

BELMONT VISION 21 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Minutes, July 10, 2003

Approved July 24, 2003

Present: Jenny Fallon, Tim Higgins, Meg O'Brien, Jennifer Page, Paul Solomon, Barry Winston

Absent: Joe Greene, Bill Hofmann, Matt Hausmann, Sara Oaklander

Also present: Dolores Keefe, Chris Arthur, Don Becker, Barbara Brown, Pat Brusch, Nancy Davis, Vera Dreyer, Steve Klionsky, Jim Murphy, Ellen Cushman O'Brien, Gene Record, Murray Rubin

The chair, Jennifer Page, called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM in the Flett Room of the Main Library.

She explained that the purpose of the meeting was to continue the investigation into current efforts by Belmont groups and individual citizens to make Belmont an "environmentally responsible community". She noted that the committee will conduct public meetings to help determine the direction that the committee will recommend for the town in this area.

She then recognized representatives of town committees, boards, and non governmental groups:

Vera Dreyer, chair of the Board of Library Trustees:

- Recycle, mostly white paper

- Open spaces around the Main Library are cared for by the Garden Club

- The small parking lot decreases the potential auto traffic

- The recently-purchased van conforms to state energy conservation Standards

- The current library building (main branch) is not energy efficient, since its mechanical systems are now well beyond their expected useful life.

Ellen O'Brien Cushman, chair, Cemetery Commission, chair, McLean Land Management Committee, President, Garden Club:

- Garden Club: Recently added 70 new trees to the Concord Avenue island; Plant and maintain the area around the Town Hall and all the deltas in town; conduct monthly seminars on resource conservation and new gardening ideas.

- Land Management Committee: most of the McLean land will remain in its natural state. The committee is working with consultants on an ecological management plan for preserving habitats and

the environment. The object of this is to become educated about what can grow in the area.

Cemetery Commission: the current cemetery is more manicured than the new one will be. Recycling is currently done, water is conserved in dry periods, and care is taken with fertilizer; herbicides are occasionally used.

The new cemetery is designed to be self-sustaining and will not need watering. There will not be a building on site in the new cemetery during its first phase.

Murray Rubin, Belmont Land Trust:

Founded to preserve open space. The trust assists property owners in preserving and protecting their land while relieving them of some of their tax burden. The recent restriction placed on the Richardson Farm is the largest example of this. There are 25 to 30 acres of land scattered throughout the town currently under negotiation, with agreements expected within a year. The spaces involved could be as little as one buildable lot.

Pat Brusch, chair, Permanent Building Committee, member Warrant and Capital Budget Committees.

Warrant Committee: has been promoting the use of energy-efficient motor vehicles for the Town and approved the placing of an automatic switch on the lighted softball field.

Permanent Building Committee(PBC): stresses energy efficiency in all buildings. For school buildings, state guidelines require this. Specific energy-efficient measures include windows that open, water-efficient toilets, automatic faucets in sinks. Motion-sensitive light switches can cause problems, however, with lights going off at very inconvenient times. The PBC asks building committees to request the Shade Tree Committee to design plantings around buildings that require minimal care. The PBC is currently writing a primer for all building committees.

An audit of all town buildings one year ago included energy efficiency measures. Going forward, energy efficiency will be part of the feasibility process for each project. There are no meeting rooms (other than for internal use) planned for the Town Hall Annex. This will avoid the need for energy expenditure at night.

Jim Murphy, chair, Belmont Housing Authority:

The recent modernization of Belmont Village resulted in less energy efficiency, but the Authority has funding to bring energy efficiency back to pre-modernization levels.

Sherman Gardens and Waverley Oaks are heated by electricity and hot water. If the Authority decreases electricity and increases natural gas usage, state subsidies decrease, therefore costing more to be energy efficient. However, the Authority is trying to bring in gas, first for hot water, then for heat. They are also trying to upgrade faucets, using help from a vocational school, because of the lack of funds.

There is a problem with a damp basement at Waverley Oaks, which is difficult to remedy because of the presence of tenants' storage lockers.

Gene Record, trustee of the Judy Record Conservation Fund:

A goal is to keep open space in its natural state. Funds have been used to gain state funding for upgrading trails on the McLean land. He referred to the building at the new Mass Audubon Sanctuary in Boston, which uses new materials and techniques for conserving energy.

Don Becker, Bikeway Committee. Noted a clean-up effort one month ago on the bikeway

leading to Alewife. The committee has become inactive because nothing can happen without funds. State funding for bikeways has dried up. The focus has changed since 1994, when the committee was formed. Now the emphasis is on bike paths within Belmont, rather than a continuous bikeway through the town.

General discussion followed the presentations. Among topics discussed were the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program, the possibility of a tunnel under the railroad tracks, funding for maintenance at Rock Meadow, and the decreasing maintenance of the Payson Rd. reservoir by the City of Cambridge.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Solomon
Secretary pro tem.