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Monday, September 23, 2002



Belmont awaits preliminary designs for new town hall

By GEOFF CUNNINGHAM Jr.

Staff Writer

BELMONT — After consulting with an architect for more than two months, the Town Hall Study Committee is set to receive schematic renderings detailing alternative ideas for a new town hall.

Town officials are looking to build a 8,500-10,000 square foot structure on some seven acres of town-owned land next to the Belmont Mill.

The Town Hall Study Committee is made up of Town Administrator Donald McLelland Sr., Budget Committee Chair Ron Mitchell, Town Planner Candace Daigle, Town Land-Use Technician Rick Ball and Budget Committee Member and local contractor Rod Pearl.

The committee has been meeting with Architect Patricia Sherman of Greiner Hallé Ltd. to determine what the town requires in a building and how it could be sited on the property.

The architectural firm was hired by the town in July after concerns arose about the adequacy of the current town hall. Town officials say that due to a lack of space and deteriorating physical condition, the present town hall is quickly reaching the end of its lifespan as a suitable home for the municipal offices.

After meeting with Sherman on a number of occasions to discuss ideas for a new building, the Town Hall Study Committee is now awaiting options for what could be put on the property.

McLelland said that the committee is expecting to be presented three different renderings sometime in early October.

While costs and specifics have yet to be determined, he said that the committee is looking at a two-story structure that could accommodate the town's needs for the next 15-20 years.

Discussions between the architects and study panel have emphasized the need for the proposed building to fit the architectural character of the town.

"We have given them several ideas concerning what we would like to see. They have been looking at the best way to use the property, while still complimenting the mill and village area," explained McLelland.

McLelland said that space, storage, appearance, parking and possible future expansion are all items that have been discussed in talking about the building.

The committee and architect have also been looking at ways to save money on the building, while still having it meet the needs of the town.

Although the project remains in an investigatory stage as of now, the goal is to bring a town hall proposal to voters at this March's town meeting.

"It is our intent to try and put this on the warrant," said McLelland.

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