

Colchester's Weekly Town News
For the Week of November 22, 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

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

Town Manager's Office—Dawn Francis, Town Manager

The Colchester Selectboard has been reviewing a draft budget, and we expect to have a draft available for public review shortly after their final work session on December 2. A comment that has arisen is that it seems that a lot of new positions have been added by the Town over the last year. To clarify, the only new position that has been added during the current fiscal year is an Information Technology position which is being funded by cost savings in other areas; all other positions are replacements due to retirements or employees moving onto other opportunities.

As soon as the budget is finalized in two weeks, I will report out on the proposed staffing for FY'15.

Save the Date – On Monday, December 2nd at 5:45 p.m., there will be a dedication of a beautiful mosaic commemorating Colchester's 250th anniversary at the Town Hall on Blakely Road. This work of art was the brain child of Sandy Hawkes, a teacher at Colchester Middle School who oversaw its preparation on Charter Day by Colchester students and residents. A copy of Colchester's original charter was presented by the Wolcott family to the community and will also be recognized at this time. Our community has certainly had a full and exciting year of events dedicated to our 250th anniversary as a result of many residents' hard work.

Attended a monthly Chittenden County Manager's meeting in which the escalating problem of opiate addictions throughout our region is resulting in a significant number of burglaries, robberies and other crimes was described by our area police chiefs. Measures are being considered to address these issues at a regional level.

Did a site walk of the Bayside/Hazelett property owned by the Town.

As a result of 13 meetings over a 30 month process, the Circ Alternatives Task Force voted on a suite of 34 projects in the towns of Colchester, Essex and Williston with an estimated total cost of \$99 million as alternatives to the Circ Highway. Colchester will be the beneficiary of at least \$19 million in projects ranging from intersection improvements to sidewalks/multi-use paths and transit improvements.

Burnham Memorial Library—Kelly Tomaseski, Director

The Burnham Library has a range of holiday programming over the coming weeks, including the following:

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

- The library closes at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 27, and will be closed through Thursday and Friday (November 28 & 29) for Thanksgiving. We are open our usual hours on Saturday (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.).
- Our annual Christmas Tree Lighting & Caroling takes place on Sunday, December 1. Gather for crafts, songs, cocoa, cookies, and lights on the tree. At 4:00 p.m., children can make a holiday craft in the library. At approximately 4:30 p.m., we'll all sing with the Colchester Community Chorus at the Meeting House. The annual tree lighting follows outside at approximately 5:00 p.m.
- Drop off your tasty creations for our Gingerbread House Contest on December 2 or December 3. We'll display your gingerbread structure, and every entrant will be eligible for a raffled basket of goodies. Gingerbread kits are welcome, and family entries are very much encouraged. Entry forms are available at the library or on our website.
- The week of Monday, December 2 through Friday, December 6, we'll have cider and cookies available at the library, compliments of library staff.
- Holiday story times run the first three weeks of December, Mondays and Thursdays for preschoolers, and Tuesdays for toddlers (all at 10:30 a.m.).

For more information about Burnham Memorial Library's events and services, visit <http://colchestervt.gov/Library/> or call (802) 264-5660.

Economic Development—Kathi Walker O'Reilly, Director

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

- Attending the Vermont Environmental Consortium Annual Conference
- Ongoing logo contest rollout and branding campaign work
- Working with LCATV on the Town and Community Center video
- Pursuing prospects for expansion or relocation
- Working on the Community Center Initiative
- Working on December Legislative Breakfast
- Working on building vacancies throughout the town
- Working with Colchester Community Development Corporation, including standard meetings, events, and business topics that are pertinent to the community

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

Information Technology—Alice Greig, Technology Department

Highlights of the activities of the Technology Department this week include the following:

- Completing interviews for new Systems Engineer position

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- Starting new inventory of PC and server equipment
- Continuing troubleshooting of current domain server
- Scheduling installation of the new server in December
- Replacing the last Windows XP PC with Windows 7 in the Parks and Recreation Department

Police Department—Jennifer Morrison, Police Chief

- Colchester Police responded to 184 calls for service this week and stopped 47 vehicles for traffic violations. Six arrests were made during the week, including a thirty-nine-year-old male on charges of first-degree unlawful restraint, domestic assault, interference with access to emergency services, and sexual assault.
- We remind the community that the winter parking ban is now in effect. All vehicles are prohibited from parking on public roadways and parking lots nightly from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. until March 15, 2014. Please help our Public Works Department with the difficult job of keeping our streets clear by not blocking the roads at night.
- We would also like to remind motorists that cold weather often brings hazardous driving. When ice and snow are present on the roadway, please reduce speeds and increase following distances. Drivers should keep their vehicles in good mechanical condition and make sure that they are equipped for winter travel. For more winter driving tips, visit http://exchange.aaa.com>safety>roadway_safety

For more information about Colchester Police Department, please visit <http://colchestervt.gov/Police/index.shtml> or call (802) 264-5556 (non-emergency).

Rescue and Technical Rescue Squads—Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief

- Rescue responded to seventeen calls and transported eight people to the hospital.
- Colchester Technical Rescue had a quiet week.

For more information about Colchester Rescue, please visit <http://colchestervt.gov/Rescue/index.shtml> or call (802) 264-5990.

Parks and Recreation—Glen Cuttitta, Director

Highlights of the activities of the Parks and Recreation Department this week include the following:

- Youth basketball practices started on Monday.
- FEMA paperwork was completed for the Causeway and Bayside Slope projects.
- Village Park Phase IA paving will be completed in the Spring of 2014
- Bayside Park Phase II project is waiting for benches to be installed.
- New playground at Heritage Park will be installed soon.
- Planning for winter programs was conducted.

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- A new program brochure was designed.
- A software upgrade to RecTrac, WebTrac and Mobile WebTrac registration program was completed.

Bayside Activity Center for the week of November 25:

- **ACTIVITY CENTER CLOSED NOVEMBER 27, 28, and 29**
- **Monday, Wednesday, and Friday walk-in hours:** 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
- **Monday:** 10:00 a.m.—Body N Mind Mix
- **Monday:** 10:00 a.m.—Drop-In Game Time
- **Tuesday:** 9:30–11:30 am—Intermediate Watercolor
- **Tuesday:** 1:00–2:00 p.m.—Tai Chi

The following is a list of projects/work accomplished this week in the parks division of Colchester’s Parks and Recreation Department:

- General maintenance duties
- Seasonal park employees are finished work for the year

For more information about the Parks and Recreation Department, please visit <http://colchestervt.gov/Recreation/parksNRec.shtml> or call (802) 264-5640.

Planning & Zoning—Sarah Hadd, Director

- The Planning Commission met on November 19 and set January 7 as the hearing date for the draft 2014 Town Plan;
- The Development Review Board (DRB) met on November 20 and considered a CVS pharmacy at Exit 16 on the site of the old Friendly’s Restaurant. The DRB continued the application to December 11 to allow the applicant to redesign the Roosevelt Highway façade, to remove the proposed trash compactor, and to improve the aesthetics to reflect the significant gateway presence of the site in Colchester.
- The VT Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Town of Colchester in an enforcement matter (*Town of Colchester v. Andres*) that was appealed from the Environmental Division of Vermont Superior Court. The appellant converted a seasonal residence to year-round use without the proper permits or septic. While the amount of fines will be determined by the Environmental Division of Vermont Superior Court, the decision upholds Colchester’s conversion process and septic requirements.
- Asbestos removal at the Casa Romano on West Lakeshore Drive is under way with demolition to soon follow.

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

Clerk’s Office—Karen Richard, Town Clerk

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

Highlights of the activities of the Town Clerk's Office this week include the following:

- The second installment of taxes was due last week. We billed \$12,921,920.14 for this installment. The amount that went delinquent was \$318,451.57, which is 2.46 percent.
- Although our delinquency rate is low, we are still faced with bringing accounts to a tax sale. When an account has multiple years of delinquent taxes and the taxpayer has not responded to our many requests to contact us to set up a payment plan or has failed to fulfill his or her obligation to the payment plan, we have no choice but to turn the account over to an attorney for tax sale.
- On November 21, we conducted a tax sale. Initially, there were eleven properties advertised to be sold. The taxpayer is notified, as well as all of the lienholders. The properties are advertised in the paper for three consecutive weeks. During that period, we responded to many requests for information from the lienholders and the public. Two properties were paid in advance of the sale. Nine properties were sold. Most were sold for more than the taxes owed. The Town then put the additional amount into an escrow account. The delinquent taxpayer has a year to "redeem" the property. If the taxes and additional monies plus interest are not paid or "redeemed" by the taxpayer, the property will be deeded to the successful bidder.

For more information about the Town Clerk's Office,

<http://colchestervt.gov/TownClerk/townClerkHome.shtml> or call (802) 264-5520

Finance—Aaron Frank, Assistant Town Manager/CFO

Highlights of the activities of the Chief Financial Officer's Office this week include the following:

- Conducting FY'15 Budget meetings with Selectboard and related follow-up
- Reviewing collateralization agreement
- Conducting interviews for information technology position

For more information about the Finance Department, please visit

<http://colchestervt.gov/Finance/financeHome.shtml> or call (802) 264-5650.

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