

The Citizen of Laconia

The voice of New Hampshire's Lakes Region

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Voters send warrant on

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BELMONT — Around two dozen residents attended Monday night's deliberative session of the special town meeting which lasted less than a halfhour.

After one attempt to amend the warrant, both articles were forwarded on to be placed on the official ballot to be voted upon next month.

Article 1 calls for the town to discontinue the section of Mill Street between Main Street and the Belmont Mill and

to relocate it to the entrance of the public library.

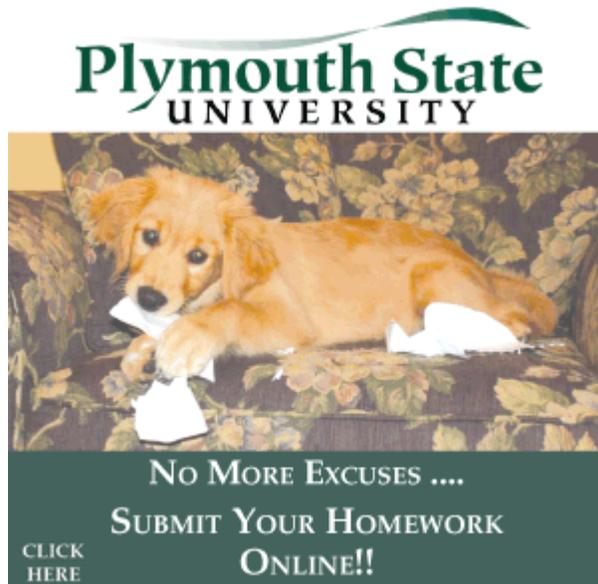
Selectman Ron Cormier said it is part of the town's revitalization project for the Village.

"Part of the reconstruction was to take Mill Street and relocate it," said Cormier. "The entrance would be the library parking lot."

Cormier said the idea would be to create more green space next to the library, as well as to create additional parking downtown. The village area currently has 39 public parking spaces. The new plan would create 35 additional spaces, bringing the total to 74.

Article 2 calls for the town to purchase the former Northway Bank property at 154 Main St., a building owned by William and Carolyn McDonough.

The town has had the building on previous town meeting warrants, first in 2008 when it was offered for \$300,000 and again in 2009 at a price of \$275,000. In both instances, the warrant articles failed by more than 100 votes.



"We are aware that this property has come before the voters twice before," said Cormier. "The items that make it slightly different is that the price is \$50,000 less than the first time we asked, \$25,000 less than the second time, and, with the construction going on, we thought it would be appropriate to ask the voters."

Resident George Condodemetraky made a motion amend the warrant article, reducing the amount the town would spend on the property to \$240,000.

Selectman Ruth Mooney said the town recently had the property appraised, which put the value of the building at \$245,000. Mooney said the

reason why the town is asking for no more than \$250,000 on the warrant is to allow the town to have the ability to negotiate, if possible.

Condodemetraky's amendment failed on a voice vote; a hand vote confirmed the decision on a vote of 5-20.

Before voting on the article as written, resident Ken Knowlton spoke in favor of the proposal.

"I'm personally for this. The reason I'm for this is because we've been paying money to improve the school system," he said. "We have a new high school, revamped middle school, and an adequate elementary school; but we don't have a future adequate town hall."

Knowlton noted that, as of this year, the school district will no longer be making debt payments on the high school building which, according to Knowlton, was \$500,000 a year.

"If you want your town to thrive, if you want this revitalization, if you don't want this town to die, if you want the town to be attractive for new businesses ... vote to attain this bank [building]," said Knowlton. "It's another way to support the revitalization effort."

There was no further discussion on either article and the first portion of the special town meeting adjourned.

The second session, when the voting will take place, will be on Tuesday, Aug. 21, between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. at the Belmont High School.

[Return to top](#)