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## The Laconia Daily Sun

### Belmont residents get details of project that will improve Church Hill Road & pave sidewalk to BHS

By Michael Kitch  
Dec 07, 2010 12:30 am

BELMONT — With a few minor reservations, plans for building sidewalks along Church Hill Road between Monument Square and Belmont High School were welcomed by the dozen residents who attended the public hearing at the Corner Meeting House last night.

Bill Stack of Steve J. Smith & Associates, Inc. explained that the original project, consisting only of sidewalks, had expanded. One the one hand, the area to be improved was stretched at both ends, to include Monument Square to the south and Seavey Road to the north while on the other, in addition to sidewalk, the project includes reconstructing Church Hill Road, complete with improved drainage.

"There is no reason to invest in a sidewalk and a new road without improving the drainage," Stack said, stressing that the drainage improvements are "really necessary."

The sidewalk, lined with granite curbing, is planned for the west side of the road and designed to be five feet wide, except for around Monument Square where it is seven feet wide. Altogether the project stretches over 2,300 feet on Church Hill Road and another 500 feet around Monument Square. All the improvements, both sidewalk and drainage, are planned within the right-of-way and only a handful of utility poles would need to be relocated.

The estimated cost of the project is \$447,340, of which the sidewalk represents \$120,000.

Stack said that the monument at Monument Square would be moved five or six feet to ease the flow of traffic, adding that the opportunity would taken to raise the island housing the monument. Jim Fortin, director of public works, said that since efforts to landscape the island have been frustrated by road salt, relocating it would likely enhance its appearance.

Bob Stevens of the American Legion, which has hosted a service at the monument on Memorial Day since 1919, welcome the move, asking that the flagpole be replaced. "That flagpole is a disgrace," he said. "There is another flagpole in town. Let's improve the flagpole one way or another."

Sarah Van Tassel, who lives just south of the high school, voiced concerns about speeding and wondered if a caution light or other signal could be installed to control traffic.

Steven Booth, whose home sits on the curve at the south end of the road near Monument Square, said that because the road was not properly banked, cars rounding the bend, especially in when the the pavement was slick, frequently lost control. He said that motorists often struck the retaining wall bordering his lot and one hit the house, though it is not close to the road. Booth said that he feared for those, especially school children, who would use the sidewalk.

Stack said that reconstructing the roadway and adding granite curbing would improve safety on the curve.

On learning the cost of the project, Selectman David Morse asked "are we going to share any cost with the school?"

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"I beg your pardon," answered Chairman Ron Cormier.

Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin doubted that federal funds through the "safe routes to school" program, were still available.

NOTE: The Selectboard will propose adjustments to the sewer rate at a public hearing to be scheduled in February. Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin told the board that at \$36 a quarter, Belmont has the lowest rates in the state. She said that the rates "barely cover operating expenses," proving little for capital improvements. The Budget Committee, she continued, was "somewhat shocked" by a PowerPoint presentation on the condition of the infrastructure. Jim Fortin, director of Public Work, said that six of the eight pump stations should be rebuilt and many of the more than 480 manholes also need repair. Beaudin said that the plan is to adjust rates to sustain annual investments of \$125,000 over the next five years.