

The Laconia Daily Sun

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TOUR FOUR BELMONT TOWN BUILDINGS ON NOV. 15



November 8, 2017 Written by Mike Mortensen Published in [Community Announcements](#)

BELMONT — A citizen committee studying future use of Belmont's town buildings is offering a tour of four key buildings on Wednesday, Nov. 15, if there is sufficient public interest. Reserve a place on the tour by Nov. 13 by contacting dhepp3@gmail.com or leave a message at 414-837-8976. This tour is hosted by the Belmont Facility Strategy Committee on Nov. 15 from 3–4:30 p.m. The tour is open to the public and begins at 3 p.m. at Belmont Town Hall, and then moves to the Bank Building, Belmont Mill and at 4:15 p.m. the Police Station. During an open house and listening session on Belmont's town buildings, these buildings drew the highest interest.

The Belmont Facility Strategy Committee is seeking further input on town buildings. Comment forms are available at Town Hall. Feedback is requested by Nov. 16. The committee has summarized the feedback received from the community 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 a second floor.

plan than last proposal. Specific suggestions included using the first 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 the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance and New Hampshire 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 the second-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 a 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 the 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.



An aerial view of the village of Belmont. (Courtesy photo)

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Do you have concerns about the proposed tax rewrite?

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

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