
Parking, integrity of Belmont Mill discussed at meeting

By TIM CAMERATO | Oct 03, 2014

2

BELMONT — Plans for a future parking lot and talks about the Belmont Mill's structural stability were front and center during Wednesday's Board of Selectmen meeting.

The board has been gathering with architects and construction managers every two weeks to discuss the possibility of moving town offices from Town Hall and into the Belmont Mill.

During a discussion on how to keep costs low, Keith McBey, vice president of Bonnette, Page & Stone, asked whether the mill needs a new parking lot.

Chair Ruth Mooney said additional spaces would provide handicap parking outside a future General Assistance office.

"I think what we're trying to do is provide enough parking so that the employees kind of park away from what we consider would be the main entrance to leave that available for everyday customers," Mooney said.

She added that the board probably needs to do some counting, but the area will most likely have to be paved.

Selectman Jon Pike said he sees a parking shortage in the future. He said parking that was just created to the right-hand side of the library is already being used by town employees.

Pike said parking isn't an item the board should "short change," considering the long-term plan is to make the mill area the center of town activity.

Selectman Ron Cormier said he's not sure there are many spaces to be gained. He said there are about 25 going in around the pavilion nearby. Pike said it would still be difficult to accommodate events during the workweek.

"If we're looking at the redevelopment of this area and you get people to come down here, for all the future purposes, we got to have the parking," Pike said.

Pike said he was at Sunday's dedication of the Historic Bandstand and children from the school district singing.

"What did they bring with them? They can't drive so they brought their parents," Pike said. "That's what we're trying to do is get people do come downtown, so we got to bring the cars."

He said they're trying to sell the center of Belmont, so it has to be easy to get to.

"We're going to create an epic center of this town, and that's what we're looking to do," Pike said.

PortOne Architects Principal Kelly Davis said the team will come up with a conceptual plan along with prices on the parking lot for the selectmen.

Fmr. Selectmen Mark Mooney and Donna Cilley also attended the meeting to voice their concerns about the mill’s structural integrity. McBey said the board has talked about bringing in a masonry expert to look at the mill.

“Because of the exposure that building had to fire, being left out in the elements for years and years freezing and thawing, I really question the integrity of that masonry,” Mooney said.

He said the fourth floor isn't tied into the structure of the mill, but lies on top of the third floor.

“I think it’s got to be tested before you go much further,” Mooney said. “You got to determine what the structural capabilities of that building is now and into the next 20 years, 30 years.”

Cilley said there’s has to be a structural engineering study that looks into the conditions of the building.

“If there isn't a strong comprehensive study that is going to be available for individuals to review, I really truly feel there’s going to be a tremendous amount of time, and effort, and money invested and it’s going to hit a brick wall,” Cilley said.

Davis said he will bring in a structural engineer that’s a member of his team to help look into their concerns.

2

Comments (0)

Staff Profile

<p>Tim Camerato Reporter 603-581-1967 Email Me</p>

Recent Stories by Tim Camerato

- **Firefighters recount tale of frigid rescue**
Jan 14, 2015
- **Duct catches fire at New Hampshire Ball Bearings**
Jan 14, 2015
- **Belmont operating budget down \$1.4 million**
Jan 14, 2015
- **Belmont Mill Pavilion awaits spring opening**
Jan 13, 2015
- **Gilmanton Town Hall flooded**
Jan 12, 2015

