

# VISION IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES, February 12, 2009

Approved March 12, 2009

Present: Kirk Hazlett, chair; Sara Oaklander, Jennifer Page, Al Rubin

Also Attending: Tim Bowman, Jonathan Mascia, Susie Titus (potential new members)

Absent: Paul Solomon

## 1. Administrative:

- VIC Chair Kirk Hazlett called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
- Minutes of the January 29, 2009, meeting of the Vision Implementation Committee were **approved unanimously** with modest corrections. Kirk will send to Town Hall for posting.

## 2. Updates

### 2.1 Martin Luther King breakfast: Discussion

This event, of which we were co-sponsors, went very well, and VIC was well represented by Kirk Hazlett, Tim Bowman, Jonathan Mascia, Jennifer Page, and Paul Solomon. We were especially impressed by the size of the gathering, given the snowy conditions. We also praised the selection of speakers, the presentations and the engagement of the audience. We felt the event went on a bit long and would have benefited from more limited audience interaction.

### 2.2 Sustainable Belmont: Update

Jennifer reported that the group is almost finished proofreading the draft and is now moving on to developing plans for vetting the document. She will let the rest of us know when/how we can help.

### 2.3 Meet Belmont: Update

Jennifer will meet tomorrow with Superintendent Pat Aubin to set a date for Meet Belmont '09.

### 2.4 Town elections: Discussion

Sara raised a concern that Precinct 8 has six vacancies in this year's Town Meeting race. The discussion moved to a broader consideration of ways the town's government does and does not encourage participation. We agreed that this discussion really was part of our central concern about civic participation (one of our two major new initiatives), and we discussed canceling our next meeting in order to attend the hearing being held by Paul Solomon's Government Structure Review Committee on February 26.

**Moved and seconded** to cancel the VIC meeting of February 26, 2009, in order for us all to attend the hearing on recommendations from the Government Structure Review Committee. **Passed unanimously.**  
(Meeting is at 7:30 p.m. in the Selectmen's meeting room at Town Hall.)

### 2.5 VIC Membership: Update

We discussed the status of our hopeful prospective members who have yet to be officially appointed. Background: Last summer, chairs of appointed committees were asked to send a letter to the Board of Selectmen discussing their committee's work and then to meet with the Board to discuss their committee's future. On behalf of the VIC, Kirk Hazlett submitted a letter in early September; apparently the letter did not reach the Selectmen. When Paul Solomon recently inquired about the pending appointments of Tim Bowman and Jonathan Mascia, our new "prospective members," he learned of the problem with the letter. It has been re-sent.

The Vision Committee has now been invited to meet with the Board on Monday, February 23 [Editorial comment: The meeting has now be rescheduled for Monday, March 16.] We discussed what kind of presentation we might make. We agreed it should be short but highlight important accomplishments. It should make the points that (1) our work is defined by the Vision statement; (2) we support other groups whose work moves forward the Vision; (3) our own initiatives are in those areas where other groups are not already working. (Examples of the latter include BEDPG, Sustainable Belmont, Meet Belmont.) It was proposed that a review of our work be framed by relevant phrases from the Vision Statement. Jennifer will check her documents on file to see if we already have such a piece, developed earlier, that could be a starting point.

It appears that several of our members will be able to attend the meeting with the Board of Selectmen, and Jennifer will also contact the leadership of Sustainable Belmont to invite them, should questions arise about their work.

### 3. Town's web site review: Continued discussion, analysis, proposals – reports from members

3.1 Overview of town's website (Kirk): Kirk examined the Town's web site. He felt that the School's section was very well organized, orderly, easy to use. The general government section was very government-oriented and a lot of information seemed out of date. Kirk hopes that the website can be modified to include information about the business community, where to shop, and what to do.

3.2 Jonathan selected several sections that might be of interest to newcomers. In order to develop new text for the newcomer's section, he first searched for links, focusing on trash and construction. He also investigated the A-Z listing. He recommended that on the newcomer's site, we consider "cross-marketing"; an example would be – under the library – have information about how to get a library card and possibilities for volunteering. As a follow-up to his presentation, Jonathan sent us all the pages he had worked on; they are attached to these minutes.

3.2 Jennifer worked on "Getting Around", information on transportation of possible help to newcomers. She examined information and format in the existing "Getting Around" section and proposed new categories. Her comments are attached to these minutes.

3.3 Sara looked into what links might be appropriate for a listing of businesses and restaurants in Belmont, so we could avoid having to create and maintain a

list ourselves. She reported that most of the available links were not very satisfactory; the best one she found was Switchboard.com. She also recommended that we include a link to the Massachusetts Secretary of State's site that has a good "welcome to Massachusetts" letter as well as other state information useful to newcomers.

3.4 For future web work, Sara urged us all to "spell out" the URL for each link we propose. We did not give ourselves specific homework for our next meeting.

4. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M. We will all attend the hearing on February 23 (see 2.4 above). Our next regularly scheduled meeting will be on **March 12**, when Dave Petto will be our guest and we will continue to learn about changes to the Town's web site.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Page, Secretary Pro Tem