

Colchester's Weekly Town News

For the Week of September 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

The Burnham Memorial Library has been busy, with the start of our story times - Preschoolers on Mondays and Thursdays, Toddlers on Tuesdays, and Drop-In on Saturdays. This week also marks the return of our Saturday hours, which are 9am-3 pm. We've added a weekly "Wellness Table" to the Farmers' Market - next week (9/19) will be a kale-themed cooking demonstration. Lastly, our tutoring program for elementary age children will be starting back up, on weekdays and Saturdays - call to sign-up!

IT – Alice Greig – Technology Department

Time was spent this week helping with the police move to their newly renovated building. Also server maintenance, work on our website and general helpdesk tasks.

Police Department –Chuck Kirker, Police Chief

The Department has spent the week vacating its temporary facility and moving into the renovated facility.

Rescue & Technical Rescue Squads - Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief

Colchester Rescue responded to 29 calls, and transported 25 people to the hospital.

Colchester Technical Rescue responded in a wooded area, at the Colchester/ Winooski/ South Burlington line, for a male stuck on the ledges. The team, with the help of Winooski Fire Department, were quickly and safely able to rescue the man.

Parks and Recreation – Glen Cuttitta, Director

The inaugural Muck it Up Adventure Race will take place this Saturday. The department has spent many hours creating and preparing for the race. We have 20 teams competing and hope that this will be the start of a very successful race that will bring visitors to Colchester. We are very thankful of the various town departments that have assisted us as well as local landowners and volunteers.

Our department has been working with Champlain Consulting Engineers to go out to bid to repair the slope at Lower Bayside Park that was damaged by the flooding last spring. Bids on the project will be

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returned by Sept 26th. Causeway renovation project continues to stay on schedule with the completion date of early November.

Public Works – Bryan Osborne, Director

The repair of the Town's drainage ditch along Meadow Drive continues to present new challenges as state and federal regulators have determined it to be necessary to secure wetlands, stream alteration, and Army Corp permits to repair the ditch which was damaged in the spring of 2011 resulting in a federal damage declaration. Approximately \$500,000 is available to the Town from FEMA for the repairs if the necessary permits can be secured.

The majority of the sub-surface utility work for the East Road Depot Road intersection project is nearing completion. Upon completion of this phase of the work, construction of the roadbed will commence.

Scoping report for the reconstruction of the Prim Road and West Lakeshore Drive intersection has been completed. This particular project is one of many under consideration as a Circ. Alternatives project. These projects are being funded by 100% federal transportation dollars.

Significant amount of staff hours were expended during cleanup efforts following the strong storm Saturday afternoon. Activities such as street sweeping, basin cleaning, clearing downed trees and repairing roadway washouts are common following these types of storms. On average, the Highway and Storm Water Divisions expend approximately 525 staff hours per year providing these types of services.

Planning & Zoning - Sarah Hadd, Director

All Vermonters should take the following actions to protect themselves from mosquito bites and risk of infection from EEE and West Nile virus:

- Limit the amount of time spent outdoors at dawn and dusk.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants outside when mosquitoes are active.
- Use [insect repellents](#) labeled as being effective against mosquitoes.
- Remove standing water around your house.

For more information go Healthvermont.gov or dial 2-1-1. Join us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

Clerk's Office – Karen Richard, Town Clerk

Election notes: The voted ballots from the August 28th primary were delivered to the Chittenden Superior Court so that they would be included in the recount requested by Annette Smith, for the governor's race on Progressive ballot. Colchester had one person vote a Progressive ballot in the 9-2 district.

The November ballots have not arrived yet, but we expect them by September 24th. Any time after that you are welcome to stop by for early voting or you can call 264-5525 and request that an absentee ballot be mailed to you.

Assessor – Bob Vickery, Assessor

The Board of Civil Authority (BCA) has heard most of the appeals for 2012 Grand List (GL), The BCA will be finishing up the hearings this month, and will be inspecting the properties over the next month. As

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soon as we receive the decisions from the BCA we will be entering into the Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) software the information from the BCA. When all the decisions are entered we will be able to finalize the GL and start entering data for the 2013 Grand List.

There are 10 appeals to the State Appraiser that have not been scheduled yet. There are 5 appeals that are scheduled in the months of September and October.

The assessor and state District Advisor will be meeting this week to review the sales that will be used in the equalization study. The equalization study will calculate the Common Level of Assessment (CLA). The CLA is very important because it will be a factor in determining the Town's Education Tax Rate, the lower the CLA the higher the tax rate. A hand full of sales with unusual circumstances can have an effect on the CLA which in turn can affect the tax rate. It is important that all the sales are reviewed and that only "arm's length" sales are included in the study to ensure that the most accurate CLA possible is used when the tax rate is calculated.

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

Did you know that the Town uses the Consumer Price Index to help determine what might happen to various expenses in the budget. The Consumer Price Index measures the rate of inflation in the economy. We use the Northeast Urban Index of smaller cities for all items. On 9/13/12, the increase for the year ended August, 2013 over the previous year was 3.11%.

We begin the budgeting process 10 months before the start of the next fiscal year and 21 months before the last month of the next fiscal year. Trying to determine that far in advance what might happen to expenses is difficult. By relying on the CPI, trends, past history and known changes we put together the budget for the next fiscal year. If we look at how our property tax rates have gone up over the past 5 years (excluding 2012 the reappraisal year) versus the average change in the CPI over the same period, we can see that the average property tax increase has been 1.80% and the average change in the CPI has been 2.94%. We have been able to keep the tax increase below the rate of inflation. There are some increase in prices that have gone up more than the rate of inflation, like health insurance and gasoline. In order to have the tax rate as low as it has been in relation to inflation, we have had to cut some expenses every year

Town Manager's Office – Al Voegele, Town Manager

This week I spent a very exciting and informative three hours attending the National Land Trust conference in Burlington. The one session I attended was with participants from Atlanta, Georgia. Their ages ranged from late twenties to fifty. This group of citizens is committed to establishing a 22 mile "green belt" around the City of Atlanta. They anticipate it will take 25 years to complete. This green belt will be built initially with a "multi modal" (bike and pedestrian) path to which a trolley rail will be added later. Branching off from this "green belt" will be high schools, neighborhood centers, restaurants and cultural centers. The goal is to link the city's neighborhoods and their respective amenities with one another by walking, bike riding and eventually trolleys. Although Atlanta and Colchester are geographically laid out differently what struck me was the similarity of the goals these citizens have for their municipality with those the Town Administration has for Colchester. Of concern

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to me from my contacts with many citizens of Colchester is whether we as a community share a commitment, optimism and hope for the future.

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