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Vision 21 Implementation Committee
Minutes, Meeting of February 10, 2014

Approved, March 3, 2014

Present: Paul Solomon, Acting Chair; George Durante, Natalie Leino, Don Mercier,
Jennifer Page, Mary Power

Absent: Doug John

1. Call to order and introductions

- Paul Solomon called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. He welcomed the newly appointed members.
- All members introduced themselves, telling a bit about their experience of living in Belmont, their professional work, their interest in or experience with the Committee.

2. Minutes

- Members reviewed the minutes of November 14 and December 12, 2013; it was moved to accept each set of minutes. Members appointed in January were excused from voting on this question; the others present voted unanimously to accept the minutes of November 14 and December 12, 2013.

3. History and Past Activities of the Vision Implementation Committee (VIC)

- Paul Solomon briefly described the history of how the Vision was created and adopted; then, with Jennifer Page, he gave an overview of several of the key projects undertaken by the Vision Implementation Committee since its inception. The activities and projects discussed included
 - Business and Economic Development Planning Group
 - Public Information and Communications Planning Group
 - Forums/ Discussions for Belmont Businesses
 - “Welcoming Community” – Booklet for newcomers; Meet Belmont
 - Sustainable Belmont
 - Public forums on government and town finances.

4. Discussion of Future Initiatives

- Several suggestions for new initiatives were proposed:
 - Promoting neighborhoods: We might develop some strategies for helping neighborhoods develop informal, cross-generational events that

would enhance the sense of community and (for newcomers) a sense of belonging. (From Belmont's Vision Statement: "Welcome newcomers and value diversity, while caring for our neighbors...Preserve our small-town community atmosphere.")

- Revisit the VIC's earlier work with Belmont's businesses; determine whether, from their perspective, the concerns expressed in the forums of 2002 have been addressed; identify new concerns of the business community; is the Town meeting their needs? Develop recommendations as appropriate. ("Thriving business centers...")
- Survey the residents of Belmont to determine (a) whether and to what extent each aspect of the Vision has become incorporated into the life of the community; and – where residents feel it has not yet been successfully implemented – invite suggestions from the public for what kinds of programs/ actions the Committee might consider to facilitate the adoption. We might use Survey Monkey or another electronic survey program.
- Develop a program that would help the town become more "walkable"; perhaps invite Jeff Speck as a speaker? ("Environmentally responsible community")
- Decisions, next steps:
 - It was agreed that the survey is the highest priority; we should begin work on it immediately. There will be a "lag" once the survey is distributed, as residents would need time to learn about the survey and to participate. In this interim, we would also advance work in one of the other areas above such as work with the business community. We will continue discussion of what initiative to advance at the next meeting. In effect, we would be working on two initiatives at once.

5. Initial steps to develop a survey: Some brainstorming

- General format: We will identify the main components of the Vision, and give examples of steps the Committee has taken to help the Town understand and adopt that element. After each item,
 - Rate the importance of each item/concept/statement to you. (scale 1–4 or 1–5)
 - "Rate the Town's success in implementing this goal?" (scale 1-4 or 1-5)
 - Survey participants will be asked to offer suggestions/ideas for what the VIC could do to help further engage the Town in that part of the Vision.

- Demographics: We brainstormed the demographics we'd collect regarding the survey participants. Our initial list: Age range; How long in town; Gender; Precinct (or where do you vote?); Number of people in household? We will check the "original" survey for demographics collected then.
 - We'll want to include the high school students as well.
 - How to get the survey to the public? Advertising, notices, newspaper; and, additionally, paper copies should be in the library and in the Senior Center.
6. Informational (background) materials – to be circulated to Committee members:
- The VIC's report to the BoS based on the 2003 business forums (Jennifer)
 - Original 2000 survey, data used in developing the Vision (Jennifer will take paper copy to Natalie who has scanner and will circulate electronically.)
7. Next meetings of VIC
- Next meeting: Monday, March 3, room #1, Town Hall. Our liaison to the Board of Selectmen, Andy Rojas, expects to join us.
 - Thereafter, we will meet the third Thursday of the month. We agreed that we would stick to a monthly meeting, with the understanding that there will be "homework" to do between meetings.
 - Paul will distribute a meeting schedule and minute-taking rotation list.
8. Assignments for next meeting:
- **Natalie** volunteered to draft a survey based on our discussion; she will circulate it to us all well before the next meeting.
 - **Our (everybody's!)** assignments:
 - Read Natalie's draft and come prepared to comment and offer revision.
 - Read the "body" of the report on the business initiative.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Page,
Secretary, Pro Tem

