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03/14/2012 Minutes

VISION 2020 STANDING COMMITTEE
 MINUTES OF MARCH 14, 2012 MEETING
 Approved April 11, 2012

Present: Andrew Fischer, Joey Glushko, Mary Harrison, Jane Howard, Elizabeth Karpati, Josh Lobel, Gail McCormick (Sustainable Arlington).

Absent: Paul Bayer, Kathleen Bodie, Adam Chapdelaine, Bruce Fitzsimmons, William Hayner, Gordon Jamieson, Cheryl Miller, Angela Olszewski, William Shea, Heidi Sheehan.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as amended.

Census survey: Approximately 4342 responses have come in to date including 657 on-line. The deadline is tomorrow but responses arriving through the rest of this week will be tallied.

Josh will prepare the report on the survey to be presented to Town Meeting.

The list of sign-ups for task groups which was started by Brucie Moulton will be completed by Elizabeth. Those who signed up for "environmental" but did not specify any of the three committees should be contacted by all three. It is up to the Standing Committee what to do about task groups which have no chair, and people who filled out the sign-up section without specifying any task group.

Task Groups should look at the Town Goals which were adopted when Vision 2020 was established, and consider whether they are still operating in accordance with these goals.

Swimming in Spy Pond: The Spy Pond Committee objected to the long swimming ban imposed by the Board of Health last summer when state testing data showed only a few occasions of harmful levels of microcystis algae. The Board agreed to post generic signs warning of possible algae problems and listing the website where current information can be found. However, the state may not be able to continue testing Spy Pond in FY13. MyRWA apparently does some testing, but for coliform bacteria, not for algae.

CDBG request: The Standing Committee will ask for \$4300, which will cover the cost of the next census survey. The Selectmen have said that they find the information from the surveys valuable.

Warrant articles: (1) The Finance Committee unanimously approved the request of \$50,000 for the water bodies fund.

(2) The public art article seeks to remove the words "designed to catch the eye" from the zoning bylaw so that the Zoning Board does not have to deal with art. The Selectmen have approved the installation of permanent hardware to hold public art (temporary or permanent) at three sites on Massachusetts Avenue (Grafton St., Olivio's, corner of Rt. 16).

Gail reported on the state's "Solarize Mass" program to get as many homes and small businesses as possible to install photovoltaic systems. Each town would select one company to work in that town and offer a discount to all customers in that town. Two towns will be chosen to receive grants to help with the project. Arlington is in the process of applying and is asking for a letter of support from the Standing Committee, which will accompany the application.

Rain gardens project: A recent meeting narrowed down the numerous proposed sites to four to six possibilities. The final choices must be sites that don't present big engineering problems.

Task group reports:

Diversity is reviewing its goals: it wants to make Arlington feel like a welcoming community.

Spy Pond Committee members walked the Rt. 2 path with the DPW engineer and consultants for MassHighway. The latter concluded that removing the sandbar and moving the fence closer to the road are both unlikely; removing the sandbar would be very costly. The annual Trails Day for cleanup and invasives removal along the path is scheduled for May 12. The annual fertilizer flyer has been distributed in the Spy Pond watershed.

Reservoir: Scout groups have been lined up to help in April with cleanup and planting in the habitat garden, including replacing shrubs that were stolen last year. David White's annual report on the Res Committee was distributed at the meeting.

Coming events:

March 24, 2 p.m. Sustainable Arlington presents the movie "Dirt" at the Senior Center.

March 29, 7:30 p.m. Candidates' Night at Town Hall.

March 31, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. EcoFest at Town Hall: "Locavoracious – About Food."

April 10, Tuesday: Town Election.

April 23, Monday: Town Meeting begins.

End-of-year event: Many suggestions were made for a possible venue: Reservoir habitat garden; Jason Russell House; Recreation Center for softball or bocce; a walk through the silver maple forest, which is threatened by development; Dallin Museum, which has its 100th anniversary; something related to the EcoFest or gardening; the solar installation at the Ottoson school; a public art exhibit at the Arlington Center for the Arts. The 2011 event was planned for the Reservoir habitat garden but it was rained out; if we plan for an outdoor venue, we need an indoor backup.

Legal Handbook form: Joey distributed forms to be signed and returned after each committee member has read the relevant sections and taken the on-line quiz required by the Open Meeting law. Task group or committee members who are "regulars" should be given copies of this form.

Town Hall news: There is a new initiative to encourage Town employees to get to work without using a car. Plans for Symmes now include an assisted living facility on the site of the old nurses' quarters.

It was suggested that for the next meeting we should invite Heather Remoff, who has proposed a series of articles with suggestions for the growth of Arlington.