

My name is Adam Smith and I've served as a Light Commissioner since last September when I was appointed by the Select Board and Light Commission to fill a vacancy on the board.

I'm asking for your vote to serve the remaining one year of my predecessor's term.

You can watch a video of me giving these remarks on my website, voteforadamsmith.com and on my Facebook page.

What I've learned over the past year is that we have an enormous responsibility to make sure the Light Department is prepared to meet the energy challenges of the future – by providing clean and reliable electricity at fair rates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Today's electric grid is changing quickly.

I see more electric cars in town every week and I also notice people switching to electric heat pumps and mini splits to heat and cool their homes.

Our linemen and engineers do a great job caring for every light pole, electric wire, transformer, and substation in town, but they face a distribution system that is dated and not designed to handle an electricity load that is growing at 2% a year and may double in the near future.

We just voted to spend \$8.7 million dollars to upgrade our nearly 70-year-old main town transformer and switching gear. Because we waited too long to act, it won't be ready until 2025 and we spent \$2 million more than we needed to.

That project depleted most of our capital reserves, and we need to plan for what might come next. Our new distribution manager noted that we have 20+ years of deferred maintenance in town. I and others have pushed for greater public transparency by pushing for a five-year capital needs assessment. We need to plan ahead now to avoid outages and costly surprises for ratepayers.

Today's electric grid runs on computer software. Software introduces cybersecurity risks and operational complexity even for simple tasks like reading the meters for accurate bills. I worked at Google for almost 17 years where I learned first hand how to ensure safety and privacy in designing software systems. I'm committed to using these unique skills to keep us safe in a Light Department that has no full time IT staff.

I support more rooftop solar on schools, municipal buildings, homes, and businesses to reduce electric rates for everyone by making Marblehead more energy independent and avoiding costly transmission charges to bring electricity into town from outside sources.

I am currently leading our efforts to put solar on the roof of the new Brown school, which will be our first utility scale “made in Marblehead solar,” which we hope to replicate at the high school after their new roof is done.

Please let me know if you have any questions, I have business cards outside with my information and you can usually find me in the dark blue house on Washington Street just past the Old North Church where I live with my amazing wife and three incredible daughters who each attend a different school in town. You might have seen our daughters’ signs on the garage windows, the latest of which is “choose more love”.

Thank you,
Adam