

BELMONT VISION 21 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE
Minutes, June 5, 2003
Approved July 24, 2003

Members present: Jenny Fallon, Joe Greene, Tim Higgins, Bill Hofmann, Sarah Oaklander, Margaret O'Brien, Jennifer Page, Paul Solomon, Barry Winston

Members absent: Matthew Hausmann

Also Present: Dolores Keefe and Gerry Missal

7:10 p.m. There being a quorum, Jennifer Page opened the meeting.

Joe Greene updated the Committee on the "new comers" recent meeting. They will be reviewing the "Welcome to Belmont" brochure and making edits. Barry Winston said Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School will work with us on printing the brochure in the fall when classes resume.

Jennifer Page then introduced Gerry Missal, Business Manager from the School Department. Mr. Missal had been provided with the discussion questions on how Belmont can become more environmentally responsible. Specifically, the Committee was interested in initiatives his department may be involved in. Jennifer Page provided an overview of what the VIC does, how we are organizing with sub-committees and the current environmental awareness project. After learning what Belmont already does, the Committee expects to gather considerable community input for recommendations about what kinds of initiatives the Town might undertake. Ultimately, the V-21 Committee and Board of Selectmen will create another planning group in this area.

Mr. Missal distributed a detailed memorandum on the actions the schools take to be environmentally conscious and in energy conservation. He provided examples:

1. All chemicals from the labs were categorized and removed where appropriate and replaced with more safe chemicals.
2. Environmental education classes occur in grades 2-12.
3. Grade 5 students take a field trip to an environmental camp on the Cape.
4. Recycling occurs in all schools (cans, light bulbs, mercury, paper).
5. Energy audits have been performed in all buildings. Staff is working with a private vendor and the Belmont Electric Light Company to implement.
6. Preventative maintenance programs have been instituted, including boiler cleaning, HVAC units, snow blowers and lawnmowers.
7. Future projects with energy savings include a new Wellington School and renovations to the Belmont High School.

There was a lengthy discussion of the rationale for initiating energy saving improvements to existing buildings rather than building new structures. The issue is more pronounced

due to current funding problems at the local and state level. Discussion focused on the Wellington School since there appear to be virtually no options other than replacement. The High School however, does provide opportunities for energy savings, especially considering its 250,000 s.f. area (the largest building in Town). A 30-40 million dollar master plan of improvements will be developed (re: replacement of all burners, windows, etc.). Implementation is expected over the next 5-7 years.

Mr. Missal suggested that that the Committee must educate people to think in terms of complete systems, not just their bi-weekly recycle bin being put out. It was suggested that the School Committee look into the design of the new Wellington being a “green” building. Discussion ensued on what defines “green”, and how “green” a building must be to be beneficial. Margaret O’Brien asked what the pay back period is? When does the Town get a return on its investment?

Tim Higgins then discussed environmental issues and efforts within the Office of Community Development (OCD). He noted that OCD is a small department within Town Hall and has little policy or decision-making authority in this area. OCD does participate in the recycling program operated by the Town, though the implementation of the program by the cleaning staff is sometimes problematic.

Tim would like to see changes in the way streets are reconstructed. He suggests that it should be a general policy of the Board of Selectmen to reduce the pavement width each time a street is reconstructed. Most streets in the Town are too wide with over-sized intersections that could be green; this would also improve stormwater management. Over a number of years, the policy will reduce impervious area and positively impact stormwater run-off. He also noted that the existing zoning by-law is not environmentally friendly and should be re-written. (He also noted that it should be re-written in any case, as it is extremely difficult to read and interpret.)

Jenny Fallon supports such a proposal and suggests the process to implement this should follow the Planning Board’s Trapelo Road Corridor Study. She thought the emphasis on public participation was a great idea. She also recommended that the zoning By-Law should be rewritten. It could then reflect more environmentally sensitive regulations and requirements (Design and Site Plan Review for example). A discussion centered on the environmental benefits of re-writing the zoning by-law. It would be a long process if done internally (12 months +). Tim Higgins would need Tom Gatzunis as the Zoning Enforcement Officer to assist in making the point that the By-Law need to be revised.

The minutes from May 15, 2003 meeting were approved unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Submitted by recording secretary pro-tem,

Timothy Higgins