



Set for the Season
Click here to Register today!
DIGITAL KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL SUMMER!

FREE New college building
The Laconia Daily Sun
Children's Auction taking independent path
School Board looking for historic superintendent to lead 2 schools for 1 year

Home News Local News

70 residents answer call to discuss & debate future of Belmont Mill

70 RESIDENTS ANSWER CALL TO DISCUSS & DEBATE FUTURE OF BELMONT MILL

Published Date Wednesday, 06 May 2015 02:02

BELMONT — Some new faces joined with some familiar ones Monday night for a facilitated discussion about the future of the Belmont Mill. About 70 people attended the meeting at the High School.

Where's the story?



The facilitator, Michael Castagna, was involved in both planning charrettes for the first renovation of the mill in the 1990s and the village redesign that was completed last year. He was paid by the town for his services.

While every participant had something a little different to say, the overall trends could be broken down into two categories, those, representing a minority and identifying themselves primarily as new to Belmont, who wanted to tear down the mill and those, who were in the majority, who wanted to save it.

"It's a health hazard," said one man named Joe who suggested giving it to the Fire Department and letting them "burn it to the ground."

"The mill is the gem of Belmont Village," countered Donna Hepp, a vocal proponent of saving it but an equally vocal opponent of converting in to town offices in one fell swoop. She thinks the restoration could be done over phases, an idea many liked.

What nobody can agree on is exactly what to do with the building, when it should be done, and how much should be spent to do it.

HotSpring Portable Spas
HOT TUB EVENT!

Oil Heat
Clean | Reliable | Local
CLICK HERE to learn the benefits of heating with oil in New Hampshire.



Sponsored by the National Oilheat Research Alliance

PLYMOUTH OFFICE
NEW EXPANDED HOURS & SERVICES!
Get an Appointment within one week!
CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS
LACONIA EYE & LASER CENTER
Andrew Garfinkle, MD, PhD • Patrick Mallin, OD
And Welcoming Richard Talkington, OD
607 Tenney Mountain Hwy • 536-2744



Do you dream of remodeling your home?

A home equity loan could make it happen.

Consolidate debt, pay tuition, remodel your home, endless possibilities...

[Click here for details.](#)



Escape from the Ordinary®
SHOP NOW ►

The discussion was prompted by the nearly 4-to-1 defeat of a warrant article that proposed spending \$3.4-million, with 2.9-million to be borrowed, for the restoration of the mill and its conversion to town offices.

Few in the crowd Monday supported that option, though a number of people thought that the Department of Recreation could expand some of its activities to additional space in the mill.

One new idea that came to the fore was the possibility of a public-private partnership with many suggesting LRGHealthcare of Laconia as the likely partner.

The third floor is entirely occupied by the hospital company-owned Belknap Family Health Care which, according to statements made by unsubstantiated sources, wants to stay in Belmont but is looking for additional space.

Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin acknowledged at selectman's meeting earlier this spring that there have been very informal and non-committal discussions between her and LRGHealthcare. At the time, a spokeswoman from the hospital declined to confirm them saying only that it was looking at a number of options for Belknap Family Health Care.

All agreed Monday night that it would be sad if the doctor's offices left Belmont Village.

Although the mill was supposed to be the only topic, many saw the discussion as a way to talk about all of the town buildings in the immediate village area, including the former Northway Bank and the current town hall.

Current town hall, according to many town employees, has its challenges, including a partial dirt cellar, its small size, and an second floor that is unusable because of a lack of elevator required by the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Many of those who spoke were under the impression the bank was purchased for town offices although history, including prior news articles and selectmen minutes, indicated the town wanted it because it felt it was a key piece of property located in an important section of town.

Former Selectmen Donna Cilley pointed out that there never was any intent to move the town offices there because it is too small.

Others pointed out that although the fourth floor of the mill is unusable, the remainder of the building is structurally sound, though the "envelope" or the exterior needs some brick work.

Castagna drew the conclusion that people didn't have enough information when they went to the polls in March and defeated the article converting the mill to town offices.

Castagna plans on returning with some conclusions, however what Selectman Jon Pike said he's like to see is more townspeople being involved during the next round of planning so there is some consensus and more widely known and understood plans before voters go to the polls the next time.

What do you think?

While sleeping, do you like the end of your top sheet tucked in?

- Yes, of course
- No, I like it untucked
- I don't use a top sheet

ADVERTISEMENT

AdChoices

One Question Site Survey
IT TAKES ONLY SECONDS TO ANSWER BELOW

How interested are you in purchasing Kraft Singles Cheese the next time you go grocery shopping?
SELECT ONE ANSWER

Strongly interested

Somewhat interested

No effect on my interest

Not interested

Do not purchase products in this category

POWERED BY VIZU
SAFE & ANONYMOUS

Be the first of your friends to like this.