

PLANNING BOARD

Monday, May 11, 2009
Belmont Corner Meeting House
Belmont, New Hampshire

Members Present: Chairman Peter Harris; Christine Long.
Members Absent: Claude Patten, Ward Peterson, Russ Davis, Jon Pike and Gary Flack
Alternates Present: Reginald Caldwell
Alternates Absent: William Rollins and William Otto.
Staff: Candace Daigle, Rick Ball, S. Dalton and Elaine Murphy.

Those Board members present were:

Board of Selectmen: Ron Cormier and David Morse and Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin.
Conservation Commission: Denise Naiva and Carol Fairfield.
Zoning Board of Adjustment: Ed Hawkins and Linda Couture.
School Board: Preston Tuthill, Thomas Goulette and Superintendent Michael Cozort.
Heritage Commission Wallace Rhodes and Linda Frawley.

The Planning Board chairman opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Board of Selectmen chairman R. Cormier presented R. Caldwell with a plaque for 18 years of service to Belmont for serving on the different Boards and Committees.

The Planning Board chairman thanked the Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, School Superintendent, School Board, Heritage Commission and the public for attending. He stated that tonight's meeting is to strengthen communication between the Boards and make everyone aware of the different Boards' goals so they can work together to better serve the public. The focus is on future goals and sharing information with each other. He would like to welcome all the new Board and Commission members and thank them for volunteering to serve the community. A new commission that was invited tonight is the Heritage Commission that will do a presentation on their goals and activities

HERITAGE COMMISSION:

Mr. Wallace Rhodes and Ms. Linda Frawley did a power point presentation. Mr. Rhodes thanked the Planning Board for the opportunity to explain the goals and activities of the Commission. He explained that they don't have a large budget but they are working on interesting projects concerning the

history of Belmont.

Mr. Rhodes gave a brief history of the Corner Meeting House. In 1900 the Advent Christian Church used the meeting house until the 1950's. In the 1950's it changed to a full gospel Pentecostal Church but did not last long because the church community was more conservative. The building was abandoned and vandalized. Author Grace Metalious lived on Gale and School Streets while writing her book which mentioned the Corner Meeting House.

Mr. Rhodes explained that Heritage Commissions were authorized by the legislature in 1992. Belmont's Heritage Commission was first mentioned in the 2002 Master Plan and in 2004 they went to Town Meeting to establish the Commission. A year later they established a heritage fund with a non lapsing account. They have \$15,000 in that account. The money can come from funds that are appropriated or through gifts.

He stated that there are about fifty Heritage Commissions in New Hampshire and they are becoming common practice throughout the State.

Ms. Frawley explained that the Statement of Purpose of the Belmont Heritage Commission is to promote the property recognition use and the protection of unique historic and natural resources of Belmont and also integrate preservation planning as a partnership with individuals businesses, Town Boards and other groups.

Ms. Frawley stated that the Commission members have stayed about the same since it's beginning: Chairman Wallace Rhodes, Vice-Chairman Linda Frawley, Secretary Margaret Normandin, member Shayne Duggan and selectmen's representative Ronald Cormier. She stated that the Commission needs young people to keep the Commission going. They keep their programs/projects interesting and appropriate for all citizens.

The Commission's goals are to continue to build awareness of the community's heritage assets, local, regional and statewide. A current goal is to stabilize and preserve the town bandstand for its next hundred years. Mr. Rhodes explained that Mr. Steve Bedard did an assessment study of the bandstand and determined that the foundation needs to be replaced. Replacing the foundation is first on the list for repairs. They also need to raise the bandstand and replace the footings and bring it up to grade. The floor will eventually need to be replaced using material as close to the original material as possible. The roof needs to be replaced in the next four or five years. The Commission applied for the Moose Plate Grant last year and did not get it and have applied again this year hoping for \$10,000 to reduce the cost of fixing the foundation.

Ms. Frawley stated that they continue to build community awareness through emails, sharing information with the Historical Society, community projects and press releases. It takes work and time to establish a commission. They work on expanding partnerships for project collaboration. A planting project they worked on at the Province Meeting House involved school children. They collaborate projects with other local organizations such as boy scouts, girl scouts, historic society, the library and

senior center.

They are also facilitating the village revitalization. In March they had a presentation by Chris Williams who was the architect for the mill. The presentation was well received with fifty people in attendance.

Ms. Frawley explained that they are aiding the Historic Society with their 40th anniversary. They are working on developing programs, publicity, brochures and activities. They will be videoing the projects to keep them alive. They have hosted a community preservation workshop for the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources and New Hampshire Preservation Alliance.

Ms. Frawley stated that a Section 6 study was done in 1992 and 1993 the result showed what a nice village Belmont has. A historic and archeological study provided a solid inventory of the village and structures over fifty years old. Mr. Rhodes stated that the study did not include the northern end of town which is the most historic part of town. They are hoping to have a complete inventory of the town in the future but they are ahead of other towns which may help them when they apply for grants. Grants are limited in New Hampshire so the more information they have compiled the better their chances are to receive grants.

The Heritage Commission supports Belmont Old Home Day scheduled for August 8th celebrating Belmont's farming heritage. They are also working on banners for the village and mill area. They are working with a company that makes banners out of recycled billboards. The Rotary Club is also coordinating a fall concert at the bandstand to celebrate the bandstand's centennial. The Commission is continuing to make a difference in Town with projects like Deck the Village events, celebrating community volunteers and beautification projects. They are also are working on getting a bronze historic marker for the Belmont mill.

Ms. Frawley stated they are researching new funding sources and the Commission members have attended workshops looking for alternative sources for funding. Mr. Rhodes stated that they need a mini Master Plan for the village, mill area and river walk in area. The Board of Selectmen could appoint members to form the Mini Master Plan Groups like people from the library trustees, members from the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Heritage Commission. This Board would develop a twenty year plan.

P. Harris thanked Mr. Rhodes and Ms. Frawley for their presentation and all the work they have done to preserve Belmont's history.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

Selectman Ron Cormier stated that in this tough economic time the selectmen have tightened their belts and are not proposing any new major projects. This year the on going project is Horne Road and

next year the is Bean Hill Road. The other on going project is Pleasant Valley's drainage project which was approved at last year's town meeting.

PLANNING BOARD:

P. Harris stated that the Planning Board applications are at a minimum stage which gives the Board an opportunity to work on projects and to update regulations. He commended staff on their professionalism and ability to guide the Board through applications. Through the Land Use survey they have received positive responses from consultants and engineers on how qualified staff is and their willingness to work with applicants on their projects. The Board is taking this time to get things done and to be prepared for what comes before them in the future.

C. Daigle explained that the owners have completed the 32 unit work force housing and it is at 100% occupancy. This project brought in 50 school age children. Another project underway is rebuilding the mall that burnt down in 2005. Staff, the Board and the excavators are working on revising the Earth Excavation regulations.

SCHOOL BOARD:

Mr. Preston Tuthill stated that the school's building and grounds maintenance is working on a resolution for alternative energy source. They have met with Jordan Institute on alternate energy sources and they suggested that before they look at alternative energy they need to do an energy audit. Currently they are working on that.

Mr. Mike Cozort stated that in the last twenty years he has seen wonderful changes and improvements in Belmont and is proud of what has been accomplished. Some of the improvements have been the Corner Meeting House, Belmont High School, the mill and the beach which has made Belmont a better place. These improvements are due to the residence, municipal leaders and the School Board.

He explained that the high school will be paid off in 2012/2013 and the school is not proposing any major impact until that debt is paid off. He explained in 2013 they may present their next major project so that the debt ratio remains on an even scale without having any lulls or spikes in the budget. He keeps in contact with the Town Administrator so that the Town and School do not propose any major projects on the same year.

Mr. Cozort explained that the student bubble this year will be in the 8th and 9th grades. The study shows that the enrollment numbers in the elementary school will not rise.

Mr. Tuthill stated that in the southwest they are working on a forty year maintenance building plan and Belmont is looking into creating a similar plan. P. Harris wanted to know if the school has a CIP. Mr. Tuthill stated that they do but it has not been updated this year. Major renovations are necessary about every twenty or thirty years.

Mr. Cozort stated that the most immediate project is adding a sprinkler system in the elementary school. Another safety issue that will be addressed in the future is the redesigning the entrance to the elementary school. The school was built in the 1980's with the offices in the middle of the building. Due to safety issues the offices needs to moved closer to the entrance for improved visibility and enhanced safety.

Mr. Tom Goulette stated that they need to keep a critical eye on economic trends and worker and business migration in and out of Belmont. The Lakes Region is seeing a migration of middle income workers who leave the area looking for good benefits and better paying jobs. We need to be cognitive of the need for high tech jobs in this region to understand the economic picture of this region. The economic situation has an impact on education, roads and services.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION:

Ms. Denise Naiva stated that the Conservation Commission has two new members: Ms. Carol Fairfield and Mr. Keith Bennett. They bring experience and knowledge to the Commission.

She explained that the Commission has been talking about the importance of economic development and the importance it has on conservation. She stated that the studies done by Mr. Russ Thibeault showed that factors that companies look for when relocating to a new area includes the quality of life, affordable housing and aesthetics of the area. The Conservation Commission is trying to enhance the quality of life with three major properties they have acquired. The Town Forest management plan is completed. They have received a grant for the trails through forest. The Andrew Sanborn Farm property at the end of Durrell Mountain Road abuts conservation land in Gilmanton and Gilford and is at the head way of the Tioga River. This property is for recreation and enhancing the town. They are doing an inventory of the property for the best way to manage the property. Mr. Andy Fast, county forester, is working on a timber management plan. They are also working on a wildlife inventory for the Tioga wildlife conservation area on Rte 140.

Ms. Naiva stated that the Conservation Commission is working on becoming more visible in the community and are planning on participating in the Old Home Day celebration this year.

P. Harris stated that the Conservation Commission has been working with the Planning Board on identifying wetlands and shoreland protection.

Mr. Tuthill wanted to know the status of the BRATT trail. R. Ball stated that they are meeting with DOT to see if they can get additional funding. If that happens then it is going to be built this year. Mr. Tuthill had concerns about liability insurance. Town Administrator, Jeanne Beaudin, stated that there is a hearing scheduled for Wednesday addressing that issue.

P. Harris stated that he would like to thank all the staff at Town Hall for their professionalism

and ability to get things done.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

S Dalton wanted to know what the Town is doing about Economic Development. Should they appoint a committee? Selectman R. Cormier stated that they have a committee but with the economic downfall they have not been meeting. He has talked to chairman, Brian Watterson, about bringing the committee back together. S. Dalton stated that he would like to keep progressing so that they are ready for the future. They need to be proactive and not reactive. They need to be watching what businesses are leaving Belmont and which ones are looking to relocate to Belmont. Ms. Frawley stated that there is a new survey out on work force development. Mr. Goulette stated that DRED has a data base that is monitoring job loss of the different types of job. There is a need to participate in an Economic Committee to help offset the loss of good paying jobs and determine what companies want to locate to the Lakes Region. .

STAFF REPORT:

BLUE SKY EXCAVATION:

C. Daigle Blue Sky Excavation wants to use organic compost to reclaim their site. Compost brought onto the site will be used to stabilize the slopes and will not be sold. They will advertise for compost but will monitor what is brought onto site and safety controls will be in place monitoring the stockpiles. P. Harris stated that it is a small change and will help towards reclamation. It was the consensus of the Board that Blue Sky is doing a good job on reclaiming their pit and they consider this a minor change.

The Board will review the proposed Earth Excavation Amendments and possibly hold the public hearing on June 22, 2009.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M Murphy
Administrative Assistant