

## **Colchester's Weekly Town News**

For the Week of December 21, 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**

We've had another busy week here at the library. We had our first Wednesday AARP Tax Assistance, with two more to follow; Saturday sessions run through Apr. 13 (call to sign-up for either). One-on-One Tutoring takes place four days a week, and there is still space, so call to sign-up. We have four story times a week (see our page for the schedule - <http://colchestervt.gov/Library/>), and our monthly Pajama Story Time is next Wednesday (Mar. 20) at 6:30 pm. The 2013-2014 Dorothy Canfield Fisher Award list has just been announced. Our discussion of “The False Prince” by Jennifer Nielsen will take place on April 3 at 6:30pm. Copies are available at the library. Our downloadable ebook and audiobook service has been getting more and more popular; check out our page at: <http://colchestervt.gov/Library/libraryDLAudio.shtml> or stop by the library to get started. Finally, the Colchester Farmers Market is accepting applications for vendors. Sign up by April 1 to take advantage of the Early Bird rate. For more information and a vendor application: <http://colchesterfarmersmarket.wordpress.com/>

### **IT – Alice Greig – Technology Department**

This week the helpdesk has been busy with a few software problems and some glitchy printers.

Installation of new software to centralize data is being installed.

Sometimes I'm asked about the difference in Compact Disks - CD, CD-r, CD+r, CD/RW. For everyday use just remember the basics. CD is a read-only CD (the type you buy that have a game, music, etc. already on it). A simple way to remember what you want when you purchase blank disks to use is that you can only write to CD-r and CD+r one time. You can't delete anything or add anything to them. CD/RW disks are re-writable. You can keep adding data to them until they are full, delete data from them and add more data. Also keep in mind that if you plan to share your CD with someone else you should record to it with a lower record speed because not everyone's CD player may be as new as yours. If you are saving important data on a CD you should check it a couple of times a year to make sure that it hasn't degraded and lost your information. The lifetime for a CD varies according to the physical quality of the disk, the drive and software that is used to record to it and the environment it is stored in. As time passes and your computer equipment gets newer and more powerful you may not be able to read the

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

CD any more. We usually think of a CD's lifetime to be 10 years but it's better to keep checking it to make sure you don't lose valuable data.

### **Police Department –Chuck Kirker, Police Chief**

Officers responded to 191 calls for service over the past week for complaints as diverse as parking issues to the investigation of an untimely death. Our patrol staff and investigators worked together on three drug cases, and several burglaries. Thirteen people were arrested this week on charges ranging from possession of heroin, to domestic assault, to driving under the influence. Our officers stopped 138 drivers this week in an effort to make our roads safer. As warmer weather takes over, driver's speeds and the severity of crashes has a tendency to increase. Please remember to drive safely and always buckle up.

### **Rescue & Technical Rescue Squads - Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief**

Colchester Rescue responded to 18 EMS calls, and transported 17 people to the hospital. While already committed to a call, we had to turn over two calls to other agencies.

Colchester Technical Rescue assisted Stowe Mountain Rescue, for the search of a lost hiker on Mt Mansfield Tuesday night. Luckily the hiker was safely located around 1:00 am.

### **Parks and Recreation – Glen Cuttitta, Director**

In the Recreation Division, we have been receiving registrations for our summer programs and many are starting to fill up. We recommend if there are programs that you are interested in having your child participate in this summer to register soon before you are left out. Youth lacrosse is almost in full swing. We have a few openings left in each age group and the deadline for registering is this Friday. Practices for Youth Lacrosse will begin on March 25<sup>th</sup>. Also, if you are thinking about a family gathering this summer at the pavilion at Bayside or Airport Park the availability is quickly shrinking. We starting taking reservations on March 1<sup>st</sup> and many weekends are already booked. Staff has been involved with the Colchester's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration planning for June 8<sup>th</sup>. The celebration is called Charter Day and will be held at Bayside Park on June 8<sup>th</sup>. The committee is still looking for volunteers for this event. If you are interested please contact the Parks and Recreation Department.

In the Parks Division, seasonal staff will be starting in the coming weeks to start preparing the parks and athletic fields for spring sports and activities. Projects that you will see happen this summer will be repairing the tennis court fence at Airport Park, creating a new water line for irrigation of the athletic fields at Airport Park to just name a few. We are hopeful that warm temps and field use happening soon but also realize that winter is not quite over.

### **Public Works – Bryan Osborne, Director**

**2013 Capital Paving Program** - Bid documents have been completed and are under review. The anticipated bid period for this program is late April.

**Exit 16 Sidewalk Sidewalk Project** - Notice of Award has been forwarded to the General Contractor. Cost proposals are expected soon for for inspection services. This project will funded with 90% state and federal funds.

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

**Fort Ethan Allen Sidewalk Project** – Continuing cost negotiations with design engineer. Consultant has been selected based upon a qualification based process as required by VTrans. This project will be funded with 81% federal funds.

**LED Lighting Project** – The project is approximately 63% complete with 500 out of 800 street lights having been converted to LED fixtures. The estimated completion time for this project is mid to late April. Approximately 10% of this project has been funded by Efficiency Vermont. The conversion is expected to provide significant energy savings to the Town in the future.

**Exit 17 Traffic Study** – Preliminary meetings have been held with consultants to identify traffic mitigation measures for Exit 17. The study and expected mitigation measures are being completed as part of the Circ. Alternatives Process and will be funded 100% with state and federal funds.

**CENTS** – As a part of the Colchester Essex Network Transportation Study, preliminary meetings have been held with consultants to identify mitigation measures for both the Severance Road and Rt. 2A corridors within Colchester. The study and expected mitigation measures are being completed as part of the Circ. Alternatives Process and will be funded 100% with state and federal funds.

#### **Water Pollution Control :**

- The annual report to the Department of Environmental Conservation is being finalized that outlines the Town's efforts to comply with the requirements of the General Permit associated with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System as required under the Clean Water Act.
- Work continues on the Town's application to seek continued coverage under the recently revised General Permit. The Department expects to expend approximately 350 staff hours preparing the application to respond to the 45 page federal permit. We anticipate that compliance to the revised permit will require significant additional spending.
- As a part of the Integrated Water Resources Management Program, a draft feasibility study has been completed for the possible formation of a storm water utility and is currently under review. The formation of such a utility is intended to better position the Town to manage the new and future requirements relating to storm water.
- The FY 14 Wastewater Operating Budget is currently under development and is expected to be completed prior to the end of March.

**Operations:** Street name signs are being replaced throughout the community with larger more reflective signs outlined in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices as published by the Federal Highway Administration.

- Grading of the Town's 13 miles of gravel roads is continuing to improve driving conditions and promote improved drainage.
- Roadside trash and litter that have accumulated over the winter months is being removed. Concentration is on high volume arterial roadways to allow Green Up Day volunteers to focus on lower volume roadways.
- Preparation of the Town's street sweepers and vacuum trucks are underway to allow the annual sweeping of over 80 miles of roadway and the cleaning of over 2000 storm water catch basins.

#### **Planning & Zoning - Sarah Hadd, Director**

The Development Review Board met and approved several projects on Wednesday evening. These projects included a new house lot off of Raymond Road and an amendment to a commercial shopping

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

plaza on the corner of Macrae and Prim Road (Dunkin Doughnuts site) to include one additional short-order restaurant. We have had several “technical review committees” over the past week. The meetings are free of charge and are an opportunity for people to bring in potential developments to the town and receive informal feedback from staff. These sit-downs have been working well to facilitate developments and alleviate uncertainties with the permitting process.

**Clerk’s Office – Karen Richard, Town Clerk**

Filing your homestead – the law has changed again and you MUST file your homestead annually by April 15<sup>th</sup>. if you own and occupy your home as of April 1<sup>st</sup> 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](http://www.tax.vermont.gov)

There are many elderly citizens that no longer need to file income tax returns, but they still must file their homestead forms. Failing to file these forms will result in a higher tax bill as you will be billed at the non-residential rate and you will not receive a credit to your tax bill. Please call our office if you have any questions re: the homestead forms at 264-5520.

**Assessor – Bob Vickery, Assessor**

Nothing to report.

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

**Municipal Budgeting and Finance Course** - Last week I mentioned that I will be offering a course in municipal budgeting and finance. I have had 4 responses so far. The course will be offered in an evening in late May and should take a couple of hours. I would love to have more participants. . If you would like to learn more about government finances please contact Joan Boehm at 264-5502 or [jboehm@colchestervt.gov](mailto:jboehm@colchestervt.gov).

**Town Manager – Al Voegele**

Nothing to report.

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