

**For the Week Ending
July 1, 2016**

Upcoming Town meetings:

- **Selectboard Meeting:** Tuesday, July 12, 6:30 PM at the Colchester Town Offices at 781 Blakely Road in the Champlain Room, 2nd Floor.

Notices:

- There will be no meeting of the Development Review Board on Wednesday, July 13th.

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**Town Manager's Special Edition
Dawn H. Francis, Town Manager**

Colchester is busy and not just because summer is here. Town boards and staff are working on a vision for Malletts Bay which includes a Master Plan for Bayside Park and a Needs Assessment for a possible Community Center. Although we do not currently have the funding for such a Center, it is important to plan for the future location of a facility as we also consider possible sewer, storm sewer, and transportation improvements. At the same time, the School District is considering an early education center and the UVM Medical Center is considering expanding the Colchester Family Practice which presents opportunities for partnerships.

The results from a recent community survey show our residents value parks, trails and pathways, open and natural areas, public water access, community events and Bayside Park and beach. Public interest in a community center ranked lower, but there was very high support for a public pool, exercise rooms, gym and fitness classes (all of which would require a facility).

Five possible sites for a Center were identified with Bayside Park ranking first, followed by the Colchester High School ballfields, Severance Corners, Bayside Park/School, and Bayside/Hazelett property.

Bayside Park has traditionally been the heart of the community activity and the views of the lake from the Park are unmatched. A beach connection from upper Bayside Park to lower Bayside Park via a well-designed archway under Lakeshore Drive would better serve pedestrians and provide better traffic flows. Open spaces and trails could connect the lake through the park, to a Community Center, schools, Bayside/Hazelett property and beyond. An outdoor pool, skating rink and natural

amphitheater would encourage social interaction and create a focal point for the community. The Bayside Park site with connections to Bayside/Hazelett would result in a unique park, unlike any other in the state. However, constraints to siting the Community Center in the Bayside Park area include a lack of municipal sewer and limited traffic capacity.

Severance Corners could benefit from a Community Center as it could stimulate growth and activity as well as more private investment. The site is better served by infrastructure / roads and includes more land for expansion. However, the Town does not own property at Severance Corners and political/voter support may not be as strong for this area.

The Bayside/Hazelett site is owned by the Town, across from Laker Lane and is a beautiful wooded site with some lake frontage. The site is not as accessible as Bayside Park to the Bayside Park and School campus and would ideally require access from both Lakeshore Drive and Blakely Road. It has limited visibility from the road, so would not attract drive-by users or boaters. The steep slopes and erodible soils along the lakeshore would make clearing vegetation to create views a challenge and limit access to the lake. Environmental mitigation and proximity to residential neighborhoods would have to be navigated during the permitting process. However, because the Town already owns this 14 acre parcel, support for a Community Center in this location may be stronger.

As with any project, there are many options to be discussed, researched, and explored, and we will provide updates to the community as progress is made. We encourage residents to comment on these very important issues that will shape our future.

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