

Vision Implementation Committee
Minutes, June 21, 2007
Adopted July 18, 2007

Members Present: Donna Brescia, Vinnie DeNovellis, Sara Oaklander, Meg O'Brien, Jennifer Page, Paul Santos, Paul Solomon

Members Absent: Austin Bliss, Kirk Hazlett, Ann Rittenburg, Jay Szklut

Others Present: Delores Keefe, Laurie Graham

Note: Decisions and next steps appear in bold print.

1. Administrivia

The minutes from the May 17, 2007 meeting will be reviewed for approval at our next meeting.

2. Membership and Officers

Donna Brescia has taken a new job that will require her to relocate. As a result, she is resigning from the VIC and her role as chairperson. In addition, Meg O'Brien's term is up and she has chosen not to seek reappointment. So there are two open seats on the Committee.

Paul Solomon proposed that we hold off on electing a new chair until these new members are appointed, which he expects will happen this summer. In the meantime, Kirk will be asked to serve as acting chair since he is currently the vice-chair. Donna will connect with Kirk when he returns from China and Paul will speak with him, as well.

Paul Solomon then took this opportunity to thank Meg and Donna for their service to the Committee. Meg has been a member since the fall of 2001 and has always been a very active contributing member of the Committee. Donna joined the Committee more recently and Paul thanked her for stepping up into the leadership position. Both will be missed.

Jennifer Page added her appreciation and thanks to both Donna and Meg. She spoke at length about Meg's service, given her tenure with the Committee. She told a story about Meg's role in the collection and analysis of data from the business community. Meg brought her considerable professional expertise to bear on the project and helped everyone to understand how it was that the data was valid so that we could proceed with confidence. Meg also led the Public Information and Communications Planning Group. The work of that group turned out to be very relevant to many of the pressing issues in the Town.

Meg said it's been a pleasure to serve on the Committee.

There was some discussion of the possibility of Meg serving again on the Harvard Lawn fire station committee as an alumna of the VIC. There is precedence for this sort of arrangement in how Jennifer Fallon, as an alumna of the School Committee, served as that Committee's representative to the VIC. A motion was made, seconded and approved to recommend Meg for this role given her experience and interest.

3. Meet Belmont

Laurie Graham joined this portion of the meeting as a veteran planner of Meet Belmont.

Paul Solomon spoke about the importance of Meet Belmont and the VIC's role in making it happen now that the people previously involved have stepped down. He has asked Jennifer and

Sara to co-lead this effort and they have agreed. Their involvement in this capacity will be for Meet Belmont only, not for the ongoing efforts of the Newcomers' Club. A motion was made, seconded, and approved for Jennifer and Sara to co-lead the Meet Belmont planning process.

Jennifer and Sara thanked Laurie for coming and continuing her involvement and spoke about the importance of all members of the VIC stepping up to help out with this event. Jennifer then distributed a document providing an overview of the Meet Belmont planning process. She, Laurie, and Sara then led the group through a discussion of various issues related to the event, as well as some of the specific tasks that need to be completed, including those that need to be done immediately.

a. Date - Meet Belmont has traditionally happened the week before the start of school, which is often the week before Labor Day. The high school, however, has so much going on during that week that the staff as requested we hold the event a week earlier on Thursday, August 23. Tuesday, August 21 might also be a possibility. After some discussion, it was agreed to hold the event on August 23.

b. Involvement of the religious groups - A decision needed to be made regarding how the faith communities would be involved. For the first two years, the Belmont Religious Council represented the various houses of worship in town. Then one year one of the ministers who was new in Belmont attended the event on his own and went around meeting people. This caused some concern on the part of other churches that did not send representatives. The following year, all of the faith communities were invited and shared one big long table. Many of them sent multiple representatives and there were so many people at that table that participants found it intimidating. Concern was expressed about the need to avoid a repeat of this situation as well as the downsides of excluding any groups from the event. After much discussion and consideration of various options, the group agreed to invite all of the faith communities to participate in one of two ways: either send one representative or provide literature to be offered at the Belmont Religious Council's table.

c. Audio/visual equipment vs. talking, meeting, greeting and other related matters - A decision needed to be made regarding the use of electronics at the event, as well as about the use of freestanding easels and the size of tabletop displays. The issues are the limited number of power outlets, the heat and noise created by the A/V equipment, the visual obstructions created by tall displays, the space taken up by easels, and the preference for people at the event to personally connect rather than be focused on A/V presentations. After much discussion, these decisions were made:

a. Participants will be told that due to noise, ventilation issues, and the limited number of outlets, power will not be provided this year. If someone wants to bring a battery operated laptop, they may do so but it must be without audio.

b. Free standing easels will not be allowed.

c. The invitation letter will discourage large displays.

The use of areas outside the cafeteria was discussed as a way of opening up more space. No decision was made about this.

d. Various assignments -

a. Exhibitors - Laurie offered to continue her involvement by setting up the Yahoo email account and address book and updating the invitation list. She will work with Jennifer on this.

b. New homeowners - Meg is willing to help later in the summer. She agreed to help with the postcard mailing to new homeowners, including contacting a realtor (probably Sue Pizzi) to obtain the names and addresses.

c. Sandwich boards - Paul is willing to help out with discreet tasks, particularly on the day of the event although his time will be limited by his commitment to the Farmers' Market that same day. He is also willing to pick up, deliver, and remove the sandwich boards as long as the rest of the details of the sandwich boards are taken care of by someone else. Laurie will submit the

letter of request to use the Selectmen's sandwich boards and later on someone will take care of making the posters for the boards.

d. Publicity - Jennifer will ask Adine if she is willing to update last year's materials to reflect this year's date so that we can use them again. Sara will take care of revising PR notices for the newspaper and other aspects of publicity. More needs to be planned around this. Delores will find out more about the notion that flyers can no longer be posted in store windows and she will let Jennifer and Sara know what she finds out.

e. Funding - Jennifer will pursue this, as she has done so in past years.

4. Sustainable Belmont

Jennifer updated the group on the current focus of Sustainable Belmont. They've been engaged in a long process toward the preparation of a Climate Action Plan for the town. A group of Tufts interns collected a lot of the data on energy use that's needed to draft the plan. Since then, only modest progress has been made and the push is now on to complete the plan so that we will have the full picture of what we need as a town to conserve energy. Dan LeClerc has asked that the plan be finished by early fall before budget season begins. The group has now formed a writing group to move this initiative forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Oaklander
Secretary Pro Tempore