

Colchester's Weekly Town News

For the Week of December 14, 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

If you've been to the library recently, you'll have noticed that our gingerbread house contest is up and running, with a variety of interesting and tasty (looking) entries. Voting will begin next week, so be sure to stop by and make your opinion known. On Tuesday, we'll have our last Holiday Story Time (at 10:30 am), and on Wednesday we'll have Preschool Music (12:30 pm) and Pajama Story Time (6:30 pm). In terms of scheduling, the library will be closed on Tuesday from 11:45 am to 2 pm, and on Saturday (Dec. 22), Monday (Dec. 24), and Tuesday (Dec. 25); we apologize for any inconvenience. Finally, though many of you may have already heard, our director Rubi Simon will be leaving the library in January. We would like to thank Rubi for her leadership and hard work, and we wish her the best of luck at her new position.

IT – Alice Greig – Technology Department

Nothing new to report.

Police Department –Chuck Kirker, Police Chief

Nothing new to report.

Rescue & Technical Rescue Squads - Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief

Rescue had 19 calls this week, and transported 12 people to the hospital. This week also wrapped up a 4 week CPR/ First Aid session taught at the Middle School, by our Outreach Coordinator, Jamie.

Tech Rescue was called in to assist CPD with the search of a missing person. However, the individual was found just as the Tech members arrived on scene.

Parks and Recreation – Glen Cuttitta, Director

In the Recreation Division the Winter/Spring Program Guide should be arriving in your mailboxes this week. With that completed we have been entering all the codes and programs into our program software and making sure that the online registration is ready to go. Youth Basketball has one more week before the holiday break and then when the kids return to school in January the game schedule

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will start up. We have been interviewing officials to referee the games. Planning is now starting for Spring and Summer camps and programs.

We are still recruiting volunteers for the 30th Colchester Winter Carnival. If you are interested please call 264-5640.

Public Works – Bryan Osborne, Director

An engineering services contract has been awarded to Krebs and Lansing of Colchester to perform the design of a new sidewalk along River Road. There were a total of seven (7) engineering firms who responded to the RFP and submitted proposals for the work. Absent any complications with right-of-way acquisition, permitting or utility relocation, we hope to have this project under construction in summer of 2014.

Attended a briefing meeting in Burlington on the newly released MS4 Storm Water Permit. The briefing was provided by staff from the State DEC, including Commissioner Mears. With approximately 50 local officials and other interested parties from around the state in attendance, this was the first opportunity we have had to discuss the newly issued permit with the state, and have a dialogue with them regarding the requirements contained within the permit. Although the permit contains additional requirements that will translate into additional costs to the Town of Colchester, I remain optimistic over the apparent willingness of Commissioner Mears to work with the MS4 communities on how best to address the new requirements under the revised permit.

Met with VTrans in Montpelier to review and discuss our current design efforts associated with the reconstruction of the Severance Corners intersection. With VTrans expected to assume the design and management responsibility of this project through the Circ. Alternatives process, our efforts are now being closely coordinated with VTrans to ensure an orderly and efficient transfer of managerial oversight and responsibility.

VTrans has been onsite in the Town offices for the past two days conducting property owner meetings with those properties that are expected to be impacted by the reconstruction of the Exit 16 interchange. As a Circ. Alternatives project, this project is expected to advance to construction in 2-3 years.

Met with VTrans to review their final report regarding the overall safety of the Clay Point Road and US Rt. 2 intersection. Several improvement options have been proposed including improved signage as well as a dedicated left turn lane. In addition to supporting these recommendations, we will also be pursuing the possibility of having the state remove the limited access designation for this roadway, thereby improving the chances of reducing the speed limit.

Planning & Zoning - Sarah Hadd, Director

With low interest rates, the Planning and Zoning Department has been busy providing “Certificates of Compliance” for sales and refinancing. Generally banks require that a property be certified as in compliance with local zoning prior to the closing to ensure that there is not a cloud on the property’s title. The department pulls the file and reviews it against other known information such as the Assessor’s property record card to evaluate if work was done without permits, if all permits were closed out with proper inspections, and if the property is otherwise conforming to local zoning. Sometimes this

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may require that the building inspector conduct a site visit. For these reasons we ask that requests for these compliance letters be made at least two weeks prior to the closing.

Clerk's Office – Karen Richard, Town Clerk

The Clerk's office assisted Fire District No. 1 with their bond vote on December 4th. We provided the election officials for the Australian ballot vote. We are happy to report that the bond vote passed. Fire District No. 1 is a municipality that provides water to St. Michael's College and the area surrounding the college.

If you are looking for a Christmas idea, please consider purchasing a Colchester calendar or a decal that are being sold in our office to benefit Celebrate Colchester, the 250th anniversary celebration events. For more information see the website, www.colchester250.org.

Assessor – Bob Vickery, Assessor

The reorganizing of the Property Record Cards is nearly complete. This has been a large project and we are looking forward to an efficient filing system.

We are anticipating receiving the yearly State Equalization Study this month. The Equalization Study calculates the Town's Common Level of Assessment (CLA). Once the Town receives the study we will review it and a recommendation will be made on whether the Town should accept the State's finding or whether we should seek reconsideration.

The preparations for the 2013 Grand List is ongoing. We have now created a "working" GL in the computer appraisal software. The creation of a working GL in the computer appraisal software enables us to make changes to the 2013 GL without changing the 2012 "static" or "as billed" GL. It also gives us the ability to track changes using the appraisal software in a property's data as well as in the cost tables from year to year.

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

FY 14 Municipal Tax Increases

On Tuesday, 12/11, I presented to the Select Board and citizens information about the FY 14 Budget. The assessed value of the average residence in town is \$280,000. The municipal portion of the tax bill for an average residence would be \$1,590 in FY 14. This is \$42 more than FY 13 or 81 cents per week. The breakdown of this tax bill is as follows:

38%	Public Safety
17%	Public Works
12%	Many small departments combined
11%	Capital Plans (Transportation, Equipment, Parks, Technology)
9%	Parks, Recreation, Library
7%	Planning & Zoning and Town Clerk
6%	Debt Service

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Town Manager's Office – Al Voegele, Town Manager

The Senior Citizens (group) who met for years at the “Senior Center” in Bayside Park disbanded due to advancing old age and infirmities of old age. As a group they had been together as a club and friends for well over 30 plus years. As I understand events, it was through their efforts and money that two buildings on the park property when it was acquired by the Town were moved together to create the Senior Center.

Over the years the club developed a surplus of funds. In disbanding the last active members of the group decided to donate these funds to local charities: The Colchester Food Shelf, PACE, The Good Samaritans and the FAHC Children’s Hospital. On behalf of these Senior Citizens the Town has received some very heartwarming letters of appreciation and thankfulness.

Here is another example of one group of citizens with unique social needs of friendship recognizing the differing needs of others. This example of compassion and caring regardless of age and all other interests and beliefs is a major facet of what our forefathers and mothers, I think, envisioned and meant by the “common good”.