

Belmont bandstand gets new day



Belmont native Wallace Rhodes and Linda Frawley of the Belmont Heritage Commission stand in front of the town bandstand Tuesday with the drum formerly used by the town band. DAN SEUFERT/Union Leader Correspondent

Wallace Rhodes remembers when people used to drive their cars to the town bandstand each Sunday summer nights to hear the Belmont Town Band play.

By DAN SEUFERT

Union Leader Correspondent

BELMONT — Wallace Rhodes remembers when people used to drive their cars to the town bandstand each Sunday during the summer to hear the town band play.

“Back in the 1940s and ‘50s, this all-volunteer band would come and play on Sunday nights, and we’d all drive up in our big cars and honk our horns,” Rhodes said. “It was a regular Sunday night thing to do.”

The bandstand, which was built in 1908 and placed in its present position in 1927, is being moved as part of the long-planned Belmont Village revitalization, which is designed to energize the village area through improvements and renovations.

Town officials aren’t sure exactly where it will be moved to yet, said Linda Frawley of the Belmont Heritage Commission.

In the next few days it will be moved to a nearby temporary location as some of the roads around its former spot are reconfigured.

On Tuesday, before the bandstand was moved from its home for the past 85 years, the commission held a noontime gathering at the bandstand that was touted as having “memories on the menu” as well as food provided by Lakes Region Community College culinary art students.

Lots of photos showed the bandstand from decades past.

A large drum made in 1941 that was once used by the town band was on display, and several people spoke of their memories, which were much like those of Rhodes.

“To me, a bandstand is civic architecture at its best,” Frawley said. “It’s been kind of hidden here, but it really is a town treasure.”

The bandstand shows its age.

It was last renovated in 1977, and some of the exterior fencing below the main floor is broken.

Frawley said a local carpenter will be on hand when it is moved “in case there’s any crunchiness” in the structure.

The problems will be repaired when the bandstand is at its new home, she said.

As the revitalization downtown progresses, the bandstand will have a new home and, perhaps, be used by residents more often, Frawley said.

“Somehow, this beautiful bandstand survived all these years,” she said. “It’s an important feature to our town.”

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