

Belmont Heritage Commission 2007 Annual Report

The Belmont Heritage Commission continues to serve as a resource promoting the proper recognition, use and protection of our Town's unique historic and cultural resources. One of 45 throughout New Hampshire, Belmont's five member commission was established by citizens in 2004, and enhanced the following year, with Town Meeting approval, that established a non-lapsing Heritage Fund.

Much of these formative years have focused on research, education and developing future strategies. As reported last year, funding for preservation initiatives is a long-term effort, and non-local taxpayer support continues as our priority. Collaboration is fundamental to all efforts, and the Commission works closely with the Belmont Historical Society, a 501c3 organization and the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, among others.

Each of our community's comprehensive or master plans, feature strong citizen desire to keep Belmont's rural character and heritage, part of its identity, sense of place, and future. Belmont Village, our center, has significant historic features – in its residential architecture, municipal buildings, Bandstand and Sargent Park – among others. The classically-designed public library, added to the prestigious National Register in 1985, and the award-winning transformation of the Belmont Mill, are two of the most visible and prominent reminders. August 8, 2008 marks only the 10th dedication anniversary of what was headlined “The Miracle on Mill Street” in a New Hampshire newspaper, praising the “rebirth of a 165-year old building nearly lost forever”, in a story about “the historic Belmont building saved by Townspeople.”

Our accomplishments of 2007 were primarily grant-related, and will translate to several 2008 initiatives. Application was made to the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance for preservation services to help identify priority sites in the historic “Factory Village District” downtown, as identified in state transportation and historical studies. Additionally, with the Belmont Historical Society, two presentations from New Hampshire Humanities Council scholars will be presented on May 16 and September 19, both at 7PM, for all community members. In another section of Town, the Province Road Meeting House, built in 1792 and gifted to the Belmont Historical Society from the Third Free Will Baptist Society in 1979, received the first of a highly-competitive state Land Conservation Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) grant, to move that project forward. All grant writing and administration is volunteered by Commission members, so that funds appropriated by Belmont taxpayers, can be used fully for matching opportunities from state, federal and foundation sources.

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We appreciate all community interest and thank citizens for their support.

Respectfully submitted,

Wallace P. Rhodes, Chairman
Linda Frawley, Vice Chairman
Margaret Normandin, Secretary
Diane Marden
Ronald Cormier, Selectmen's Representative



Photo Courtesy of Wallace Rhodes