

### **New Town Hall Study Committee 2003-4 Update**

Selectmen named a newly comprised "Town Hall Study Committee" (THSC) on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003. Committee members are all residents, and actively involved in local efforts including Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Cemetery, Library, Recreation, Budget and Master Plan committees – among others.

The working volunteer group remains pledged to exploring all alternatives for town office/municipal needs, and identifying innovative sources for grant funds and technical assistance. Research and fact-finding were the emphasis for the first six months. Committee efforts began with gathering Belmont population facts. The nearly 7000 population reported in the 2000 US Census - is projected to possibly reach 9400 - by the year 2025. (Projections are based on the Census and updated by Regional Planning Commissions and New Hampshire statewide Planning officials. For details online, see the State Data Center at [www.state.nh.us/osp/sdc/sdc.html](http://www.state.nh.us/osp/sdc/sdc.html) )

Among other tasks completed in 2003 were a walk-through of current Town Hall offices, second floor – and consultation with PlanNH leadership. For our newcomers, PlanNH is the New Hampshire professional team of architects, designers, engineers and planners that guided 1996 Belmont Mill design and preservation feasibility discussions with Belmont citizens. The Town Hall Study Committee was also consulted regarding support for possible purchase of 147 Main Street property for Town office use and made no recommendation.

Options continue to be researched, reviewed and discussed. Work currently in progress includes space need comparisons with other communities of similar population/growth and government service operations. Possibilities under study include all choices from usage of existing town-owned facilities and properties, renovation, adaptive reuse and newly designed construction. The committee expects to complete its work in 2004 and will continue to provide periodic updates.

Respectfully submitted by **Ken Knowlton, Chairman**

January 22, 2004

Appointed Committee Members

**Ken Ellis**

**Linda Frawley**

**Ken Knowlton**

**Jeff Marden**

**Ron Mitchell\***

**David Morse**

**Norma Patten**

**Nikki Wheeler\***

\*joined after formation

**(written for the Belmont Better Times & published Fall 2003)**

**Town Hall Study Committee: Focused on Facts & Options**  
By Norma Patten

A newly comprised "Town Hall Study Committee" was appointed by Belmont Selectmen on March 5<sup>th</sup>. First proposed by Budget Committee member Ken Knowlton in February, the group includes: Ken Ellis, Linda Frawley, Jeff Marden, Ron Mitchell, Dave Morse, Norma Patten, Nikki Wheeler and Knowlton as Chairman. Doralyn Harper is Selectman's representative.

Committee members are all residents, and involved in local efforts including Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Library, Recreation, Budget and Master Plan committees.

The working volunteer group, according to Chairman Knowlton, is pledged to "fully explore all alternatives and available options for town office/municipal needs." As research, fact-finding and comparisons progress, both alternatives and costs will be presented for public information, discussion and to aid future decisions. Current committee goal is Spring 2004 for study completion.

Wide-ranging committee efforts started with gathering Belmont population facts. The 6,718 all age population reported in the most recent US Census – is projected to possibly become 9,400 by the year 2025. (Projections are based on the Census and updated by Regional Planning Commissions and New Hampshire statewide Planning officials. For details online, see the State Data Center at [www.state.nh.us/osp/sdc/sdc.html](http://www.state.nh.us/osp/sdc/sdc.html) )

To date, some seven working and discussion sessions have been scheduled, including a walk-through of current Town Hall offices, second floor – and consultation with PlanNH principals. PlanNH is the New Hampshire professional team of engineers, architects, designers and planners that guided 1996 Belmont Mill design and preservation feasibility discussions, with local citizens .

According to Knowlton, "Many possibilities have already been suggested, and we are hopefully going to develop even more. Most importantly, I hope we are able to find the facts proving space and building needs, and offer innovative solutions."

"It's still very early in the process and our study," he explains. The committee welcomes comments and information. Besides Town Hall, ongoing research, information and minutes are available in the Belmont Library.

**(Editors note: Norma Patten is a Belmont native and currently serves as a returning member of the Land Use/ZBA and as a Cemetery trustee.)**