



For the Week Ending March 11, 2016

Town Manager's Special Edition

Dawn H. Francis, Town Manager

The week of March 14th is Sunshine Week, which raises awareness about government by promoting public access to information. The Heritage Project, a 2012 community-driven strategic planning initiative had a goal to “optimize the transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and cost of Colchester’s government and public services” in order to “foster communications, citizens’ trust, active participation and cooperation...” As a result, your Town government has been working hard to make our initiatives, public records, work, and financial information such as budgets, capital plans and audits, more accessible.

What have we done to meet this goal?

- Updated our website making it easier to navigate, and included more information such as board and commission agendas, minutes, and packets, as well as videos showcasing each departments functions and their major activities.
- Increased use of social media including Facebook, Front Porch Forum, Instagram, and occasional **blog postings via the CSD “Spotlight.”**
- Developed a monthly printed supplement in the *Colchester Sun* called “**Currently Colchester**”, however, it has been discontinued due to budget constraints and public input.
- Annually send our budget proposals to citizens via a *Colchester Sun* supplement.
- Compiled six different capital plans into one document with a 5 year time frame and report on past year’s activities that can be reviewed here: <http://colchestervt.gov/documentcenter/view/1237>
- All deeds, easements, mortgages, and similar documents dating back to 1987 are available on our website and on computer terminals at the Town Hall. All records dating back to 1922 will be available within the year.
- Half of the Town’s permits, plus subdivision and other planning and zoning records are currently available via our website. The remaining records will be available by May 1, 2016.
- Implemented an online interactive map through the Assessor’s office, allowing property searches by owners name or address, as well as abutter searches. The available information includes assessor cards that contain a description of the property, estimated acreage, assessed value, and the book/page number of the last known deed on the property. The map shows zoning, wetlands, streams, floodplains, E911 numbers, plus street views and aerial photos of the search area.

For further information or comment, please call Linda Kingston at 802.264.5509



Colchester Town News

Colchester-What do you want to do today?

- Periodic updates on major projects by staff including the distribution of information at public forums and the Town's **annual meeting**.

As Vermont's first digital community, the wide variety of information online coupled with our goal to have permitting services available on-line by year-end allows **unprecedented access to the Town's already public records 24 hours a day, 365 days per year**. Title history and permit status are available any time for real estate closings; home owners can access their property records to locate septic tanks in the event of weekend failures. No more waiting for the Town offices to open to access needed information.

We take transparency seriously and are always striving to earn our residents' trust in the work we do on their behalf. If you would like to access any of these new services or receive a tutorial on how to use them, please visit our website at www.colchestervt.gov.

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