

**VISION 21 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes, October 5, 2009**  
**Approved 10/19/09**

**Present:** Tim Bowman, Bruce MacDonald, Sara Masucci, Sara Oaklander, Jennifer Page, Paul Solomon  
**Absent:** Kevin Heine, Jonathan Mascia  
**Guest:** Joanne Coakley

**1. Attend Board of Selectmen's meeting to support Climate Action Plan**

Vision Committee attended BOS meeting to support Sustainable Belmont. Climate Action Plan passed by vote of 2:1.

**2. Meeting Convened at 7:25**

**3. Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of the September 24, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously. Paul will see that they are posted.

**4. Criteria for VIC Support of Town Issues**

Criteria are needed to guide the process of how VIC supports issues. By detailing the criteria it will make the VIC thoroughly discuss whether an issue is compelling enough to the Vision to warrant a position. These criteria came about in part because of the VIC's decision to take a position after receiving a request from the neighbors of the Wellington School. Further discussion raised the idea that positions, when taken, should only be for Town-wide issues, e.g. Barn Bill as opposed to Wellington neighborhood. Also, since the VIC may not be fully informed, positions must be very carefully considered.

Draft of criteria, with one change in Criterion #2: replace the phrase "be perceived by the public as contributing" with the word "contribute", passed unanimously.

**5. VIC Mandate**

Draft #4, 9/17/09 was discussed. There was concern about maintaining our autonomy to "implement" in regard to some of the wording. Decision was made to change final sentence in "Responsibilities" section from "In connection with this responsibility, it is expected that the Committee will:" to "In addition to these responsibilities, it is expected that the Committee will:". Second bullet point was revised to remove "if applicable".

New mandate now needs to go to the BOS.

Mandate (draft #4 9/17/09), as amended, passed unanimously.

**6. Entwistle's Community Dialogue and Tim Bowman's Proposal for Future Initiatives**

Sara Masucci briefly reported to the committee about her meeting with the new Superintendent, George Entwistle, and his idea for a Community Dialogue (CD). The CD

will be a participant driven event to discuss the future of the Belmont Public Schools. The discussion that followed included comments and questions:

- Agreed that CD idea is very consistent with Vision
- Concern regarding it being so specifically about the schools
- Concern that special interests will try to “run” the CD
- Can there be parallel dialogues regarding other Town issues?
  - Committee felt this was reasonable
- Looming possible Override was mentioned
  - How does CD and/or VIC forum idea relate to immediate v. systemic concerns?
- Agreed that CD is narrower in scope than Tim Bowman’s forum idea
- Need to re-cast ideas of how the Town spends and what the Town should provide in contrast to current resident expectations
- Agreed that VIC should participate in, and learn from, the CD
  - Excellent schools major part of Vision Statement
- Should we pass out Vision at CD?

It was suggested that there may be a benefit in waiting until next fall (2010) to launch a VIC forum idea. If there is (and likely will be) a bad budget cycle, this will force people to get involved. It was agreed that the community at large does not understand the financial reality that the Town faces.

A variant on the Forum idea was presented: a “Budget Road Show” (BRS). This would be a short presentation that the VIC would bring to various groups and organizations in Town. Its purpose would be inform and engage the citizenry to work collectively toward the creation of a sustainable and acceptable budget reality. Ideally, by going to groups as opposed to hoping people came to an event we sponsor, we will be able to reach a broader group of citizens.

Many questions arose in the discussion about a BRS including:

- How do we convey such dense information in a very short time?
- How do we get people to receive it?
- What is the outcome?
  - What are priorities?
  - Is this related to a potential Override in 2010?
- What is the outcome for process at large?
  - Engaged citizenry
  - Adapting to conditions that exist (as opposed to focusing on wants)
  - Work towards a more unified Town
    - Less special interest driven, more holistic
- What are we asking of people?

The idea of holding many forums at varying times and locations was presented as a way to also reach a wider swath of Townspeople. This could be concurrent to BRS.

Discussion then turned to what the next steps would be to further develop the idea of BRS. It was determined that:

- As many VIC members as possible will attend the CD on 10/27.
  - This is an opportunity to participate *and* to observe the process so that we may use pros and cons in development of our future initiatives
- 3 Sara Masucci will approach Jane Feinberg of the Frameworks Institute to attend a future VIC meeting to speak to us about her work on strong ways to communicate about budgets.
- 3 Tim Bowman and Sara Masucci will develop a rough plan for what a BRS could look like with the understanding that both the CD and the presentation from Jane Feinberg will inform any final BRS.
- 3 For any budget discussion we will need basic budgetary information, and someone from VIC will approach Warrant Committee Chair, Phil Curtis, about gathering this data.

### **7. Comprehensive Plan**

Committees formed at Comprehensive Plan Kick-off have met erratically; some multiple times others not at all.

### **8. Next Meeting**

Monday, October 19, 7 p.m.

Agenda to include:

- Further discussion of BRS idea, Tim Bowman and Sara Masucci will present rough plan
- VIC's role in the Comprehensive Planning process.

### **9. Adjournment**

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

Respectfully submitted,  
*Sara Masucci*