

**ELECTRIC SUBCOMMITTEE**  
Meeting of Wednesday, May 12, 2021  
Virtual/Zoom ELC Meeting  
7:00PM

The regular meeting of the Electric Subcommittee was held on May 12, 2021. It was a virtual/Zoom meeting format due to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

With a quorum in virtual attendance, Mr. Mootfian called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Subcommittee Members present: James Engel, William Craft, Whitney Hatch, Michael Schaaf, Edward Rauscher, Jonathan Blair, Ray Leczynski

Recording Secretary: Kathleen Reed

**I. Citizens' Queries**

There were no citizen queries presented.

**II. Approval of Minutes – March 2021 and April 2021**

Mr. Rauscher requested that on page two of the April 2021 minutes, third paragraph, second line that “*debated*” be changed to “*debate*”. On the same page, it was requested that the word “*unanimously*” be removed from the statement “After lengthy discussion and upon motion duly made by Mr. Rauscher and seconded by Mr. Hatch it was *unanimously*” He requested that a sentence be added to the formal vote: “***The vote was unanimous.***”

With the above referenced amendments and a motion made by Mr. Hatch and seconded by Mr. Rauscher, it was

***VOTED: To approve the minutes of the March 2021 meeting and the minutes of the April 2021 meeting with the amendments as noted above. The vote was unanimous.***

**III. Project Prioritization Discussion**

- A. Underground
  - a. Market/Central/Hammatt Streets
  - b. High/East Streets

Prior to this meeting, Mr. Blair had provided the ELC with his project notes that included the issues associated with an underground wiring project on the historic corridor of High Street. He provided a rough expense estimate of \$2.5M-\$3M based on the preliminary discussions of the scope of the project and as a starting point for discussion. There was discussion regarding issues of real estate; namely, two separate duct banks would have to be installed with concrete encasement and that in order to maintain the duct banks, subterranean vaults would need to be installed along the street in addition to spare conduits. An underground wiring project would likely require that easements would have to be taken from most properties to allow for the transformers and ancillary equipment to be installed. The transformers, as they contain high voltage and are filled with oil for cooling and are required to be situated ten feet from any combustible surface. Depending on where the boundaries are drawn, Mr. Blair provided predicted a need for a \$30,000 betterment per household for the roughly 90 customers in that corridor. In addition, each property would likely require excavation and installation of conduit from their meter to the

nearest interconnection. It is anticipated that similar work related to the communication infrastructure would be required as well.

It was noted that ELC had budgeted funds to conduct a modest study focused on the area of Hammatt, Market, and Central Streets. The overhead electric infrastructure in this area was described as overloaded, crowded, and difficult to access and replace. Mr. Blair reviewed photos from these neighborhoods to serve as a visual tool of the scope of the work that would be required to adapt the electric infrastructure to serve commercial customers as well as any possible expansion of growth and electric needs in that area.

There was debate regarding the avenues for possibly offsetting the cost of a betterment expense of an underground wiring project, the burden of a betterment expense to residential property owners and/or the Town, and who is best to move the project and manage it going forward

The role of the ELD in such a project was discussed. It was suggested that the ELC provide a rough number associated with the cost of a potential project and the number of affected customers to the Commissioners for their consideration. Given that there is no maintenance necessity and the focus is on beautification, there was debate about the best person/entity to spearhead the initial discussion on the project. In order for the Historical Commission to begin investigating the possibility of soliciting philanthropic funds to support the project, a point person would need to be identified before a foundation would likely be to react to the project. With a proof of concept and for such a hopeful and collective project, there was thought that future expansion of underground wiring may be a future possibility given the aesthetic and tourism value along with the pride it would bring to the community.

There was discussion on how best to move forward with an initial project discussion and whether it should perhaps begin with the Town's leadership, or whether the ELC should respond to the conceptual project by providing general information to the strategic planning group as the project would involve the condition, value, and future of the electrical system in that area, or whether an individual is best to approach the matter with the strategic planning group.. It was noted that the Town has a strategic planning working group currently in place; however, the underground wiring on High Street is not currently an item in any of the plans or priority lists.

It was agreed that the Subcommittee should not take any action until Mr. Blair refines his High Street project notes and sends them in memo format to the Commissioners for consideration.

Mr. Blair stated that the \$25,000 currently earmarked in the capital plan for the work on the Hammatt Street lot will move forward unless that ELC would like to divert from that course and use those funds to engage outside expertise to explore the complexities of the engineering challenge associated with an underground wiring project on High Street.

#### **IV. Long-Range Agenda Planning**

Mr. Blair distributed the long-range planning agenda to the ELC in advance of the meeting. The following items were discussed and a request was made that the following agenda items be added to a future meeting of the ELC:

- Rate Study Discussion. The rate study is close to completion. The way of conducting business in Ipswich needs to be incorporated into the study final recommendations.
- Sustainability. It is important to partner with the utilities departments and continue to grow the responsible sourcing brand across utilities
- Load Growth. As electrification success is achieved, it is important to predict as best as able what capital issues might arise with a successful electrification initiative.

Mr. Blair noted that, in the June 2021 ELC meeting, there is an agenda item to revisit the meter timeline in light of recent climate legislation passed by the Commonwealth of MA. In June, there will be a two-part meeting to review the impact of the legislation on the power portfolio and to then pivot or whether or not the time is right to consider battery options.

**V. New Business**

Mr. Leczynski reported that the receivables over 120 days have been maintaining at approximately \$300,000 since the first of the year. The majority of those past due accounts in the amount of approximately \$261,000 were attributed to residential customers (homeowners and renters) with 45 delinquent commercial customers in arrears. Shutoffs and liens were discussed. The first round of soft letters have gone out informing those customers that they are no longer protected by the shutoff moratorium and that shutoffs will begin on 7/1/2021. Information regarding charitable funding sources that may be able to assist the customers was also provided, and payment plans were also strongly encouraged. To date, only 10 of those delinquent customers have responded and set up payment plans. Shutoffs will begin on 7/1/2021 after two more rounds of letters, followed by door tags, and then a final notice within 48 hours of the shutoff. It was agreed that this was a balanced approach.

*Action: Mr Leczynski was asked to assess whether the over 120 days delinquent accounts were associated with primarily the same customer base year-after-year.*

*Action: Mr. Blair will provide another update the ELC at the June 2021 ELC meeting, and the ELC will decide whether or not a reminder to the Commissioners regarding the upcoming shutoff date is warranted.*

**VI. Adjournment**

There being no further business for the regular session of the May 2021 ELC meeting, a motion to adjourn the public session of the May 2021 meeting was made by Mr. Engel and seconded by Mr. Rauscher, and it was:

***VOTED: To adjourn the public meeting of the ELC and to go to Executive Session and not to return to the public session. The vote was unanimous .***

The next meeting of the ELC will be held on June 9, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Reed, Recording Secretary

# MEETING AGENDA



12 May 2021

- Welcome

*Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Ipswich Electric Light Subcommittee is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. A reminder that persons who would like to listen to this meeting while in progress may do so via zoom.us or by dialing (929)205-6099 and utilizing meeting ID 837 118 4203 and password 01938.*
- Citizens' queries (5)
- Approval of minutes (5)
  - March 2021
  - April 2021
- Project prioritization discussion (30)
  - Underground
    - Market/Central/Hammatt Streets
    - High/East Streets
  - Battery proposal
- Long range agenda review (10)
- New business (10)
- Executive session (60)

*To discuss strategy, with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the government's bargaining or litigating position. Specifically, a proposed power purchase agreement with a private wind turbine developer will be discussed.*
- Upcoming meetings
  - Select Board (Green Development) – May 17, 2021
  - Finance Committee – June 8, 2021
  - Electric Light Subcommittee – June 9, 2021

IPSWICH ELECTRIC LIGHT DEPARTMENT  
**SUBCOMMITTEE SCHEDULE**

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<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Measure of Completion</b>
May 12, 2021	Wind II Replacement; Underground Project Proposals	Discuss and determine direction for Wind II proposal as well as potential underground projects downtown	Vote a formal recommendation to the Commission
June 9, 2021	Power Portfolio Review; Battery Storage Discussion	Examine status and trajectory of wholesale power portfolio as related to local and state goals	Clear goals established
July 14, 2021	Sustainability Program Review	Evaluate Sustainability Program, including its charter and the rebates and incentives	
August 11, 2021	Summer Recess & Facility Tour	Conduct tour of facilities for new Commissioner and Subcommittee members	
September 8, 2021	FY21 Review; Manager's Review; Battery Storage Plan	Review FY21 EOY metrics, including financials, as well as sustainability and peak reduction programs	Provide formal feedback to Commission
October 13, 2021	Metering & Asset Management Plans	Review the proposed AMI system replacement, and the adequacy of capital investment program	
November 10, 2021	Rates – Cost of service study review	Review UFS cost of service study	
December 8, 2021	Rates – Rate design discussion	Discuss desired rate design features	
January 12, 2022	Rates – Rate design review	Review UFS rate design proposal	
February 9, 2022	FY23 Goals & Priorities	Discuss goals and priorities for the upcoming year, with regard to budget, rates, and capital projects	
March 9, 2022	FY23 Budget & Rates	Review proposed budget and rates for FY23; review proposal for increasing depreciation rate	
April 13, 2022	FY23 Recommendations	Final review of Annual Report, including budget, capital plan, rates, and strategic priorities	Vote a formal recommendation to the Commission