

Press Release

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Tour Four Belmont Town Buildings on November 1st

On November 1st, the Belmont Facility Strategy Committee is hosting a tour of four key Town buildings from 3 – 4:30pm. The tour is open to the public and begins at 3pm at Belmont Town Hall, and then moves to the Bank Building, Belmont Mill and at 4pm the Police Station. This tour was set up in response to interest expressed on October 11th at a Open House and Listening Session on future use of Belmont's Town buildings. There was a high level of interest in these four buildings, so the tour provides an opportunity for the community to see some of the issues and opportunities with these buildings. The Facility Strategy Committee appreciates the assistance of the Town of Belmont in offering this tour of Town buildings and its efforts to seek public involvement in this effort.

The Belmont Facility Strategy Committee is seeking further input on Town buildings. Comment forms are available at Town Hall. Feedback is requested by November 8th. The Committee has summarized the feedback they've from the community received so far. Opinions ranged widely with strongest concern about crowded conditions, need for storage and other issues at the Belmont Police Station. Based on the comments, the second highest priority was the Belmont Mill followed by Town Hall. Most participants were interested in a tour of key Town buildings. The majority also indicated support for funding study of space needs and feasibility of alternatives up to \$25,000.

Police Station – Comments focused on need for more space and storage by adding a second story to the station with other suggestions including joining the Station to the Corner meeting house, or relocating the Station to the Bank building or another building on 106. Several mentioned need for greater visibility, while others were concerned about a location on Main Street. Another mentioned massive renovation needs for security, a drive in/drive out Sally bay and an addition along with 2nd floor.

Belmont Mill – Most comments focused on the need to repair, restore and use the Mill and its historic value. One third suggested using it for Town Hall and other community services with some asking for a “less grand plan than last proposal”. Specific suggestions included using 1st floor as a Community /Senior/Youth Center, a public/private partnership with a long term lease for space devoted to town use using tax

incentives, grants, involving NH Preservation Alliance and NH Historical Society. A few indicated that nothing should be spent on the Mill and it should be sold.

Town Hall – Opinions on Town Hall varied. Most mentioned need for more space for staff and storage and concern about housing records in the basement. Some supported moving Town Hall to the Mill. Others mentioned relocating Town Hall or suggested other locations. Suggestions included the 2002 Town Hall proposal, maximizing technology for communication and document storage, and renovating 2nd floor for office space. Concern was expressed about deferred maintenance of roof and need for better management of Town assets. Some comments supported eliminating the building if Town Hall moves and using it as a park or green space, or for parking. Other suggestions were to make it a community center/museum or sell the building.

Bank Building-Strong interest in defining purpose for building. Suggestions included use as office space and/or storage such as Water/Sewer/Grounds Office, Welfare Office, Recreation Program facility, Police Station or Town Hall. There were several suggestions to improve the exterior to fit in with Village. Other suggestions included a three year plan to convert it to Town Hall, selling the building, or removing and replacing it with green space, another building or an outdoor arena.

Library – A number of comments mentioned the library's historic significance and classic architecture and the need to maintain it. Several comments supported addressing ADA requirements and adding space including more books, office and computer space. A number indicated they valued the library, but the issues at Police Station and Town Hall were a higher concern.

Other Comments:

Band Stand – Many mentioned the beautiful renovation and importance to maintain it.

Corner Meeting House – Several mentioned they value this building and its use for meeting space.

Fire Station – Several indicated support for future needs.

Public Works – Several comments indicated support for recent improvements and additional measures such as a sand shed.

Several comments were made regarding use of various buildings for a Recreation Center. It was noted that five Town buildings, the Mill, Town Hall, Corner Meeting House, the Band Stand and Bank Building are all eligible for the National Register of Historic Places because of their location in the National Register-eligible Factory Village District. The Belmont Library is already on the National Register.

If you are interested in learning more about this Facility Strategy effort or want to get involved, contact Donna Hepp at dhepp3@gmail.com to get on the mailing/email list. Information updates will be also shared on the Town website and newsletter.