

Vision Implementation Committee

January 6, 2009

Minutes

Present:

VIC: Kirk Hazlett, Sara Oaklander, Jennifer Page, Al Rubin, Paul Solomon
Guests: Tim Bowman, Joanne Coakley, Meg O'Brien

Website pages

The group took a look at three pages from Belmont's reconfigured website. There was agreement that it's great to see a "Newcomers" section.

Reports on Research

Joanne spoke to a newcomer who would like to see as much information as possible on line (e.g., trash collection, where to vote). It is her opinion that younger and professional newcomers would also like to see information on line. She also reported that some might want to get involved but in very limited ways due to time constraints.

Al spoke to a neighbor who has four little children and is very interested in schools.

Other town websites

- Most websites not very user friendly. For newcomers, a good thing would be to easily find a link that describes the town specifically for newcomers.
 - Newcomers heading not found elsewhere – looked at several sites
 - There need to be links that make you want to go further. For example, "Neighborhood College 101" – classes about the city offered by city leaders
 - Most sites are visitor-centric
 - Frequently asked questions – in very informal, chatty, welcoming manner – is a good idea
 - Too much copy on home page is not an inviting thing
 - Several local sites have links specifically to newcomers – Arlington, Cambridge, Newton are good examples
 - Business, resident, newcomer categories are good.
 - Calendar on the home page is great (e.g., Hampton, VA) – one calendar for the site, rather than different ones for different departments

Ideas

- Checklist for newcomers....what to make sure to take care of. Different checklist for homeowners, renters, people with kids, etc.
 - Orientation sessions with town officials/leaders
 - Key word search is helpful in case things here have different names from what people are used to

- Under Residents Newcomers Welcome to Belmont letter link to checklist/list of important information
 - Link to getting involved page...(also under residents)
 - Community organizations – link back to that page
 - Town government
 - Schools
 - Utilities

- “Hot Tips” for moving into Belmont
 - Start with the Municipal Light Department
 - Come to Meet Belmont – annual event held in August
 - Overnight parking prohibited – link to that page
 - If doing any renovation, go to Office of Community Development (link)
 - If looking for businesses in Belmont, go to Google!

- About Belmont
 - Getting Around/Transportation
 - Bus
 - Commuter Train
 - Link to MBTA map
 - Bikes
 - Walking
 - History of Belmont/Town Seal
 - Map – link to Google maps
 - Community and Faith-Based Organizations
 - Add note inviting additional listings – whom to contact
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Leave business list off the site – too difficult to keep current and complete

Next Steps

- What is missing? – give it some thought and send it around by email
- Let Dave know about home page changes

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Oaklander
Secretary Pro Tem