

**Vision 21 Implementation Committee**  
**Sept. 4, 2003**  
**Meeting Minutes**

*(Approved September 18, 2003)*

Present: Jenny Fallon, Joe Greene, Victoria Hasse, Tim Higgins, Bill Hoffman, Sara Oaklander, Meg O'Brien, Jennifer Page, Paul Solomon, Barry Winston

Absent: Matt Hausmann

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. The minutes from the meeting of July 24 and notes from the meeting of August 7 were accepted.

**2. Reports and updates from established Committees and Planning Groups**

**2.1 Proposal to review and change permitting processes**

Tim Higgins reported that his proposal for reviewing and updating the town's permitting processes will be on the agenda of the Zoning Board of Appeals on Monday September 8, and of the Planning Board on September 16. When both boards have had the chance to review and respond to the proposal, there will be a joint meeting of these boards with the Board of Selectmen to determine what action should be taken. There was discussion of the difficulty of getting unanimous support for making changes to the process. As the request to review the procedures came from the VIC following the business forums last year, it was suggested that some members of the VIC should try to attend the upcoming board meetings. It was also agreed that members of the VIC would always be available to assist in planning presentation to be made about issues in which we are interested. Paul Solomon reported that the Selectmen have seen the memo. There seems to be initial support for reviewing these procedures, and the Board will certainly take the lead in calling for a joint meeting once the other boards have formally received the memo.

**2.2 Newcomers Network**

Joe Greene reported that the Newcomers Network's first "Meet Belmont" event, held on August 26, was a great success. It was structured as a social event and about 40 "new" residents and 20 representatives of the town's organizations attended. The timing seemed good as many families are preparing to send their children to school for the first time. It was noticed that the School Department was not officially represented and they will be specifically invited next time. The organizing group hopes to gain some active participants from those who attended, and they plan to hold the event again next year. They are also considering following up with another event during this year, as the interest seems so high. There was discussion about what sort of format to plan, and some sort of round table discussion was proposed as a possibility.

**2.3.1 BEDPG**

Sara Oaklander reported that the BEDPG survey would be mailed the following day to 1,000 randomly chosen residents. The survey is also available on the web site and paper copies will be available at sites throughout the town. Publicity through various media, including cable TV and the paper, will include the web address. From the responses we

hope to get a better idea of what residents hope to see in the business districts. Property owners have indicated interest in the information. In addition, we hope that the survey will raise the profile of some of the issues concerning being a “business friendly” community. Plans for the statistical analysis of the survey results were discussed.

**2.3.2** Tim Higgins, Jennifer Page, Roger Colton, and Sara Oaklander have met again with representatives of the state granting authority for funding for a planning project to determine the best use for the Waverley Fire Station. The state is impressed with the project so far, and we expect to be invited to apply for the funding. To be eligible, the Town must apply for a waiver from compliance with the affordable housing laws. We hope to receive the waiver because there are affordable housing projects in the pipeline seeking approval. Without the waiver the Town will be ineligible for any community development block grants.

## **2.4 PICPG**

Meg O’Brien reported that the PICPG has met over the summer and worked to develop a focus on what to work on in the broad area of the group’s charge. They will look specifically at ways to improve communication on the town’s web site and in telephone and walk-in situations where people are seeking information from town offices. Members of the group who are also members of the ITAC have shared the information that ITAC gathered in interviews with department heads. PICPG also plans to hold a residents forum later in the fall to gather information about what could be improved in these areas. They are working with Joyce Munro on such things as a table of contents and an FAQ page for the web site, and possibly posting the text of the newcomers booklet. Meg and Lesley Hausmann are developing plans for the forum and we are all encouraged to attend.

## **2.5 Newcomers Booklet**

Barry Winston and Victoria Hasse are working on getting estimates for printing and binding the new edition of the newcomers booklet. Minuteman can do the printing very inexpensively, but their vendor’s charge for binding was high, so we are looking to see if there is a lower cost alternative package. The sub-committee (Barry, Victoria, Jennifer and Joe) will continue to work on the booklet project.

## **3. Environmental initiative**

Jenny Fallon requested that the VIC spend some time at the next meeting responding to the data gathered so far about environmental action in the town. “What have we learned?” and “What direction should we move in now to further environmental issues in the town?” are among the questions we might discuss. We will make plans for a forum on this topic later in the fall.

Jenny will report to the School Committee at their next meeting on the recent work of the VIC. She will extend thanks for the distribution of newcomers booklets, the service of John Bowe on the PICPG, and the participation of Gerry Missal in the environmental discussion.

#### **4. Future of the VIC**

There was discussion of the upcoming year and the future work of the VIC over the next few years. Of the six areas of focus originally chosen by the VIC for attention, four – business and economic development, welcoming newcomers, communications and environmental issues – have active initiatives addressing them, and two – schools and regional issues – remain for consideration. It was agreed that this year we will be consolidating and building on the work of our three active committees and launching the work of a committee dealing with our environmental initiative. We also agreed that we will need to revisit and renew the vision sometime in the next two years. There will be further discussion of how to do that. There was some discussion about how to renew the leadership and membership on the working committees so that they can maintain energy and organization into the future. The suggestion was made that some committees might be disbanded, when the original charge had been addressed, to be reformed as needed. This might lose some momentum and ongoing oversight, but might conserve human resources. The town's volunteer book will be an important on-going resource. It was also agreed that for the vision to maintain relevance and energy, it must be "owned" by a broad spectrum of town officials and residents.

**5.** The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Fallon  
Secretary Pro-Tem