

# Heritage Commission News

## Bandstand Restoration Project: Momentum & Mysteries



Work on the 1908 historic Belmont Bandstand, begun in earnest October 1 last year with stabilization and repairs by restoration contractor JR Graton, continued in May, with a \$15,000 challenge grant from the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program [www.lchip.org](http://www.lchip.org) John Thompson and crew from JLT Painting, carefully prepared old and new surfaces, following the paint study of architectural conservator Brian Powell.



Field work with a 20X binocular microscope found evidence of original colors, followed by laboratory time, and “light bleached” under fluorescent light to reverse the darkening and yellowing of linseed oil binder components confirmed the hues, and Powell matched them with a chromameter to currently available commercial paint lines.



Colors are now restored as close as today’s science allows and feature a main paint of dark, blackish green, accent of red showcasing the decorative detail work on inner brackets, upper spindle bands, scallop-cut skirt, molding, structural posts, and the horizontal trim board over lattice-work. Thompson used Sherwin Williams “Emerald” paint and their Laconia store donated a sizable product discount to support the project.



Heritage Commission Chairman Linda Frawley, says the current restoration benefited hugely from pioneering efforts of the late Mrs. Whitman Ides to protect and repair the structure in the 19070s, the care of builder Neil Whitcher who replicated the first roof replacement and balusters, following the original design, Selectmen of that era and Town Staff, including Alan MacRae and Romeo Clairmont, among others. “We also owe a debt of gratitude to architectural historian David Ruell of Ashland and former State Architectural Historian James Garvin, now affiliated with Plymouth State University. Their research, preservation and maintenance of Mrs. Ides files and correspondence helped solve a 25 year mystery about when the Bandstand was built.” While the new roof reproduction is underway this summer, the Selectmen-appointed committee hopes to secure funding for the third phase, full updating of electrical and complete in September.



Heritage Commission members also include Wallace Rhodes (Vice Chairman), Shayne Duggan, Alyce Jewell, Priscilla Annis (Secretary) and Vicki Donovan, besides Ron Cormier, representing the Select Board.

*The Heritage Commission still needs photos, memories and any information from residents and neighbors about the early Bandstand days. Call any member, or 528-5667 or email [Belmonthistory@gmail.com](mailto:Belmonthistory@gmail.com) with ideas, help or leads.*



Colored photos – Linda Frawley; 1977 News article, The Citizen of Laconia – courtesy of Belmont Historical Society; Vintage Postcard – Belmont Postcard History Series – Diane M. Marden with the Belmont Historical Society