

Colchester's Weekly Town News

For the Week of April 12, 2013

Preamble: "Colchester, Vermont, located on Lake Champlain's Malletts Bay, is a diverse, civic-minded community endowed with a rich heritage of commercial, agricultural, recreational, and educational gifts. Proud of the quality of life already enjoyed here, the people of Colchester seek to build upon this foundation to ensure economic prosperity, recreational opportunity, and an entrepreneurial spirit for future generations" – Vision Statement, Heritage Project, 2012.

By no means a total representation of all the work performed by the Town the following information highlights some activities which occurred:

Burnham Memorial Library: Hannah Peacock, Assistant Director

Things are going well at the library, as Spring starts to make itself more apparent. Beginning next week, our Preschool Music program will be taking place on Wednesdays at 1 pm (instead of 12:30 pm); we will also be joined by a new musician, Mr. Chris, who'll be bringing music and fun every week. On Thursday (April 18) at 7 pm, we'll also be having a Colchester 250 event, with the video "Colchester – A Living History" and the unveiling of our new anniversary-themed library cards. You can still call us at 879-7576 to RSVP. In addition to our usual activities, library staff is currently planning programming for this summer, for kids, teens, and adults.

IT – Alice Greig – Technology Department

With Spring in the air this week our department is encouraging a little cleaning! Overflowing email boxes can cause your email program to slow down to a crawl. Take 5 minutes a day to delete some of those unneeded emails. Clear out your Spam folder. When you finish be sure to empty your "deleted items" folder - this is not a folder to save messages in. After a few 5-minute sessions you will be surprised at how much room you have given yourself in your mailbox.

Police Department –Chuck Kirker, Police Chief

Colchester police department's patrol division is continuing their efforts to reduce motor vehicle crashes and their severity in our community. Through better data collection, our two highest crash areas have been identified as US Route 2 and 7 (Roosevelt Highway) from the Winooski line to Creek Farm Road, and Vermont route 15 (College Parkway). Other hot spots include West Lakeshore Drive and Main Street.

In reviewing crash data over the years, investigators examined a tragic hit and run crash that occurred on November 16, 1969. A thirteen year old girl riding along Malletts Bay Avenue approximately .3 miles north of the Winooski line with two friends, was struck and killed by a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed. Investigation including witness statements and physical evidence shows the vehicle to be metallic silver/blue and red in color with fins on the rear. A white middle aged

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male was believed to be the driver. Anyone with information on this open investigation is asked to call Colchester police at 264-5555.

Rescue & Technical Rescue Squads - Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief

Colchester Rescue responded to 19 EMS calls, and transported 14 people to the hospital. We also provided 2 intercepts for advanced level care, to our surrounding communities.

There weren't any calls for the Technical Rescue Team this week. One of the team members attended a week long Swiftwater Rescue course that was funded by grant money. She even made the news, when they did a segment on the course!

Parks and Recreation – Glen Cuttitta, Director

In the Recreation Division, the youth lacrosse program is finally outside after two weeks of practices in the gym. Games will take place after April school break. Last Saturday, we hosted an Italian cooking class at the Senior Center. It was quite a success and I think you will start seeing more cooking classes in our program offerings. Summer camps continue to fill, so if there are any camps you are interested for your children we highly recommend registering as soon as possible so you are not left out.

Planning continues for the three races the Parks and Recreation Department will be hosting this year, the Colchester Causeway 5/15K running race, the Colchester Triathlon and the Muck it Up Adventure Race. If you are interested in volunteering or participating you can get more information at our website www.colchestervt.gov

In the Parks Division, all our seasonal park staff have been hired. Spring cleanup is happening in the parks and preparations for the spring athletic season has begun. Projects in the works for this year include fence replacement at Airport Park tennis court, Phase II of Bayside Park renovation, playground at Fort Ethan Allen and replacement of playground elements at Heritage Park.

Public Works – Bryan Osborne, Director

LED Lighting Project – The retrofit of the Town's street lighting system is now substantially complete with approximately 800 street lights converted to LED fixtures. Preliminary review of the energy costs indicate about a 50% reduction.

Meadow Drive Drainage System – All revised permit applications for this project have been submitted to both state and federal environmental regulators. The revised permits were based upon successful negotiations with the Vermont Department of Conservation and the United States Army Corp to address design concerns with the Town's repair of this drainage ditch. We are hopeful that construction will be completed in 2013.

Exit 16 sidewalk Project – The Notice to Proceed has been issued to the general Contractor for this project. Work is expected to begin within the next month and be completed around the end of July.

Capital Paving Program – The bid opening for this summer's paving program is scheduled for May 2, 2013. Roads to be paved include Creek Road, Shetland Lane, Blakely Road from Bayside to Mallets Bay Avenue, Mallets Bay Avenue from Blakely Road to Lavigne Road and Pine Lane.

Roadway Line Striping – The bid opening for this work is scheduled for April 18, 2013.

Street sweeping has begun and will continue for the next several weeks.

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Maintenance efforts continue on the Town's 13 miles of gravel roads to restore the surface for the summer months.

Planning & Zoning - Sarah Hadd, Director

The Planning Commission continues to work on the zoning for the Heineberg and Prim Road corridor and will hold another informational meeting on May 7th. The Development Review Board approved 89 additional residential units in two previously approved buildings at the rear of the lot at their meeting on April 9th. On May 14th the Select Board will hold a public hearing on "housekeeping" fixes to Chapters One, Four, Seven, and Eight to the Colchester Code of Ordinances. The only substantial ordinance change proposed to the Select Board is to Chapter Seven, the Fire Regulations, to give the Fire Chiefs and the Building Inspector broader waiver authority such as to allow the waiver of sprinkler requirements along substandard roads within hydrated areas. These proposed ordinance revisions can be found on-line in the ClerkBase section of our website under the Select Board Agenda for April 9th.

Clerk's Office – Karen Richard, Town Clerk

HAVE YOU FILED YOUR HOMESTEAD? Currently we have approximately 2100 taxpayers that have not yet filed their homestead form. This will result in a higher tax bill. If you file after April 15th there will be a late fee. April 15th is the deadline for filing your income tax; it is also the deadline for filing your homestead. The law has changed again and you MUST file your homestead annually by April 15th, if you own and occupy your home as of April 1st of the year of the filing. To file your homestead you need HS-122, Homestead Declaration and Property Tax Adjustment Claim. The HS-122 includes the form to file a property tax adjustment, and you will also need a separate form, HI-144, Household Income. Both the paper forms and electronic filing can be found online at the Vermont Department of Taxes website at : www.tax.vermont.gov. Please call our office if you have any questions re: the homestead forms at 264-5520.

We have posted a list of all taxpayers, their span number and the date we received the filing from the State Tax Dept. on our website: town clerk page, property taxes and span listing. To view the list please go to the following: <http://colchestervt.gov/TownClerk/images/SPAN04102013.pdf>

If you are a last minute filer and find that you need information from our office, such as a copy of a tax bill or a statement of the taxes you paid last year just give us a call. We can easily email you a copy of the information that you need. If you file for an extension you are still required to file the homestead form by April 15th.

Assessor – Bob Vickery, Assessor

Nothing new to report.

Finance – Joan Boehm (Asst. Town Manager/CFO)

Through 8 months of the year the General Fund has a surplus of about \$600,000. This is due to the factors which were not known when the budget was established.

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- The following positions are vacant due to various reasons, but salaries and benefit dollars are being saved until they are filled:
 - s A police officer has been deployed with the National Guard for most of the year
 - s The Community Development Director position is currently unfilled
 - s The Library Director position is temporarily vacant
 - s Administrative Assistant in Planning & Zoning
- Ambulance revenues are up when compared to last year;
- Health insurance is less than budgeted because of the cost saving plan put into place on 1/1/2013;
- Property tax collections are up over last year

This is not an indication that we will end the year with this level of surplus because not all revenues and expenses come in evenly throughout the year. It does indicate that we may not need to dip into the Fund Balance as planned in the FY 13 budget.

Town Manager's Office – Al Voegele, Town Manager

This past Tuesday, the Selectboard voted to call a Town Meeting on June 4th to ask voters if the Town should secure a bond in the amount of \$500,000 to loan to the Housing Foundation, Inc. (HFI) for the repair and reconstruction of the Windemere Mobile Home Park sewage disposal system. This bond will have no effect on the Town's tax rate because HFI will assume full payment of this debt under a formal agreement with the Town. Approval of this bond is important to the 83 families who live in this mobile home park. It is the oldest park in Town and its infrastructure of water and sewer is decrepit. HFI has independent funding to fix the water service. Unless the water and waste water services are fixed soon these families face relocation if either system fails. Voting to approve this bond is a goodwill gesture to support the common good of fellow citizens. Watch Lake Champlain Access TV, Front Page Forum and the newspapers for further information.

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