

Vision 21 Implementation Committee
Minutes September 5, 2002
Accepted: September 19, 2002

Members Present: Martin Greco, Joe Greene, Tim Higgins, Bill Hofmann, Meg O'Brien, Sara Oaklander, Jennifer Page, Paul Solomon, Barry Winston.

Members Absent: Matt Hausmann, Ralph Jones

Also Present: Delores Keefe

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 by Chair Jennifer Page. The minutes for August 29, 2002 were accepted as presented.

Change in membership: Jennifer noted that she learned from Ralph Jones' wife that Ralph feels he cannot continue as the School Department's representative to our committee. He will inform the School Committee at the next meeting and ask to be replaced.

Forums:

Dates: The forums begin next Monday September 9, with the next two being on Thursday September 12, and Thursday, September 19 respectively.

Anticipated attendance: Sara noted that the Belmont Center business owners plan to come as a group on Thursday, September 12. We noted that many Belmont residents own Belmont commercial Real Estate; also many of the business owners own their buildings. Tim reported that he distributed fliers to all town departments, but received no feedback.

Refreshments: Delores reported that Giordanos will donate two 4_ subs for Monday September 9. Jennifer reported that Ohlin's Bakery will donate day-old pastries for both September 9 & 12. Joe reported that he is working with Oaks Pizza on a below-cost wrap or sandwich plan for the forum on the 12th. He has also secured Dunkin Donuts for a donation of coffee with a muffin, bagel, donut mix on the 19th. Martin will buy water for all three forums this weekend. Shaw's has donated a \$20 gift certificate to be spent there; this will be used for last-minute supplies or for fruit for the morning meeting on the 19th. Pick ups: Delores will pick up food for the 9th, Bill and Martin will do pastries, Joe will work on delivery for the 12th and 19th.

Forum Planning Process: Cavas will facilitate the forum on September 9th; Matt and Jennifer with share duties on the 12th; and Jennifer on the 19th. Other committee members will facilitate the small groups. We discussed a sequence of questions that Jennifer and Matt developed to use, if necessary, as a guide during small group work. If people tell us problems with no solutions, we must note the ideas, but move back to solutions. The committee agreed that we must be careful of "simple fix" solutions that may be suggested, encouraging our groups to develop steps, look for big ideas. Bill warned of "killer statements" which lead to an unproductive forum and discourage participation. Bill encouraged us to explain that no final solutions can be reached at the forums, but we hope for good ideas as a beginning of the process. We agreed that it is important for participants (not VIC members) to report out the findings from the small groups. Sara stated the need for time limits for each part of the forum process. Barry asked if we should think of keeping the group together as a whole, instead of breaking down to smaller ones. The committee felt, depending on the turnout, the small groups are useful because people are more open in small groups and talk more.

Members were encouraged to arrive no later than 6:15 to help set up.

Town-wide planning process

Selectmen's mandates: Paul reported that on Sept. 9th, the Selectmen will consider mandates for the first two planning groups (Economic Development; Communication).

The Vision Committee will be overseeing the planning groups when they are established.

Time line: Paul stated that he hopes the planning groups will report back to the Selectmen in four to six weeks on their progress. Jennifer stated her concern that this time table was too short if (a) the VIC is first to develop a planning framework and (b) we are to solicit further membership by going to the public. She asked if Paul meant four weeks after the group was fully convened. Paul stated that he hopes they will convene as soon as possible, keeping in mind that the representatives of existing committees must be appointed by their own committees; and that these representatives (the initial members of the planning groups) will work with the Vision Committee to invite people known to be interested as well as to advertise for other people. He stated he hopes new people will come aboard as the groups are taking shape. The committee agreed.

Role of Vision Committee: The committee agreed to name these groups "Planning Groups." Our role is to oversee the process by which they work, to help them see the relevance of their work to the Vision Statement, to orchestrate the work among relevant groups. Paul noted that our business forums will fit well with the mandate for the Economic Development Planning Group. Tim stated the study of the Trapelo road corridor also fits well. He elaborated on the study, noting that it will have many long term effects on economic development of this corridor as well as on transportation. This study will start in-house very soon. Paul noted that this study is focused on the future and that we cannot stop what is happening now to await its completion. Tim agreed, using the VW property as an example. Sara asked if the town can play more of a role determining which businesses come to Belmont. Bill and Tim noted that you cannot prohibit a business from opening if all zoning requirements are met and all rules followed.

5.0 Fall meeting: looking ahead On September 19th we will debrief (briefly) on the forums and consider follow-up. On September 26th we will elect our chair and vice-chair for the upcoming year; (Jennifer she is not resigning, but an election is appropriate at this time.) On the 26th, we will also begin organizing for the planning groups. After the planning groups are formed, the committee will return to two meetings a month.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Greene
Secretary Pro Tem