

The paving of Belmont's Wareing Road brings some objections

By GAIL OBER, LACONIA DAILY SUN

BELMONT — Some people in town are now voicing opposition to paving Wareing Road, a project that has been planned for nearly a year and for which bids are scheduled to be opened at 1 p.m. today. The project is estimated to cost around \$300,000.

Kevin Sturgeon, who mounted a last-minute, albeit unsuccessful write-in candidacy for the selectboard during the last election, told selectmen on Monday that it makes no sense to pave the dirt road from Route 106 to the entrance to the Parent Sand and Gravel and not pave the last 0.2 of a mile nearest South Road.

He said he would prefer to see it not paved at all, but he agreed that some draining and ditching should be done. Sturgeon added that it makes no sense not to pave the last 0.2 of a mile.

Selectmen have said the purpose of adding drainage, ditching and paving to Wareing Road to the sand pit opening is to encourage Parent to use the road to access Route 106 and not go through the center of Belmont Village to reach Route 140. There are only two families that live on Wareing Road, and one is on the corner or Route 106.

In September, Town Planner Candace Daigle said Wareing Road is unable to handle the weight of the gravel trucks in its current condition, but once it is upgraded and paved Parent will be able to use it. Parent Sand and Gravel representative Adam Towne said he wants to move his truck weight scales to the entrance on Wareing Road and has agreed to use it to move his product to Route 106.

Former Selectman Donna Cilley also told selectmen on Monday that paving the road was a mistake. She said she fears that even though it is posted "no through traffic," it will become a bypass of Belmont Village for regular drivers and that traffic will increase dramatically on South Road.

"It will give them a straight shot to Tilton," she said.

But the real objection Sturgeon and Cilley have to the project is that both believe there are other roads in Belmont that warrant attention before Wareing Road. At the recent selectman's meeting, Sturgeon pointed out that in 2007, Belmont's own road priority system rated Wareing Road a "3," or the least important rating.

Cilley said Wednesday that she spent many hours at the polls on Election Day and said a lot of people she spoke with told her they were against paving Wareing Road.

"They kept saying, 'If they're going to pave Wareing Road, why can't they pave my road?'" she said.

Selectmen have said that keeping the last 0.2 of a mile unpaved will discourage regular drivers from using the road as a cut-through for regular traffic and to keep heavy truck traffic from coming through the newly reconstructed Belmont Village.