

VISION 21 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of Meeting, June 20, 2002 -- **Draft**

Present: Tim Higgins, Meg O'Brien, Jennifer Page, Paul Solomon, John Sousa, Barry Winston
Also Present: Delores Keefe

The meeting was convened by the chair, Jennifer Page, at 7:10 p.m.

Minutes: The minutes of the May 16, 2002 meeting were unanimously approved after correcting the spelling of Bill Hofmann's name wherever it appeared, and correcting a few typographical errors.

Report on Newcomers' Booklet: Barry Winston reported on the distribution of the newcomers' booklet to town offices and realtors. Approximately 1500 booklets remain. Jennifer Page had distributed booklets at Town Meeting, and reported many positive responses from TMMs; she also reported that Sue Pizzi has had very positive feedback from the realtors (our funders.)

Report on Committee Membership: The Selectmen will make two new appointments to the Committee on June 24. The Moderator will have one appointment to make.

Report on BAR Meeting: Jennifer Page and Meg O'Brien reported on the Belmont Against Racism (BAR) meeting on May 21. They described the vision process, showed on an overhead some of the data from the survey, and then participated in small group discussions on how to welcome people of diverse backgrounds to Belmont. BAR is eager to work with the Implementation Committee in this area. Jennifer noted that she hopes to establish a newcomers group in the near future.

Questionnaire: Jennifer presented the revised questionnaire that was distributed at Town Day. There were 3 returns. In discussion, it seemed that we were rediscovering two different purposes for a questionnaire, probably leading to the development of two different questionnaires. One is directed to newcomers as a contact sheet for orienting them to Belmont; and a second for more "seasoned" residents to enable the Selectmen's office to establish a data base of residents' skills which would help the Selectmen in making committee appointments. Tim Higgins recommended that there should be a preamble to any questionnaire, stating the reason for the questionnaire.

John Sousa recommended that the Selectmen send out yearly town-wide requests for volunteers for the town's 41 boards and committees. This request should also appear on the town's website. Barry Winston suggested that the questionnaire should be skills-based and that committee chairs, together with their membership, might list the skills and experiences which would be useful to their membership. Merging and consolidating these lists would create a master-list of skills for check-off purposes.

After some discussion, it was agreed that this issue was not among the five areas that the committee had chosen to work on. Paul agreed that he would push this effort in the Selectmen's office and keep the Committee informed. Jennifer Page and Meg O'Brien will revise the existing questionnaire for newcomers.

A next step is to establish a group of newcomers to Belmont to "carry the ball", which might include interviewing newcomers' groups from Wellesley and organizing a newcomers group and perhaps orientation activities for newcomers to Belmont. Jennifer

will try to contact interested people in Belmont, including some BAR representatives, to attend our next meeting on June 27.

Report on Meeting with Reps from Belmont/Watertown Chamber of Commerce:

Jennifer Page , Tim Higgins and Paul Solomon reported on their meeting with Clint Knight, executive director, and Steve Savarese, president of the Belmont-Watertown Chamber of Commerce. Bill Hofmann was also present. In discussing whether Belmont is "friendly" to businesses, several problems were identified: the permit process for new business was described as a problem; parking in the various centers was another. The differences among the business centers in town was also emphasized. It was agreed that the chamber would work with the Implementation Committee, possibly to conduct a "pilot" survey of Waverley Square businesses.

Discussion then followed about methods for assessing the opinions of the business community. It was agreed that there should be two open meetings for Belmont business owners during the summer, after which a decision would be made on whether a follow-up survey would be necessary. After further discussion, it was also agreed that eliciting opinions from Belmont residents might be a follow-up step after the business community was heard.

Tim Higgins noted that he is attempting to get a \$30,000 grant from the state to support a planning process for the Trapelo Rd. corridor. It is possible that the Implementation Committee's initiative with the business community may benefit from this planning process.

Next Steps

- * Set dates and sites for the two summer meetings;
- * Devise questions to be answered at the meetings.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, June 27, at 7:00pm, in the Staff Room of the Main Library.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Solomon, secretary, pro tem