BELMONT -- Can lightning strike twice in the same place?

Local officials and members of a Plan NH design team are hoping that the answer to that question is yes as they plan a two-day workshop June 4-5 on the future of Belmont Village.

Linda Frawley, vice chairman of the town's Heritage Commission, said the hope is that the success of a Plan NH design charrette held in 1996 will be repeated. A charrette refers to a collaborative session in which designers solve problems. She said a previous session helped produce what became known as "the Miracle on Mill Street," the successful rehabilitation of the 1833 Belmont Mill into a center of community activity.

The mill, heavily damaged in a 1992 fire, was in the process of being torn down in 1995 when a group of citizens, led by Wallace Rhodes, president of the town's historical society, obtained an injunction preventing demolition.

The charrette was held after a special town meeting at which townspeople expressed support for rehabilitating the mill and produced plans for financing through a Community Development Block Grant. When that funding became available a year later, the mill was restored. It now houses the Belmont Early Learning Center, the Food For Thought Café of the NH Community Technical College, the Belmont Senior Center and the Belknap Family Health Center.

Frawley said this year's charrette will include architects and engineers under the leadership of Michael Castagna of Castagna Consulting Group and will seek community input in a variety of forums before recommending a plan. Items for discussion include a Tioga River walk, an outdoor pavilion and maintaining green space in the downtown area. Other topics include the future use of downtown landmarks, including a 100-year-old bandstand and expanding the public library.

On Friday, June 4, there will be a village walking tour beginning at 1:10 p.m., followed by the afternoon listening session at the Corner Meeting House from 2:30 to 4 p.m. A community supper will be at the Belmont Mill from 5:30 to 6:45 p.m., and an evening listening session will be held at Belmont Middle School from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

On Saturday, June 5, a work session will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., with the Plan NH team using input from the listening sessions to draw up designs and plan development. The final report and presentation will take place from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.