

## **Belmont Awaits Ruling On Mill Site Injunction**

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**BELMONT** -- Town officials who want to tear down the fire-damaged **Belmont** Mill and a group of citizens who are trying to save the mill, which was built in 1833 and is featured on the town seal, are both waiting for a ruling on a request for an injunction to prevent the demolition.

Belknap County Superior Court Judge Larry Smukler last week granted a 10- day restraining order sought by the mill preservation group and ruled that selectmen may not use \$100,000 appropriated for restoration and renovation of the mill at this year's town meeting to tear the mill down. Portions of the fire-damaged complex have already been torn down and only the main four-story building remains intact. Selectmen have maintained that they have the authority to tear down the building, and Smukler is expected to rule on that issue this week.

Wallace Rhodes, president of the **Belmont** Historical Society and spokesman for the group trying to preserve the mill, said the group would like to see the building preserved and perhaps even used as part of a senior housing project selectmen are trying to have switched from Shaker Road to the mill complex site.

Selectmen had also tried to intervene in a suit brought by abutters to the 4.6- acre Shaker Road site contesting the planning board's conditional approval, but that motion was also denied by the court. The board has maintained that Shaker Road site of the 40-unit \$2.4 million senior housing project is too small and that there are traffic safety problems which will cost the Belknap-Merrimack County Community Action Program, developers of the project, hundreds of thousands of dollars more than it has estimated. CAP officials say they have already put \$100,000 into the Shaker Road site and question the environmental soundness of the mill site.

But Mark Mooney, chairman of the board of selectmen, has maintained that the site does not have environmental problems. He said that an underground fuel storage tank which was discovered last week at the **Belmont** Mill site will be removed and that there is no evidence of any fuel spill or contamination.