Vision Implementation Committee
October 23, 2008
Minutes

Present

VIC: Kirk Hazlett, Sara Oaklander, Jennifer Page, Al Rubin, Paul Solomon
Guests: Tim Bowman, Joanne Coakley, Ted Dukas, Debby Fenn, Abby Magee,

Introductions

Each VIC member and guest introduced themselves.

Background

Jennifer introduced the Vision statement, highlighted the piece about welcoming newcomers, and described how the Vision Implementation Committee has approached its work by identifying pieces of the vision, such as the welcome newcomers piece.

The first project under this umbrella was the Welcome to Belmont booklet, published in summer 2002. Realtors each contributed $250. Printing was done by Minuteman High School (labor was free; we paid for printing and binding). We printed 6,000 copies. Realtors distributed them at open houses and in other ways. Other copies were distributed through Town offices. Along the way we printed an insert with some updated information. And now we feel it's time to do a complete revision.

Meet Belmont was another initiative of the Vision Committee, in partnership with some other volunteers. It's an information fair that features about 80 exhibitors. It happens in the high school cafeteria. This year was the sixth year. Last year we did a survey of participants and exhibitors to get some feedback for further development of the event, and as a source of volunteer activity for the effort.

Meet Belmont Survey

Jennifer distributed copies of last year's survey for review by the group.

Attendee (or guest) survey. Comments –
- # 5 – ask specifically about August or September, or another month? (i.e., combine #5 and #6)
- #10 – rent/own home – why is this relevant to the survey?
  - Maybe because renters are less familiar with town services?
    - A low percentage of renters attend – one challenge is how to reach the renters
  - The group mostly thought we should drop this question
- Why did you choose to move to Belmont? How did you find out about the town?

- o Kind of depends on what the purpose of the survey is – is it just about Meet Belmont, or is it for more information about people in general?
  - o It's a good question because it could be affirming to the Vision statement
  - o Reasons for coming to Belmont might reveal areas that Meet Belmont is not addressing
  - o Think about putting this question at the end – might only be relevant for people who have recently moved to Belmont. Or could also ask
  - #2 – why do we care about how many people attended from one family?
    - o Helps us know how many people attended (sometimes only one per family attends)
    - o How about asking about children more specifically?
- Using Survey Monkey is a great idea
- Ask about special interests, talents, etc. that they might be interested in sharing with the community.

Exhibitor survey. Comments –
- Should we ask about new members if it's a membership group – e.g., new library cards, registered voters, other
  - o Some groups have commented on not recruiting new people…but the reality is that for newcomers it's more informational – they may not be ready to join yet – so we don't want that to be the only measure of success
  - o Could ask…have you seen any impact on your group as a result of your participation in this event?
- #4 – May want to reword this…groups often talk about appreciation for interest expressed – could relate to above comments
- #5 – what can we do it improve the event? Should be specifically what can we do to improve it <u>for exhibitors</u>. Maybe ask the same of exhibitors with regard to attendees.

Other comments re Meet Belmont scheduling and location -
- Saturday morning in September
- Look at new senior center
- Need a place with a lot of tables
  - o Beth El Temple – has a lot of tables

Welcome to Belmont Booklet

Things we like about the booklet –
- Very well done
  - Information accurate
  - Thorough
  - The cover – the variety, the people, the images

Things to improve/change –
- People in photos are all white
  - Don't include information that inevitably will change (e.g., chairs of committees)

- Clearly date the booklet
- If want to include names of people in positions, use an insert that is updated regularly
- Next iteration should be web-based.
- Use a flyer to publicize availability of the information. Link to Town's website.
- Approach should be focused on various portals – different ways to be engaged – e.g., schools, government, community orgs, family activities, kids, etc.
- Include links to other sites
- Consider a hardcopy as well – some people don't want to go to their computers for every bit of information
- If we wanted to add businesses, it could be a revenue generating option to offer listings. Could put those in a different section.
    - As an appointed committee of the town, we aren't allowed to generate revenue by selling things so we have to be careful.
    - We have and can generate donations
- How would we make it welcoming? For some users, what's on the internet is not easy to access.
- Are there other publications like this? We want to avoid duplication; seek out collaborative opportunities
    - For example, recycling guide is already printed; could we collaborate on printing?
    - Are there other guides that could be collapsed into one?
    - To make it welcoming to newcomers, write a letter that goes with it
    - Could this be done as part of the newspaper? As an insert in the paper in the issue that is delivered free each year?
- This should be geared to all residents, not just newcomers
- At places in Town that have computers – e.g., library – offer training on how to use the site
- What about the phone book…include a welcoming section
- Maintenance of an electronic version implies continual updating
    - Could this be something a high school student does for community service?
- Find out if other towns do something like this and see how they do it
    - The minute it's printed, it's out of date
    - College students might need to do projects like this
        - Might be even better to do something through the Belmont Public Schools
    - Official Town listserve could be useful for reminding residents about things…

Content – General Comments
- Highlight the vision statement and the Vision Committee – pair a letter from the Committee with the Vision Statement itself; make the connection b/w the Town's Vision statement and this booklet
- Bold some words within the Vision Statement
- Reorganize the booklet into clear categories, organize stuff differently, different flow

Content – Specific Comments –
- There is a lot more for people with young kids than is reflected here
  - Payson Park Music Festival and Kidspace are new in town since this
- Include information about how to run for town meeting and how to join town committees
  - List of organizations can be expanded
    - Farmers' Market
    - Waverley Trail
    - League of Women Voters
- Incomplete listing in some categories
  - Restaurants could be included
  - Children's activities – karate, fencing, arts programs, music programs, etc.
  - Should businesses be included?
  - Belmont Cinema – offers community services – maybe that's why it's included
  - Habitat
  - Walking trails
  - Emphasize on line services – e.g., library
  - Postal services – addition of UPS store in Cushing Square
  - As an alternative to listing organizations, invite organizations to submit flyers that could be compiled into a booklet.
  - Box tops for education…advertise this in the booklet
  - Recycling information – expand that section
  - Library information – including information about annual book sale
  - Town-wide fundraising endeavors
  - Full day kindergarten
  - All new phone numbers!
  - Belmont Yahoo Group

Next Steps
- Do some research on how resource directories like this are done in other towns – towns around here and towns with good school systems
  - Debby Fenn offered to do this
- Talk to Belmont IT coordinator for ideas, approaches
  - Jennifer and Sara
- Get information about how we can combine an electronic version with publication of a print version. Some way to keep it up to date but that would allow user to print it in totality or in sections

Closing
Jennifer asked the guests to what extent they'd like to be involved with this project – and related projects – and regarding their interest in the Vision Committee. Paul emphasized

importance of membership on the Vision Committee and encouraged everyone here tonight to consider that option.