcotte with respect to use of the site.
- b) Small cell update: There was a meeting scheduled for next week with Extenet regarding the two tolled applications to install small cell wireless facilities. Belmont Light was still in the process of coordinating with the Historic District Commission to select an appropriate decorative pole.
Representatives from the Municipal Electric Association of Massachusetts (MEAM) had given a primer on the issue of small cell facilities, advising MLPs to focus on the technical aspects while leaving municipalities to regulate aesthetics.
Caputo noted there had recently been a public forum in Concord on 4G/5G technology; he would try to obtain the video and share with the other Board members.

III-EV CHARGING STATION DEPLOYMENT STRATEGY

Steve Klionsky (Chair, LBAC) and David Beavers (LBAC) joined the meeting. Roy summarized from the brief discussion at the previous meeting: as part of the goal of strategic electrification, trying to determine where/how best to deploy EV charging stations; the research shows that most charging is done at home and work places; need to determine how best to incentivize adoption of home-based charging stations with the limited pool of funds available.

Points of discussion:

- Dash asked if there had been any follow-up on the proposal raised by Daryl King at the previous meeting, to place chargers at the schools. Roy said there were 8 parking spaces planned for EV chargers at the new Middle and High School.

- Epstein argued that public charging stations (e.g. Claflin lot) were mostly used by Belmont residents taking advantage of free charging. Important that a reasonable fee be charged for their use – no need for Belmont Light to subsidize.
- Epstein raised the issue of timing of the deployment of EV chargers, given newly developing technologies, e.g. super charging stations that can provide a full charge within minutes. It may make sense to wait until such technologies are more prevalent/further developed.
- Roy raised an open question about how best to accommodate and incentivize the ~50% of accounts that are tenants, who don't necessarily have space of their own or control over the ability to install a charger.

Caputo advocated for the Board to take action in developing a policy or plan towards expanding the EV infrastructure in Town in the near future, suggesting LBAC could take up the issue; Klionsky was receptive to having LBAC weigh in. Epstein pointed out that there had been a dramatic slowdown in EV purchases in Massachusetts in 2019, associated with a reduction in the rebate offered – it was advisable to see how the numbers played out for 2020, as there had been changes made to increase the rebate again.

Roy emphasized the Belmont Light is supportive in general of expanding public EV charging stations, but it is a question of how best to utilize the small pool of funding to promote EV charging deployment.

[Open public comment]

- *Daryl King (Precinct 1)*: The current EV charging technology is sufficient. Due to the impact of climate change, don't have the time to wait and see or do further analysis - need to take action to increase the EV infrastructure now.

[Close public comment.]

IV-TIME OF USE RATE APPROACH

Roy explained that time-of-use rate design was a complicated and sensitive endeavour, which would require a significant amount of time, effort and public education. He was seeking input from the Board on how it would like to see the process unfold, specifically with respect to how much of the technical aspects should be taken up with the Board given its' limited time constraints. Klionsky added that LBAC was willing to take up an analysis of time-of-use rates, however it was not entirely clear how best to communicate with and advise the Light Board, given the technical and political difficulties of the topic.

Epstein suggested that the Light Board put together a memo for LBAC, outlining the high-level goals for rate design. LBAC should then take the lead in engaging the consultant and preparing a report assessing whether time-of-use rates would be able to achieve those goals.

Caputo asked about the relation of time-of-use rates to the strategic plan – ideally, goals would be outlined in the strategic plan and time-of-use rates would serve a mechanism for achieving the goals. Roy agreed the two items were related; he expected to provide an update on the strategic plan in two meetings.

V-APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion: To approve the Belmont Municipal Light Board regular session minutes of December 16, 2019. (Vote passed 3-0)

VI-PUBLIC COMMENTS

[None.]

VII-FUTURE MEETING DATES

- February 10, 2020

VIII-ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To adjourn at 6:58pm. (Vote passed 3-0)