

Colchester's Weekly Town News

For the Week of August 3, 2012

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: Rubi Simon, Director

It's the beginning of August, and the library is continuing its busy summer schedule. For kids, we had campfire stories and s'mores, as well as a program with live reptiles and amphibians. There was also an intergenerational book discussion, and our monthly writing group for adults. We just received a lobby display from the Birds of Vermont Museum about owls; next Tuesday (8/7), they'll be presenting a program on the birds and their habitats. Finally, the Farmers' Market continued successfully again this week.

IT – Alice Greig – Technology Department

Nothing new to report.

Police Department –Chuck Kirker, Police Chief

Colchester Police assisted Parks and Recreation with the annual Colchester Triathlon this past Sunday. We appreciate the patience shown by motorists who were delayed at intersections around Malletts Bay. CPD Administration, Supervisors, and Records staff attended training this week on new software designed to assist in scheduling public safety personnel and payroll records.

Rescue & Technical Rescue Squads - Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief

Colchester Rescue responded to 21 emergency calls, and turned over 2 calls. Of the 23 responses, 18 people were transported to the hospital.

Colchester Technical Rescue did not have any calls this week. However, both Rescue and Tech provided standby coverage for the Colchester Triathlon.

For further information or comment, please call June Campbell at 264-5509.

Parks and Recreation – Glen Cuttitta, Director

On Sunday, July 29th we held the 28th Annual Colchester Triathlon. The day went great and all involved enjoyed the race. We would like to send out special thanks to all the volunteers, staff, spectators and participants who make this event so special. If you are interested in participating, registration for next year's race starts in March.

Another Colchester tradition is the 6th Annual Bill Kohlasch Wiffleball tournament. We are still accepting registrations. For more information check out our website at www.colchestervt.gov

Summer Concerts started last Thursday but the rainy weather led us to cancel Peter Miles. On August 2nd, the Chad Hollister Band will be joining us for what should be a great night of music. As you may be aware funding for the summer concerts was cut out of this year's budget and we are thankful that the following businesses are sponsoring this concert... **Winooski Insurance, Berlin Optical Expressions, ColchesterVermontHomes.com, Jack & Grill and Mazza's General Store.** Thank you for your support.

Just a reminder if you missed last week's column that the Colchester Causeway will be closed for the next 14 weeks starting on July 30- Nov 9th.

Public Works – Bryan Osborne, Director

Conducted pre-construction meeting for the East Road Depot Road Intersection project with the general contractor, design engineer, utility companies, the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Town's emergency service agencies. The closure of East Road at Depot will begin August 13, 2012 and extend to November 9, 2012.

Held a public bid opening for the LED lighting project. Bid results were within projected project budgets. Retrofitting of existing Town street lights is expected to begin within the next 30-45 days. The project will significantly reduce the Town's carbon foot print and result in significant cost saving as well.

Met with the State Wetlands Office to assess potential wetland impacts associated with the Town's repair of the Meadow Drive drainage ditch which has been identified as a damage site under the 2011 spring Federal Declaration.

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Planning & Zoning - Sarah Hadd, Director

Last week there was an update on switching the Development Review Board to tablets from paper packets and subsequently a concern raised about the cost. The Planning & Zoning Department staffs this board and can perhaps speak to these concerns. For each DRB meeting our department produces substantial paper packets for various boards that involves over \$150 in staff time in copying and collating as well as paper and copier usage. The return on investment for the tablets purchased is expected therefore to be a little over one year. The Town's computer policy prohibits all devices from personal use and these tablets will be locked down accordingly. We hope to learn from the DRB's use of the tablets and may make changes accordingly prior to using such technology with other boards.

We appreciate such feedback and welcome input as we begin to develop our FY14 budget. As permitting picks up and fiscal times remain tight, we will continue to look for efficiencies especially with technology. Should you have any questions regarding our current budget or allocation of resources, please visit the Town website for the Town Budget (under Finance Dept.) or our website for our annual work program.

Clerk's Office – Karen Richard, Town Clerk

Taxes are Due- Taxes are due on Wednesday, August 15th. Please mark your calendars. Last year they were due on August 22nd due to the reappraisal causing a delay in mailing the bills. We are back on schedule with an August 15th deadline. If you have not received your bill please call the office (802) 264-5520. If you have applied for a credit to your bill from the State Tax Department, be sure to check your bill to see if the credit has been reflected. The deadline for applying for a credit is September 4th.

Election note: Early voting is available in the office. Please stop by at your convenience. You can consider multi-tasking: pay your taxes and vote in the office at the same time. We look forward to seeing you!

Assessor – Bob Vickery, Assessor

The Assessor's office has been busy over the last couple of months preparing information for appeals of the Board of Civil Authority's 2011 decisions to the State Appraiser and Superior Court. We are also working on assigning E-911 addresses to the new buildings being built this spring and summer.

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

As previously mentioned, budget surveys were sent to a random sample of voters in the Town. They went out last week and we have already received 165 responses. The information we receive will be important to help us determine how best to put together the FY 14 budget. If you received a survey, please return it to us by August 10. It is important for us to receive as many replies as possible. Once we have received all the random sample responses, we will put the survey on line for anyone else who would like to weigh in about the FY 14 budget.

Town Manager's Office – Al Voegele, Town Manager

As part of its economic development policy the Town offers support to developers and businesses negatively impacted by arbitrary interpretation of Act 250's criteria. A recent example the District #4 Commission which has jurisdiction over most of Colchester's development sent letters to many businesses in the Exit 16 corridor that they did not have lighting permits for its illuminated signs and the lights needed to be turned off or face significant fines. The Residence Inn by Marriot decided to appeal that order to the Environmental Court because the Commission refused to permit the lighting of flags on poles to the entrance of the hotel nor allow a lighted marquee at the top of the hotel. The Town participated with the Hotel in its appeal to the Environmental Court. On Friday, July 27, 2012, the Court ordered the District #4 Commission to issue a permit to the hotel for its lighting. This decision will provide an avenue for other businesses to "relight" their signs. Advertising a business' location is an important part of economic sustainability. The Town supports "common sense" application of regulatory rules and will continue to help businesses successfully locate, maintain and grow their businesses in Colchester.

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