

VISION 21 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Minutes, August 13, 2009

Present: Tim Bowman, Jonathan Mascia, Sara Masucci, Sara Oaklander, Paul Solomon
Absent: Kevin Heine (almost a new member!), Jennifer Page
Guest: Bruce MacDonald

1. Call to Order; Welcome and Introductions

Paul called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and invited each person to introduce her/himself. He welcomed our newest member, Sara Masucci, and our guest, Bruce MacDonald.

2. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the July 13, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously. Paul will see that they are posted.

3. Traffic issues at the new Wellington School

Paul referred to the documents that had been distributed in advance of the meeting and explained that he was contacted by some residents who live near the Wellington School requesting the support of the VIC for the expression of their concerns to the Wellington Building Committee. A group of Wellington School neighbors have written to the building committee requesting that the final site design include certain principles. The letter was written in response to how quickly the building committee is moving and the neighbors' concern that certain important issues have not yet been addressed or might not be adequately addressed.

The VIC discussed the neighbor group's request for support. Key points of the discussion included:

- Paul suggested that our criteria for considering co-sponsorship of events are applicable to considering issues such as this one. He highlighted two elements of the vision statement that are particularly relevant: traffic management and environmental responsibility.
- The perspectives expressed in the letter on each of the issues all seem important and reasonable.
- Why does the group want the support of the VIC and what are they expecting from us?
 - The VIC might lend credibility to their perspective
 - If we express support, we can specify that we do not want to get involved in the details
- It is important that we be sure that any position we take does not get mired in details.
- We could support the spirit of the neighbors' letter.
- Would it be possible/appropriate to endorse some parts of the letter and not others?
- Could we express support for certain concepts (safety, green space) and encourage dialogue?

- We don't know the perspective of the building committee on these issues.
- We need to be careful to avoid supporting one position over another when we don't have all of the relevant information.

A motion was then made, seconded and unanimously approved to convey the following:

With regard to the new Wellington School, the Vision Implementation Committee supports the principles of maximizing children's safety and minimizing impact on the environment. We encourage continued dialogue between neighbors of the Wellington School and the Wellington Building Committee.

Paul will send an email to John Kolterman and Gretchen McLain with this statement. The group then agreed that the chair of the building committee should also be notified.

4. Proposal regarding a future initiative of the VIC (See attached)

Tim Bowman distributed copies of a draft proposal for a new initiative of the VIC. He explained that he has thought a lot about the future of Belmont, particularly in light of the extreme financial challenges we face and the fact that so many cuts have already been made that there doesn't seem to be anywhere else to go. Either we must enhance revenues or increase efficiencies, or both. He knows that many smart people in town are thinking about these things but he also wonders if there might be a role for the VIC in creating a forum where ideas can be generated and aired and more people can be involved in the conversation.

The VIC discussed Tim's proposal. After the discussion, the group agreed that more time is needed to consider and develop these ideas so the matter will be taken up again at our next meeting. Paul will make sure Jennifer and Kevin are brought up to date on the proposal. At our next meeting we will focus on:

- Why do this?
- What is the context/problem?
- How might the effort actually unfold?
- What is our proposed timeline?

The following are some of the comments and key points made during the discussion

- Solid, feasible idea. Relates well to VIC's role. Concern would be the long timeframe and sustaining interest over time within the Committee. Using Town's resources such as those suggested is good.
- What is the end goal? The idea lacks concrete outcomes...i.e., in two years, what will we have done? It could be useful to have specific goals rather than open ended discussions.
- No Town-wide conversation is happening now...we could create a forum, with themes.
- This is the part that makes a lot of sense for the VIC, while the second part raises some concerns.

- We need to create a process that has results. We have an obligation to ensure that the process goes someplace.
- We could focus on the first part of the proposal and take the idea to the Board of Selectmen (and others?) for input, including on the second part and how to manage that process.
- We may need to start by establishing the premise that the Town has a problem and then go from there in search of ideas.
- We need to frame up the challenges we face and design a process that addresses those.
- This fits with many aspects of the VIC mandate and with various elements of the vision...especially given that we're meant to be about implementation.
- There was a Blue Ribbon Commission that was convened a few years ago to address many of the issues we're talking about.
- Timing is critical...we're facing serious financial shortfalls...this is the time.
- We could send this proposal to Dan, Ann Rittenburg, Phil Curtis and invite them to our next meeting to further discuss the concept
- We are not far enough along for that...we need to further develop our ideas first before we take them out for consideration by others.

5. Membership

Sara Masucci is our newest member. Kevin will soon be appointed. We need to think about a new member orientation. Paul will speak to Jennifer about this.

6. Town Website

Paul described the VIC's involvement in development of the new website and Sara gave an update. There is more work to be done, which Sara will proceed to coordinate – hopefully in a timelier manner.

7. Meet Belmont

Sara reported that we have a record number of exhibitors and that lots of help is needed to set up and run the event. She asked everyone to let Jennifer know when they could help. Paul reported that a few additional postcards were sent out to new homeowners and that he'll check one more time with Sue Pizzi regarding any additional ones.

8. Next Meeting

Thursday, August 27, 7 p.m.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Oaklander

Vision Implementation Committee
 Proposal – Drafted by Tim Bowman, July 21, 2009

Idea: Further and reinvigorate our mission of vision implementation by exploring and developing “big” ideas with Town residents.

Idea Criteria:

- Aligned with the Vision.
- Expense neutral or possibly expense saving and/or revenue generating.

Idea generation:

- VIC to host Town-wide vision sessions around predetermined topics with topic experts, many of whom are residents of the Town. Possibly starting in September or October of 2009 host monthly sessions to:
 - Learn – expert speaks for about 20/30 minutes.
 - Discuss – questions, how learn more—Q&A with expert for about 30 minutes.
 - Brainstorming – VIC facilitated idea generation around topic for about 30/40 minutes.
 - Post outcome on VIC blog for continued resident input.

Possible topics/experts (examples):

Clayton Christensen and his research/book on disruptive innovation and education.

Alan Altshuler and urban planning.

- After eight to twelve vision sessions, starting September of 2010:
 - VIC, with participation from Selectmen, Warrant Committee, School Committee, others (?) narrow ideas to three or four.
 - Form sub-committees/working groups to explore and research ideas—a preliminary feasibility study—October 2010 through February 2011.
 - Based on sub-committee work select two ideas to move forward. VIC to finalize proposal for two ideas March through May 2011.
 - Summer 2011—soft roll-out of ideas with Town leadership.
 - Fall 2011 – next steps for idea implementation.

Current next steps:

- VIC consideration of proposal, if agreed:
- VIC meeting with Dan Leclerc
- Create detailed plan—schedule, steps, responsibilities
- Possibly VIC meeting with others: Selectmen, Warrant and School Committees chairs(?)