

July 30, 2012

The Village of Floral Park has applied for funding from the State of New York in order to support its innovative proposal to create a state of the art Clean Energy Facility with Belmont Park. Just like its sister communities of Long Island that have already created their own electric utility services, such as Rockville Centre, Freeport and Greenport, Floral Parks' proposal could dramatically reduce residents' monthly utility bills while providing more ecologically friendly and reliable electrical service to its residents. The proposal would also put into place some of the infrastructure at Belmont Park which will be needed in order to support improvements at its 435 acre property that is fully owned and controlled by the State of New York.

The State of New York has pledged its commitment to updating and improving the facilities at Belmont Park, which had its last major overhaul in the early 60's. Over the past half century, advancements in energy efficiency have progressed to the point that a co-generational facility producing electricity as well as heating and cooling using the natural gas resources already in place at Belmont Park could become a reality. The proposal is inspired by the already in operation 30 Megawatt co-generation facility located on the campus of the University of California at San Diego, which has an attractive award winning design that has been praised for its energy and reducing the carbon footprint of the campus by lessening greenhouse gasses. The UC-San Diego microgrid has been called by experts as "one of the best examples of an electrical network that provides local control yet is interconnected with the larger electricity grid" according to the Rocky Mountain Institute.

The Village of Floral Park already has a successful public utility in place through its Four Village Studio cooperative arrangement with its sister village municipalities of Bellerose, Stewart Manor and South Floral Park, which has delivered cable television access to local residents for years. The Incorporated Village of Floral Park also envisions offering electrical service to the residents of the four villages, which would take roughly 20,000 residents off the electrical grid and therefore become less susceptible to the major power outages which have negatively impacted these communities. In such a major black out Belmont Park could become a true safe haven for emergency responders and negatively impacted area residents alike. During the mammoth black out in September of 2011 that crippled Southern California, including all of San Diego with well over 6 million residents left without power, the UC San Diego microgrid remained on-line. While nearly 1.4 million San Diego residents went without power for 12 hours, with flights canceled, sewage pumps non-operational and people being rescued from stuck elevators, the UC San Diego microgrid proved to be a real life preserver with its medical center becoming a beacon of light and hope in the midst of the massive power outage caused by a single utility worker in Yuma, Arizona.

A 30 Megawatt Clean Energy Facility at Belmont Park would fulfill the regular energy needs of Belmont Park and its four neighboring villages, with enough additional energy to provide

excess capacity back into the region's fragile electrical grid. Should the State of New York's economic development plans for Belmont Park begin to blossom, the Clean Energy Facility could greatly reduce the energy costs associated with such developments. This could provide Belmont Park with a great competitive advantage over other competing sites, so new jobs helping to support and grow the local communities could become a reality rather than just an unfulfilled potential.

The Incorporated Village of Floral Park is in the unique position in being able to partner with the State of New York to create a micro-utility because as a recognized political subdivision it can create and support a municipal electrical utility just as is the case of the Village of Rockville Centre. Residents of Rockville Centre already enjoy electrical rates that are roughly half of their fellow neighbors in the Town of Hempstead and many even heat their homes with clean electric heat, rather than the more costly and less environmentally friendly home heating oil. Any new jobs created at Belmont Park, moreover, would no doubt be directly attributable to the benefit from the lower overhead and fuel efficiency that the proposed Four Village Microgrid could bring to the entire local community. In addition, by removing Floral Park, Bellerose, Stewart Manor and South Floral Park from the LIPA service area, the strain on the region's already existing facilities would be lessened. I and Floral Park's other members of the Board of Trustees, are optimistic that this innovative proposal will be embraced by the State of New York for immediate consideration and funding. The Four Village Clean Energy Facility could be a "win-win" for everybody except perhaps the foreign oil companies who will no longer have local residents "over the barrel" come winter heating season.