

Colchester's Weekly Town News
For the Week Ending January 10, 2014

While by no means a total representation of all the work performed by the Town, the following information highlights some activities which occurred during the week ending January 10, 2014:

Town Manager's Office—Dawn Francis, Town Manager

The end of the year brought in some significant gifts to the Town of Colchester. We are thankful for the gift of flags from Mr. Quinn to replace those that Town is responsible for in many locations throughout the community. We received a substantial donation for youth programming at the Burnham Memorial Library, in memory of Susan Flatow Savage. We also received a donation to Colchester Police, Colchester Rescue, and Colchester Center Volunteer Fire Company in appreciation for service to a resident.

We have whittled the Draft FY 2015 budget down to a 2.99% tax increase. Town Meeting and FY 15 budget information is available at: <http://colchestervt.gov/Manager/TownMeeting.shtml>

For more information about the Town Manager's Office, please visit <http://colchestervt.gov/Manager/index.shtml> or call (802) 264-5509.

Economic Development Department—Kathi Walker O'Reilly, Director

Highlights of the activities of the Economic Development Department this week include the following:

- Met with the [University of Vermont's School of Engineering](#) regarding site work for students
- Met with a recreational consulting firm to learn more about their business and discuss the Logo Selection Committee and Community Center
- Conducted monthly meeting with [Colchester Community Development Corporation](#)
- Continued work on [Colchester Community Center Initiative](#); met with firms regarding possible work
- Met with [Fletcher Allen Health Care](#) regarding possible partnerships in the future
- Attended monthly department head meeting
- Continued work on the logo/branding campaign
- Continued working on building vacancies throughout the town
- Continued review of proposed Exit 16 landscape plans
- Worked with [Leadership Champlain](#) on the town residential guide
- Continued outreach and visitation to local businesses
- Continued working with new businesses moving into town
- Continued working with area business looking to expand

For more information about the Economic Development Department, please visit <http://www.colchestervt.gov/CommEconomicDev/index.shtml> or call (802) 264-5508.

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

Planning and Zoning Department—Sarah Hadd, Director

Highlights of the activities of the Planning and Zoning Department this week include the following:

- The [Colchester Planning Commission](#) held a public hearing on the Town Plan on January 7. The hearing was closed and action deferred until the January 21 meeting to allow for input from the [Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission \(CCRPC\)](#). The commission will also continue its evaluation of a wastewater allocation ordinance on January 21.
- The [Development Review Board \(DRB\)](#) will meet on January 22 to consider a three-lot subdivision on Middle Road, a firewood business service at 167 Macrae Road, and a final plat amendment to change the requirement of easement prior to mylar filing at 128 Foley Road.
- Building permits were issued for site work on Water Tower Circle for a 35,800 square-foot office addition to [Vermont Information Processing \(VIP\)](#), a second-story renovation to [Wendell's Furniture](#) on Hercules Drive, and an interior renovation for McGillicuddy's on the Green at Severance Corners.
- The department continues to monitor several court cases, including neighbor appeals of Costco and the [Bay Harbor Marina](#). The active zoning violation list stands at ten with two cases pending before the [Vermont Superior Court Environmental Division](#).

For more information about the Planning and Zoning Department, please visit <http://colchestervt.gov/PlanningZ/planningZHome.shtml> or call (802) 264-5600.

Public Works Department—Bryan Osborne, Director

Life After Winter Storm Gemini

Winter Storm Gemini consisted of a severe icing event with a duration of well over thirty hours. This type of a weather event creates extremely poor and dangerous driving conditions. The Department's [Snow and Ice Removal Plan](#) relies upon ten employees; it requires all ten employees to cover all routes associated with 110 miles of roadways and thirty-seven miles of sidewalks.

The department is not designed or staffed to provide around-the-clock operations. The severity and duration of Winter Storm Gemini, however, required just that. The necessary coverage was accomplished by splitting the department in half and running twelve-hour split shifts over a thirty-six-hour period. With only five trucks trying to cover 110 miles of roadways, the emphasis was placed upon keeping the arterial roadway system open; this is where the majority of the traffic exists, and it is the most critical portion of the town's transportation system to ensure the delivery of emergency services (police, fire, and rescue). The result of this was very little attention to secondary roads and no attention to sidewalks. By the end of the storm, however, when resources were available for secondary roadways and sidewalks, it was too late, and the freezing temperatures and significant icing had left the secondary roads and sidewalks covered in a thick layer of ice. A tour of surrounding communities in most of northern Vermont will illustrate that it was not a condition isolated to Colchester.

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

In the aftermath, we are likely stuck with these conditions for the remainder of the winter. In the event that we have an extended period of unseasonably warm weather, we could possibly remove much of the ice accumulation. However, this would require significant amounts of salt and fuel to accomplish. While the secondary roadways are very rough, they are quite drivable with occasional applications of sand for traction. Ultimately, we must consider this situation against the significant cost and environmental impacts of trying to remove the ice with significant salt applications.

Winter Storm Gemini cost the Town \$30,000 in salt, sand, fuel, and overtime. This is over 10 percent of the Town's snow removal budget expended on one storm. As of the first week of January and with much of the winter season remaining, the current status of the Town's snow removal budget is as follows:

Salt:	56% expended
Sand:	60% expended
Fuel:	57% expended
Overtime:	43% expended

Our total snow removal expenditures to date are 42 percent higher than what they were at this same time last year.

For more information about the Public Works Department, please visit <http://colchestervt.gov/PublicWorks/Home.shtml> or call (802) 264-5620.

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