

BELMONT VISION 21 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of December 18, 2003

(Approved January 8, 2004)

Members present: Jenny Fallon, Victoria Haase, Matthew Hausmann, Tim Higgins, Sarah Oaklander, Margaret O'Brien, Jennifer Page, Paul Solomon, Barry Winston

Also Present: Delores Keefe

Absent: Joe Greene, Bill Hofmann

7:10 p.m. There being a quorum, Jennifer Page opened the meeting.

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of 10/16/03, 11/6/2003 and 12/4/2003 with changes noted.

1. Report: BEDPG. Sara Oaklander reporting

- The Fire Station grant application was submitted to the state. Project is eligible because it could potentially include affordable housing. It will be six weeks until we hear on the proposal. Board of Selectmen approved the creation of a steering committee to guide the process.
- Surveys finalizing results. Approx. 525 responses. There was a discussion around the tabulation of the data, which is proving to be a large task.
- Snow removal in business areas: Sara sent a note to Peter Castanino, but to totally tackle the issue, Sara needs people to work on it. There was a discussion of role of the Belmont Watertown Chamber of Commerce.

2. Report: PICPG, Meg O'Brien reporting.

- Currently writing a report for the Board of Selectmen summarizing the results of their research.
- PICPIG is working to promote the Cable Communication Planning Workshop. Meg emphasized the importance of people attending the workshops. The goal of workshops is to better understand the community's needs (by different 4 community interest groups). These will then be consolidated and used as part of the negotiations with Comcast.

3. Environmental Project: Mass. Climate Action Conference, Jennifer Page reporting.

- There is funding available for start up organizations. Jennifer said that there are many interesting things that other communities are doing. She then provided the group with handouts from the conference. She said that she left the conference feeling that many communities in the Commonwealth have begun to understand the importance of this.

4. Environmental Project: Sustainability Indicators, General discussion of articles read .

- Committee members like the concept of the “indicators” and the concept of the three “environments” to which the indicators are tied. (Social, natural and economic environments.)
- Paul suggested that the town through its vision has already come up with our indicator. Jenny suggested that we have not taken the next step the Cape Cod did, which was to publish the analysis in the paper. Group agreed that sustainability is a great term, probably less politicized than “environmental.”

5. Environmental Project: Planning Board, Tim Higgins reporting.

- Tim said Planning Board can affect environmental improvements through regulations/permitting. He gave an example of storm water management regulations. Tim said Belmont’s current bylaws do not have good, written standards for some of these things. The rewrite of the bylaw will address these. He provided other examples including changing lot coverage allowances and requiring a specific number of trees to be planted for each new parking space.
- Jennifer asked whether teardowns can be required to have recycling requirements. Tim said that there could be a demolition bylaw that would give notice to the community but not mandatory recycling.
- Sara suggested leadership is what is necessary to push the “community good” versus the “individual good.”
- Tim is sending to the Planning Board the proposed changes that he would like to see go to Town Meeting in April.
- Jennifer suggested that relating these back to sustainability giving context for the changes.
- Jennifer asked whether there is a way to make sure the bylaw are “continuously” reviewed as the thinking of what constitutes “best practices” evolves. Tim noted that this should occur as a normal responsibility of the Senior Planner.
- Jennifer suggested V21 should meet with the Planning Board to discuss how many of the bylaw changes are supportive of the Vision. Matt suggested we look at the memorandum and then decide next step.

Environmental Project: Next Step

- Jennifer said we need to figure out how to recruit volunteers in working on the environmental initiative. She believes that some public forums/sessions are a way of educating the public and attracting interested people as potential recruits.
- Group agreed to use the next V21 meeting to brainstorm how to move forward on the environmental protection, both to raise the issue with the community and as a vehicle to begin recruiting volunteers..

9:15 p.m. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Hausmann,
Recorder Pro Tem

