



WESTFORD ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) CHARGING STATIONS WORKING GROUP Meeting of April 12, 2022

Approved on 4/26/2022

A meeting of the Westford Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station Working Group (EVWG) was held at 7:00 PM on April 12, 2022, virtually via Zoom.

The following WG members were present: Chauncey Chu, Jerimy Arnold (joined at 7:25 PM), Gerry DiBello, Bob Shaffer, Tom Teller

Town Staff present: Sierra Pelletier, Assistant Planner

1. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm.

2. Old/New Business

- Tom reported that he had received data showing the number of EVs registered, by town, in Massachusetts as of March 2021. The data shows that Westford is about mid-pack in registrations when compared with all the other towns and cities in the state.
- Gerry commented that a Lowell Drives Electric event will take place on Saturday April 30 at Heritage Farms Ice Cream in Lowell from 12-4:00pm. Many EVs will be present for test drives. EV owners will be available to relate their real-life ownership experiences.
- Chauncey reported that he has been working with the Economic Development Committee (EDC). Chauncey has learned thru the EDC that Orchard Square on Rt. 225 does not have any current plans for adding EV charging stations. The EDC has also contacted the owner of Westford Plaza who reported that he does not have plans for installing EV chargers. Chauncey noted that space is tight at this location and the owner would have to give up needed parking spaces for chargers. Another barrier mentioned by the EDC is the installation costs. Even with available rebates, costs to install chargers can be high.
- Bob commented that we have to consider up to three classes of developments where EV chargers could be installed: new developments, existing developments, and existing developments that come before the Planning Board for a change of use or site plan changes. When the owner of an existing development comes to the planning board seeking a change of use, parking space allocation must be revisited. At that point we might work with Town Counsel on seeing what we could incentivize or require to have the owner add EV chargers. This is a matter that can be investigated.

3. Discuss Timeline to Present Proposed Bylaw Changes to Planning Board for Special Town Meeting in the fall

- Chauncey commented that as a goal for the group he would like to propose EV Charger Bylaw changes at the Fall Special Town Meeting.

- Bob commented that any proposed zoning changes require public hearings. Additionally, the Planning Board sometimes needs at least one meeting to discuss any proposed changes before they start the public hearing process. A realistic time frame is to create any proposed zoning changes three to four months before a Town Meeting.
- Chauncey noted that given Bob's comments, the group would have to finalize our proposed zoning changes no later than June to present them at Fall Town Meeting.
- Tom commented that we could schedule additional meetings to be able to meet an early June deadline.
- Sierra commented that if our group wants to schedule extra meetings it may be possible to make the June deadline but the Town Meeting of Spring 2023 may be more realistic.
- There was additional discussion about meeting deadlines for Fall Town Meeting warrant. Bob and Sierra agreed to create a timeline for the group to have proposed bylaw changes ready for a Planning Board meeting.
- All the members agreed by voice vote to change our meetings from monthly to bi-weekly. Bob may not be able to take part in additional meetings due to his job requirements.

4. Brief Overview of Potential Section of the Westford Zoning Bylaw to Amend

- The group reviewed a document showing some current zoning bylaw sections provided by Sierra that may need updates for EV chargers requirements. These include sections dealing with: Off-street parking requirements (5.1), Signs (5.3), Planned Commercial and Industrial Developments (6.4), Definitions (10.2), and Table of Parking Requirements (Appendix D).
- Gerry presented some examples of various U.S. towns and cities that included in their zoning requirements the number of EV chargers per total number of parking spaces in new developments. The development examples included both industrial buildings and multi-unit dwellings. The examples showed large variations in the numbers of make-ready percentage to be allocated for chargers based on the type of land use. Other towns and cities specify both make-ready spaces and spaces that must have a specified number of installed charging stations based on the total number of required spaces. In one case, the city/town required a certain number of make-ready spaces and that chargers be installed in those make-ready spaces after a certain number of years had passed since the spaces were created.
- Bob commented on what the zoning bylaws we propose would require for new single family residential homes. Should we require that this type of dwelling should include pre-wiring for EVSE? For other types of developments, we might want to require a certain number of make-ready spaces for multi-unit or commercial development per total spaces.
- Chauncy asked Bob and Sierra about what currently happens if the Planning Board receives a request to add a charging station to any property. Bob stated that this type of request is more likely to come to the Building Commissioner.
- There was discussion regarding which of the examples Gerry presented regarding new construction they would favor. The group favored the example that specified the number of parking spaces that required installed chargers and the number that are required to be make-ready for each type of use.

- There was agreement that we would closely examine the quite specific EV charger zoning example for Franklin County, NJ that was presented at a previous meeting for examples of how to include EV in the bylaws.

5. Signage and MUTDC Compliance - Bob

- Bob stated that the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) must be followed for all signs. Bob provided examples of signs, and the group discussed wanting them to be uniform at all locations in town. Example for signs: The maximum number of hours a car can be connected and charging as well as daily hours of operation. The group may consider creating a signage guide for EV charger spaces.

6. Lighting Requirements - Jerimy

- There was a brief discussion on lighting requirements. Jerimy said Section 5 specifies illumination for all parking spaces. Requirements will be discussed in more detail at a future meeting.

7. Make-Ready Space Requirements and EVSE Equipment Standards - Tom

- Tom reported that the terms EV-Ready and Make-Ready (used most frequently in zoning regulations) are commonly used terms in the bylaw examples he found in his research.
- Some common requirements:
 - Ordinance language must clearly define installed equipment compared to make-ready for future installations.
 - Make-ready spaces probably should not apply to DC-Fast chargers since the equipment requirements are high in cost.
 - Make-ready spaces are best applied to level-2 chargers that have less infrastructure requirements. Installation must comply with current National Electrical Code (NEC) current revision standards.
- Tom also presented a number of EVSE standard terms that could be applied to ordinance definition sections.

8. Potential Numbers/Percentages of EV Spaces Required - Gerry

- This agenda item was discussed in agenda item 4.

9. ADA Compliance with EV Spaces - Gerry

- This agenda item was discussed in agenda item 4.

10. Approve Minutes – March 8, 2022

- A motion was made by Bob to approve the March 8th minutes. Tom seconded the motion. Approval was unanimous.

11. Set Date, Time, and Scribe for Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be virtual on April 26 at 7:15pm.

12. Adjournment

- A motion to adjourn was made by Tom and seconded by Bob. Meeting adjourned at 9:03pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Gerald DiBello
4/20/2022