

VISION 21 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

April 04, 2002

Present from Vision Implementation Committee: Jennifer Page, Joe Greene, Ralph Jones, Barry Winston, John Sousa

Absent: Paul Emello, Bill Hoffman, Meg O'Brien, Tim Higgins

From Welcoming Newcomers Workgroup: Vilma DiBiase, Delores Keefe, Sue Pizzi

1. Co-chair Jennifer Page called the meeting to order at 6:55 P.M. Minutes from March 21 meeting were accepted.

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2. Discussed bank account for Vision Committee. On advice of Ernie Fay, retired Town Treasurer, a private account has been set up at Belmont Savings Bank with co-chairs Paul Emello and Jennifer Page as signers. A federal tax ID number has been granted

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3. Sue Pizzi read a draft letter to serve as a bill to the realtors funding the newcomer's booklet. The letter was accepted. Sue reported nine real estate companies are on board at \$250 each.

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4. Barry reported that after printing expenses for 6000 copies the leftover balance would be \$89. He will get a quote from UPS for shipping from binder in Waltham to real estate offices and a storage facility. Acknowledging that \$89 will probably not cover the shipping cost, Ralph Jones offered free storage space in Waltham for six months; his offer was gratefully accepted by the committee. Ralph and Joe Greene offered to pick up the books at the binder, deliver 2700 to Sue Pizzi who will distribute to realtors, bring 300 to library, 300 to town clerks office, 300 to Senior Center, 300 to the School Department, and take the remaining to Ralph's location for storage. (All this is on hold until we check UPS quote.) When we deliver final product to Minuteman we will get the pick-up date. Sue requested that the packages be assembled in batches of 300 for ease in distribution to realtors and many other sites. The distribution locations are as follows:

Town Meeting Members:320

Library: 300

Town Clerk: 300

Senior Center: 300

School Department: 300

Real Estate Offices (9 offices @ 300 ea):2700

Books remaining from 6000: 1780

5. Delores suggested not to distribute at Town Day, creating more trash. Committee agreed.

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6. We agreed that, after the initial distribution, we will develop a new-comers list from the town clerk and the light department office data; henceforth newcomers will receive a booklet. (Vehicle for implementing this not yet determined.)

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7. Reports on progress and changes to content in booklet:

- Sue reported the problem of how to select useful information about trains and buses from the abundance of detail available. We agreed to focus on basic information, directing readers to the T's web site, listing phone numbers and reminding readers that all busses require exact change.

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- The language translation is moving along well at the high school. Ralph used the top 18 languages required for parents and two others particular to Belmont. Fonts for printing are more difficult, but will be solved. The language section will be sent to Meg by Monday.

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- Barry reported on changes made to trash and recycling areas.

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8. Publicity for the booklet: We agreed to wait to contact the newspaper until after we have the product in hand to do so. Steve Rosales has agreed to have us on his show when we are ready.

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9. Jennifer asked if there are further steps we can take now regarding newcomers. We discussed how to reach out to more newcomers. Ideas included posting signs in likely busy areas such as Starbucks in the Center (Jennifer), asking PTO's for contacts (Ralph), contacting pre-schools (Delores) Sue urged us to learn more about the Wellesley model; Barry agreed, suggesting we invite them to a meeting. Joe urged us to include those newcomers from Belmont who have reached out to us, to which the committee agreed. Jennifer will follow up, set a date for the meeting. We agreed to help establish a newcomers group that would become self-sustaining.

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10. Vilma suggested a questionnaire at Town Day aimed at newcomers. Sue agreed that finding out what Belmont newcomer's want would be a good idea. We agreed to do this. Jennifer will research obtaining a Vision Committee table. Members agreed to help staff the table.

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11. John asked where is Cavas? He has missed him and his input. Jennifer explained that he had been attending pro bono to help. She hopes to invite him back as a friend to the committee.

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12. Next: A discussion about next steps regarding our goal to become business-friendly. Many ideas were offered, including a "shop Belmont" campaign (Sue, Vilma); a

survey of businesses to assess their concerns and problems (John, Vilma); a survey of townspeople to see what they want from businesses; a survey of landlords; develop a plan to collaborate with other town committees addressing this issue, bringing focus to the efforts of many groups; work with the Chamber of Commerce; Ralph suggested that surveys can be very complicated, urging that a survey, if done, it be short and simple. (Both Ralph and Meg have had experience developing surveys). Delores offered to provide us with a list of other town committees, should we wish to follow up on that. Vilma reported that the League of Women Voters recently had a forum on zoning, but no action came from it. She also mentioned that there are over 90 studies paid for by the town that have not been acted on. Regarding the public's concern about businesses, John suggested we all re-read the comments included in the survey.

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13. Membership: In response to a question from John, Jennifer stated that we do not yet have a replacement from the Board of Selectmen; additionally we are "down" one member to replace Paul Solomon. Jennifer invited Vilma, Sue and Delores to continue attending our meetings.

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14. Members will be contacted regarding the date of the next meeting.

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15. John brought up a program he went to regarding collage scholarships and grants. Ralph agreed to look into the possibility of promoting it through the school department.

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16. The meeting adjourned at 9:03 P.M.

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Respectfully submitted,
Joseph F. Greene
Secretary Pro Tem