

County Will Aid Belmont's Quest To Restore Mill

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BELMONT -- The Belknap County Commissioners last week agreed to assist the town of **Belmont** in its quest to obtain \$1 million in grants for rehabilitation of the historic **Belmont** Mill.

The commissioners have scheduled a public hearing for July 9 at 7 p.m. on an application for a \$300,000 community development block grant for the mill restoration project.

Belmont is applying for a \$700,000 grant for the mill rehabilitation project, twice the amount usually awarded to communities of comparable size.

Eliza Leadbeater, executive director of the Belknap County Economic Development Council, expressed doubt the full amount would be awarded to the town and told **Belmont** selectmen they should be prepared to apply for an economic development loan.

Selectman David Mika said the town is hoping to fund the project entirely with grants.

The town hopes to turn the fire-damaged 1833 mill into a center for social services such as day care and senior citizen activities.

It has been estimated it will cost \$1 million to restore the mill, which nearly fell to the wrecking ball last fall when selectmen had other portions of the fire-damaged complex torn down.

But a group led by Wallace Rhodes, president of the **Belmont** Historical Society, obtained a court injunction to prevent further demolition activities.

Voters in March agreed to give supporters of the Save the **Belmont** Mill organization a year in which to come up with funding sources to save the mill.