

Colchester's Weekly Town News

For the Week of October 26, 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

We've had another good week here at Burnham Library, with story times, parent-child sign language classes (every Tuesday), yoga, knitters, and more. On Monday Oct. 29th, we'll have our annual Halloween Party, for kids up to age 10 - there's still time to sign-up. Next week are the monthly Intergenerational Book Discussion, Adult Writing Group, and Adult Book Discussion - call for more info. And just as a reminder, the library is open 10-8 pm on Mondays and Wednesdays, 10-6 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12-5 on Fridays, and 9-3 on Saturdays.

IT – Alice Greig – Technology Department

Nothing to report this week.

Police Department –Chuck Kirker, Police Chief

This week we continued with block training within the department. All our sworn officers are required by the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council to accrue a minimum of 25 hours of training each year in order to maintain their certification as officers. Without this mandatory training officers would face decertification by the Council and would be unable to perform their duties.

Many times during the year I run statistical reports on our Computer Aided Dispatch/Records Management System in an effort to track trends from the previous year to the current one. While the overall numbers indicate an overall increase 4/10 of 1%. I do note several worth mentioning. Last week I talked about the arrest of two individuals involved in thefts from vehicles. What I didn't say was that in both cases alert citizens were instrumental in the arrests by calling in suspicious activity in their neighborhoods. We hope that past pleas from our department to lock your vehicles plus you're working with us to report any suspicious activity is working. So far this year actual or attempted thefts from vehicles are down 38% while suspicious activity reports are up 23.5%. These are the types of numbers that clearly show working together with our officers you can make a difference.

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

Rescue & Technical Rescue Squads - Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief

Colchester Rescue responded to 23 EMS calls, and transported 16 people to the hospital.

Colchester Technical Rescue responded to Mt. Mansfield, to assist Stowe Mt. Rescue with extrication of an injured hiker.

Parks and Recreation – Glen Cuttitta, Director

The department had the first planning meeting for the 30th Colchester Winter Carnival. We currently have 5 volunteers on the committee. There is a need for more community volunteers so if you are interested please contact our department. Since it is the 30th anniversary we are planning some new and bringing back some old events and activities.

The department staff is working on a stand-alone website for the Colchester Triathlon. Great progress has been made. This coming year the Triathlon will be soliciting sponsors for the event. This would be a great opportunity for Colchester businesses to get involved with a great community event with over 400 participants.

Planning and brochure work is being done for the Winter/Spring Program Guide. If you have any skills that you would like to share or ideas for a program that you would like to see us offer please contact our department. We are excited about our new publishing software and the change to our brochure format.

The completion of the repairs to the Colchester Causeway are in site. We are anticipating within the next 2 weeks it will be open to the public. Please stay tuned to the Town of Colchester website for information related to the opening of the Causeway.

Public Works – Bryan Osborne, Director

Weather permitting, paving of East Road is scheduled for next week.

Met with VTrans to discuss the Circ. Alternatives projects currently within the planning phase. These include the intersection of Laker Lane and Blakely Road, and the intersection of Prim Road and West Lakeshore Drive.

Initiated the purchase of approximately 800 LED street lights to begin the process of converting the Town's street lighting system.

Preparatory work has been completed on a grant application to secure state and federal funds for pedestrian improvements in Colchester.

Planning & Zoning - Sarah Hadd, Director

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The Department of Planning and Zoning is pleased to announce that the Colchester Business Map is now live and linked off the Town's main website (button on the left side): www.colchestervt.gov. This map was the work of our summer intern, John Neri, who updated the old CCDC business directory and worked with Chittenden County Regional Planning to have the directory in a searchable on-line format with links to business websites. We thank CCDC for their support with this project and hope businesses and residents find the map a useful tool. In other news, the building under construction at the corner of Macrae and Prim Roads is now confirmed as a Dunkin Doughnuts drive-through with an anticipated opening after the first of the year.

Clerk's Office – Karen Richard, Town Clerk

We continue to be very busy with election preparations and early voters. There are many residents that walk in the office each day in order to vote early. We are encouraging you to do so to avoid the crowds on Election Day. It does require additional labor for the staff. We data enter the date of the request, the date that we mailed the ballot, the date that it was returned. We store the ballots in the vault until Election Day. We deliver the voted ballots to the polls, the ballots need to be checked off the checklist, envelopes opened and ballots fed through the voting machines, as time allows.

As we prepare for Election Day, November 6th, please keep in mind that the schools will be open that day, creating additional traffic. You may want to avoid early morning and 2 p.m. in the afternoon when there is extra school bus traffic if you are voting at the High School (District 9-2). If you are voting in the Village (District 9-1) please remember that your polling location has been changed to the basement of Our Lady of Grace Church.

Assessor – Bob Vickery, Assessor

The Assessor's Office is reorganizing the filing system for property records. This includes updating the Record Retentions Guidelines to conform to State recommendation, so that outdated files, correspondence, and redundant information is not taking up space. We will also be utilizing an electronic fillings system to have associated documents linked to the Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) software. This will allow us to review a property's data and any information that might help in determining the property's value all in one place. These changes will create efficiencies by consolidating data and have a better use of the limited space.

There are 4 appeals to the State Appraiser scheduled in the month of November.

The Board of Civil Authority decisions have been issued. Any changes as a result of the Board's decisions have been entered into the appraisal software and new tax bills will be mailed by the Town Clerks Office in the coming weeks.

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

The Town's outside auditing firm will be in Colchester next week to perform our yearly audit of our

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financial statements. Their job is not to express an opinion on the internal controls of the Town or to determine whether fraud exists. They use information they may obtain about our internal controls to determine the extent of their testing of transactions that occurred during the year.

Two sentences in the opinion the auditors may give sum up what their responsibility is. "An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and the significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation."

The auditor's opinion and our financial statements will be available in January for public review.

Town Manager's Office – Al Voegele, Town Manager

This week the Town's Senior Citizens Association "closed its doors" due to a dwindling number of active members. Some of these people have been attending the Senior Meetings on Tuesday mornings for over twenty years and have developed some very close and supportive relationships. As their departing gesture they have asked the Town Manager to distribute their remaining funds collected from dues to the Children's Hospital, the Colchester Food Shelf, PACE (a Colchester nonprofit serving elderly people who qualify for nursing home care but wish to remain in their own homes) and a Fanny Allen Hospital organization called the "Good Samaritans" who help elderly and disabled people with home repairs. As the youngest member of the Colchester Senior Citizens Association I am sorry the Town is losing one of its long time "institutions" of service and living memory of Town affairs.

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