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Belmont debates the future of bank property

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BELMONT — There is still much debate as to what to do with the old Northway Bank, which was recently purchased by the town, with some officials preferring that it become the new town hall while others favor just tearing it down.

Budget Committee Chair Ron Mitchell is of the opinion that the old bank, which is located in front of the Belmont Mill, be renovated and used as the new town hall.

Mitchell said that the second floor would be a good location for the town clerk's office because of the presence of a bank vault.


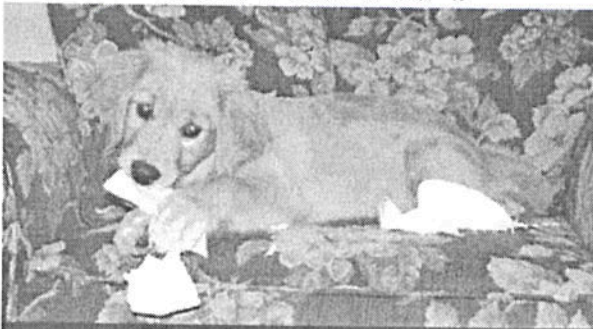
Budget Committee Vice- Chair Ken Ellis has also said that the current town hall is inadequate, and that the town should stop dumping money into it.

The old bank was purchased for \$250,000 this past summer after Belmont voters approved of the transaction.

Selectmen Ruth Mooney said that she is of the opinion that the bank should be torn down, and that it blocks the view of the Belmont Mill, which she called the new center of the village.

Mooney said that the bank does not fit with the aesthetic of the rest of the town, and that she is at the top of the list of people who want it torn down.

Mitchell has said that voters would have never approved the purchase of the old bank if they had known it would just be torn down instead of renovated.



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Mooney and Mitchell got into a bit of a tiff at a Selectmen meeting in early December when Mooney told Mitchell she thought it was offensive that he addressed rumors that the town is going to tear down the old bank at a previous budget committee meeting.

No decision has been made by town officials as to the fate of the old bank, and currently it is under discussion to put forth several options in a town survey to see what Belmont residents want to do with it.

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