

Vision Implementation Committee Meeting
Belmont Public Library/Assembly Room
Thursday, July 16, 2008 / 7:00-9:00PM

Minutes

Present:

Kirk Hazlett, Austin Bliss, Sara Oaklander, Al Rubin, Paul Solomon

Absent:

Jennifer Page, Vinnie DeNovellis, Paul Santos

Call to Order

The July 16, 2008, meeting of the Belmont Vision Implementation Committee was called to order by Chairman Kirk Hazlett at 7:00PM. Hazlett welcomed attending VIC members and thanked them for their participation.

Membership

Sara has reached out to a few possibilities for VIC membership, but no acceptances yet. She also has been in touch with some Town Meeting members, newly- or re-elected, to gauge their interest.

A discussion ensued of "talking points" for new member outreach. It was agreed that wording similar to the following could be employed when talking with potential new members: "Turnover in Vision Implementation Committee membership has allowed us to revisit the goals and strategic focus of the Committee." In addition, it would be emphasized that the VIC meets two times a month and that active participation in both meetings each month is desirable.

Kirk has had a brief conversation with Meg O'Brien, former VIC member, regarding her interest in returning as a member of the Committee. He will follow up with Meg later this summer to discuss this further.

Al has spoken with Julie Barton, who indicated that she is unable to accept at this time.

Board of Selectmen Inquiry Regarding Committee Viability

Kirk read a letter he received as VIC Chair from Town Administrator Tom Younger on behalf of the Board of Selectmen. The Selectmen would like input from committees on their perceptions of their viability, their future goals, and their plans for achieving those goals.

Discussion then ensued, at Austin's lead, of the Committee addressing the issue of "Civic Engagement" as an area of focus. It was agreed that this indeed is an area that the Vision Implementation Committee could "sink its teeth into."

A brief discussion of just what "Civic Engagement" entails followed. It was agreed that VIC members would spend time until the next Committee meeting doing their own research and thinking and be prepared at the next meeting to discuss in more detail.

2008/07/16 VIC Minutes...continued Page 2

The "disease" and its "symptom" that have led to this focus on Civic Engagement were identified as "apathy" as evidenced by an "abysmal interest shown in Town office candidacy" in the most recent Town election cycle. "There were no candidates for several offices."

The following list was developed of "reasons why people don't participate":

1. Perception that involvement "takes too much time"
2. Actual lack of time or overextension with other activities
3. Energy
4. Lack of a sense of duty
5. More choices/ways to make use of available time
6. Not perceived as "cool"; seen as something "retirees" do
7. No "investment" in Belmont; lack of pride in being Belmont resident
8. Lack of visibility of Town leadership
9. No sense of community
10. Lack of positive publicity
11. No welcoming environment for volunteering in Belmont; no welcoming attitude
12. Lack of understanding of what is required
13. Perception that some volunteer opportunities are meaningless...that decisions are made "behind closed doors"
14. Misperception of what a volunteer position actually means

Meet Belmont:

Sara provided an update on planning for "Meet Belmont." The next subcommittee planning meeting is scheduled for August 5.

Sara is coordinating publicity and the subcommittee has sent out a batch of postcard invitations to new homeowners who have purchased a home in Belmont since July 2007. Smaller mailings will be done later to catch more recent homeowners.

Volunteers are sought to assist in distribution/posting of flyers for the event. The plan is to blanket the Town the first week of August.

Laurie Graham is handling the registration and communication with exhibitors.

Adjourn

The July 16, 2008, meeting of the Belmont Vision Implementation Committee was adjourned at 9:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kirk Hazlett, Secretary pro tem