Belmont revitalization project steams ahead

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CHRIS MULLEAVEY, P.E., from Hoyle, Tanner and Associates talks during Wednesday evening’s public information meeting about the Belmont Village revitalization project. HARRISON HAAS/CITIZEN

BELMONT — The revitalized vision of Belmont Village is coming closer to reality, as engineers begin to close in on a plan that would start a project that has been in the making for more than a year.

A small group of residents came out on Wednesday evening to the second public information meeting hosted by the Village Revitalization Committee to receive input on the first phase of the revitalization plan.

Present during the meeting were engineers Chris Mulleavey and Bill Davidson of Hoyle, Tanner and Associates, along with Michael Castagna of Castagna Consulting Group to give an update on the plan.

The town held a charrette during the summer of 2010, which brought a group of professionals into town to brainstorm ways to revamp the downtown area. A public hearing in December was held to begin planning the first phase of making these revitalization projects a reality.

“As it stands right now, we’re still planning on advertising this first phrase of the project [and putting it] out to bid in April,” said Mulleavey. “We’ve presented several concepts for the downtown village area and will hold another meeting to make the final touches.”

A third and final meeting will be held at the end of March, when a final plan will be presented.

On Wednesday evening, the committee was shown a design of the village, which adds parking near the public library by adding a Mill Street extension to the north of the library, which in turn would close off the north section of Mill Street, located just south of the library.

“In modifying Main Street, we want to provide as much green space as possible,” said Mulleavey.

Engineers for the project plan to research ways to make the intersection of Main Street and Route 140 more driver-friendly. One idea is to see if it’s feasible to place stop signs along Main Street to allow Route 140 to flow without stopping.

The current proposal calls for turning Center Street into a one-way, with traffic flowing onto Main Street. Along Fuller Street and Sargent Street, engineers added sidewalks and various green spaces.

“We’re likely going to have to meet with the committee to narrow down a number of items,” he said. “At the end of March, we’ll hold the third and final public meeting, where we’ll hopefully have answers to the various questions.”
It was also discussed about having a common theme of street-scrape items — i.e. trash cans, banners, building/landscape materials — incorporated through the village area to provide continuity throughout.

“We are chasing some funding for the project at this point,” said Mulleavey. “We hope to hear back, we are moving forward.”

Relative to the project, the town has applied for $3.26 million in funds through the Transportation, Community and System Preservation Program to assist with a number of items along Main Street, including road work, landscaping, sidewalks, street lighting and other infrastructure. This grant was completed and the town is awaiting to hear back.

The town has also applied for a Community Development Block Grant, in the amount of $202,377, for assistance with the water line replacement in the village. These funds are contingent of approval at Town Meeting and the town’s final application.

Updates on the Belmont Village Revitalization Project can be found online at www.BelmontNHVillage.org. Anyone wishing to give input on the proposed plan can visit the website for contact information or call Town Hall at 267-8300.