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Both articles passed in special town meeting, voter turnout low

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THE TOWN of Belmont held the second portion of the special town meeting on Tuesday, asking voters to discontinue Mill Street and purchase the former Northway Bank building, pictured center. Both articles were approved. HARRISON HAAS/CITIZEN

BELMONT — Both articles on the special town meeting ballot in Belmont passed, with the results of one article being so close, a recount was needed despite there only being an 8 percent voter turnout.

After being voted upon three times in the past four years, voters in Belmont finally passed a warrant article seeking to purchase the former Northway Bank building on Main Street.

By a vote of 164-156, Article 2 on the special town meeting ballot passed, with residents voting in favor of not spending more than \$250,000 to purchase the building located at 154 Main Street, a property that is currently owned by William and Carolyn McDonough.

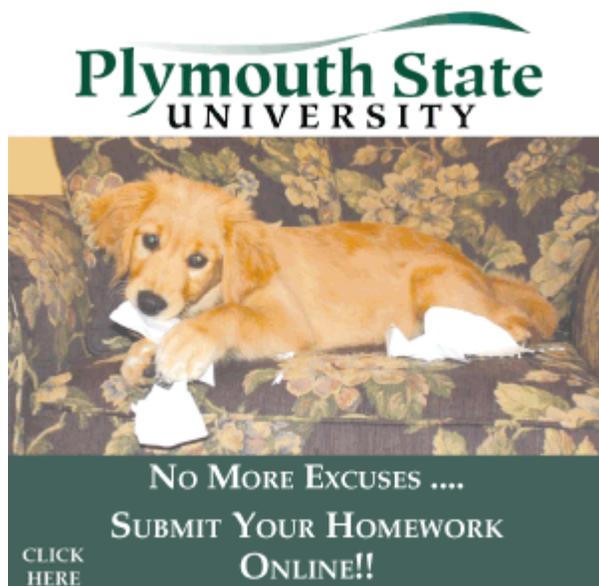
Supervisors of the checklist had conducted a recount, with there only being an eight vote difference, which yielded the same vote of 164-156.

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.

The intentions of the town, noted at past selectmen meetings and deliberative sessions, are now to use the building to relocate town offices from the current location across the street and have the building be a part of the Village Revitalization plan.

According to the warrant, the selectmen have sufficient funds legally available to be expended to purchase the property, which does not require any appropriations from taxpayers.

Article 1, which passed by a vote of 179- 137, called 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. Selectmen noted that by discontinuing the road, it would play a large part in the revitalization effort in Belmont Village.



Now that the vote has been taken, the plan is to create more green space next to the library, relocate the town's bandstand back to its original location, and 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.

Three hours after the polls opened, only 105 votes had been cast out of the total number of registered voters of 4,012. Collectively, only 320 voters made their way to the polls at the high school between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m., with four people not voting on Article 1.

[Return to top](#)



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