

Belmont chooses contractor for Winni Trail

By TIM CAMERATO | Sep 17, 2015

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TIM CAMERATO/CITIZEN

THIS CROSSING of the Tioga River behind the Belmont Mill will soon become home to a 50-foot section of covered bridge as part of the new Riverwalk.

BELMONT — Selectman Chair Ruth Mooney formally signed paperwork on Monday, awarding Nelson Communications Services, Inc. a contract to build Belmont's Winni Trail.

The Center Conway company was one of three contractors who completed bids in August to construct the 1.7 mile path from the Laconia town line on Route 3 through wooded land to Osborne's Agway.

Although Nelson came in with a low bid of \$726,278, their offer was still \$69,418 over the project's budget. The town set aside \$755,872 from federal funds, grants, town money and independent donors to complete the trail but \$99,012 of that was slated to be used for construction oversight.

Land Use Technician Richard Ball said he contacted the state Department of Transportation after opening bids and the agency offered to increase funding to keep the project alive. That was under the condition that the town provide a 20 percent match.

The town's \$13,883.60 share is to be taken from a capital reserve fund that was once used to hold money for a second phase of the project. Ball said the appropriations also had to be approved by the Federal Highway Administration.

“That's one of the things that took so long between the bid opening and when it was awarded,” he

said.

Nelson Communications now needs to obtain a performance bond and provide the town with proper insurance information. Once that's completed, the town will sit down with the contractors for a preconstruction meeting.

Ball said he's now hoping that by October there will be shovels in the ground.

The Winni Trail isn't the only construction project to benefit residents this fall. People can also expect to see strides made on the village's Riverwalk.

Belmont resident Woodbury Fogg is one of the project's planners and volunteers. He said volunteers will soon place one concrete bearing pad on each bank of the Tioga River behind the Belmont Mill.

The pads will eventually sit beneath a covered bridge purchased for \$1 from the city of Dover in 2013. Designed by H.E. Bergeron, of North Conway, the 150-foot bridge was erected in the 2000s before being discontinued and moved to Belmont.

On arrival, it was split into three pieces. One 50-foot span will cross the Tioga behind the mill, while two others will be combined to cross the river where a former railroad bridge once stood.

Fogg said an ADA compliant trail from the mill to the bridge site will be constructed this fall and, when volunteer Mark Roberts has time, he'll set the first 50-foot section in place.

The town Public Works Department has also put gravel down to create a drivable slope that will enable trucks carrying the bridge to get in and off of Route 140. The area will also act as a parking lot for people to access the Riverwalk.

Over the next few years, Fogg said gravel will be laid on the railroad bed donated by Dick Persons. When more money is available, volunteers will also place the other two bridge sections, completing the trail from the mill, across the river, along the bed near Great Brook Village and ending on South Road.

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