

# Heritage Commission

## 2010 Annual Report

“...It has been said that, at its best, preservation engages the past in a conversation with the present over a mutual concern for the future ...” William Murtaugh 1923-2004 *First Keeper of the National Historic Trust, who helped shape the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, and for 50 years the historic preservation movement*

Successes led by Heritage Commission initiatives were visible and measurable, as we:

1. Surpassed \$100,000. in federal and other grants since 2008
2. Developed PlanNH Charrette application and marketing
3. Saw “Make a Difference Day” and “Deck the Village” events attract substantial growth in all-aged volunteers and participation
4. Commissioned glass sun catcher limited edition commemoratives of the 1908 Bandstand and 1833 Mill Tower to raise funds for local preservation priorities

For some time, the Commission has studied lighting of historic and special places, consulting with PSNH community and technical experts, among others. That interest and opportunity combined in a lighting upgrade project designed in February for two Village locations. The Heritage Commission led effort was supported through American Recovery and Reinvestment funding.

Among features are replacement of ornamental poles and fixtures at the Mill, in a style reflecting earlier Village lighting, with energy efficient LED bulbs. “Uplighting” focuses attention on the Mill belfry – perhaps the most recognizable center site. Additionally, Sargent Park reconfiguration includes better distribution of sports lighting, complimenting recent investments of playground equipment.

The June PlanNH Charrette inspired all who participated. For two days, residents shared their hopes and dreams for Belmont Village and with the expert help of architects, contractors, engineers and others, created a long-term vision for the heart of our Town. PlanNH first came to Belmont in 1996 and helped foster a commitment to recycling and reusing the Mill for future generations. Their 2010 return and significant attendance, was a positive signal for Village revitalization.

Since our 2004 establishment, the Selectmen-appointed Commission has been about partnership & pride. We volunteer *“To promote the proper recognition, use and protection of the unique historic and cultural resources of Belmont, and also integrate preservation planning as a partnership with individuals, Town boards and other appropriate groups.”*

That collaborative approach literally “bloomed” this spring when April daffodils brightened the Province Road Meeting House, Sargent Park, Corner Meeting House, and Library – including the historic watering trough. Just a couple of months from now, even more of that signature early flower will greet Mill visitors and Village pedestrians strolling by the Tioga River next to the park-in-progress at the old penstock, thanks to Saturday morning volunteer energy.

The newest traditions of “Make a Difference Day” and “Deck the Village” again brought people and festivities to Main Street, supported by growing and helpful partnerships. If you haven’t yet attended and/or have ideas for these community celebrations in October and December, please be in touch with any of the Heritage Commission members or email [belmonthistory@gmail.com](mailto:belmonthistory@gmail.com)

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Moving forward, we continue Bandstand stabilization and believe its relocation the highest preservation priority. Like the Mill it is a local landmark, architecturally and historically significant, with need of repair. Besides grant writing, research and telling the story of the Bandstand, this year we commissioned a limited edition recycled glass sun catcher, hand-pressed by League of NH Craftsmen glass artist Chris Salmon. The 100 piece Bandstand edition was nearly sold out within six weeks, and followed by a sun catcher showing our Mill tower. All monies raised are pledged to Bandstand preservation.

Near year's end, an opportunity for inclusion in the National Scenic Byway program was identified. Recognizing our regional heritage, the role of mills, and importance of rivers, exploration of a "Mill Heritage Byway" trail has begun. The Commission has initiated discussions with the NH Department of Transportation, Belknap Mill and Franklin Historical Society about the potential.

We gratefully acknowledge kindnesses and support from all community friends that make these results possible.

With sincere appreciation,

Wallace Rhodes, Chairman  
Linda Frawley, Vice Chairman  
Margaret Normandin, Secretary  
Shayne Duggan, Member  
Ronald Cormier, representing Board of Selectmen



Photos Courtesy of the Belmont Heritage Commission

