

**For February 24, 2022**

**Malletts Bay Sewer: From Your Selectboard Chair, Pam Loranger**

A small group opposed to the Malletts Bay Sewer Project has publicly made false allegations. The Town Manager shared their “plan” with the Selectboard by including it in the January 24, 2020 public Selectboard Packet. The Town has considered the opposition plan and found that this opposition plan is deeply flawed and untruthful in three key areas:

**1. It ignores that the Town has devoted significant attention and financial resources to stormwater in comparison to sewer, and fails to understand the reality and basic principles of stormwater management.**

- The Town has a comprehensive water quality effort that addresses both stormwater and wastewater. This effort began with a \$2M U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Funded study that recommended both stormwater Improvements and the proposed sewer.
- Stormwater has a full-time manager and two maintenance staff vs. a part-time manager and half-time maintenance staff for sewer.
- Stormwater capital investments in the last 15 years have been \$4M vs. \$0.25M for sewer.
- There are \$7 million in stormwater improvements planned for the Malletts Bay area alone.
- Town wide stormwater capital investments in the next 30 years are planned at \$28M vs. \$17M for sewer.
- Annual stormwater resources were increased by 50% in 2017 with no additional cost to homeowners resulting from the creation of a stormwater utility.
- The Town has very limited to no control over e-coli bacteria coming from non-human sources, which is why the State of Vermont doesn't have specific reduction requirements associated with their permits. You could transfer all of the funding for the Malletts Bay Sewer Project and another \$100 million and have little to no effect on e-coli bacteria coming from non-human sources. The only way to remove e-coli from non-human sources in any meaningful way would require removing all animals, both domestic and wild, from the entire watershed.

**2. Growth in Malletts Bay will not be fueled by a sewer. We will not become Lake George or Taft Corners.**

- *This is an environmental abatement project not a growth project.*
- Growth will average 1% as it is now--with or without sewer in the Bay
- The proposed sewer serves the inner bay where there are: inadequate lot sizes, depth to groundwater, distance from the surface waters,

depth to bedrock and inadequate soil, as noted on page 12 of the [EPA funded study summary](#).

- In 2016, the Planning Commission proposed, the Selectboard approved, and the Development Review Board administers Revised Zoning for West Lakeshore Drive to restrict the development and ensure the community vision to promote welcoming, small scale, yet vibrant infill and redevelopment. Efforts are underway to evaluate *zoning on East Lakeshore Drive which will be completed prior to the construction of the sewer project.*
- Limited amount of available sewer treatment capacity limits development.
- Proposed system pipe sizes are designed for only 20 years of growth as is typical of projects funded and permitted through the state.
- Floodplain Shoreland, and Wetland Protection zones substantially limit development.
- *Abandonment of the Circumferential Highway limits development as projects that generate significant amounts of traffic will not be able to obtain Act 250 permits due to adverse traffic impacts.*

**3. “Friends of Malletts Bay” Plan to Use Bayside Hazelett Park as a Leach Field,**

- Addresses only 26% of the problem by serving only 75 properties vs. 289 in the Town’s plan.
- Will cause the loss of \$8.7M in one-time State and Federal Grants.
- Will cost residential properties over 4 times as much at \$4,208 per year vs. \$993 proposed by the Town.
- Places septic leach fields on land the community voted to purchase for recreation in 2004 for which the Selectboard has authorized the design of a community recreation center to be voted on by the residents.
- Does not include phosphorous treatment, a significant pollutant of the Bay.
- Instead of transporting wastewater from the Bay to a completely modernized wastewater treatment facility in South Burlington, it dumps it into the ground immediately, next to the Bay.

*The Selectboard, the Planning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Board, and the Conservation Commission have endorsed the Malletts Bay Sewer Project. We feel it is the best solution to remove the human waste bacteria from the inner Bay. It is affordable, funded with grants and user fees from only the 289 users. It will not allow significant development, only 1% on average for 20 years at which case it will be at capacity; It will eliminate the human waste pollution from 289 properties which fail at 3-4 times the rate of systems across the entire town; and it costs nothing to Colchester taxpayers.*

Thank you for your consideration of this important part of a comprehensive water quality effort to improve our precious Malletts Bay for generations to come.

*Pam Loranger, on behalf of Your Colchester Selectboard*

---

**2021 Audit for the Town of Colchester:** The Town of Colchester has received its annual audit from Sullivan, Powers & Co., P.C. (Certified Public Accountants). We have a clean audit, with no findings.

Congratulations to Finance Director Lara Alemy, Finance Officer Julie LaPlume, and staff member Amy Baker for their consistent production of accurate financial records; to the Town Clerk/Treasurer Julie Graeter and her staff for billing and recording revenues in a responsible manner; and to the entire Town staff who must follow ten different Selectboard polices related to financial management. Find the audit report at:  
<https://colchestervt.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/784>

---

**Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup> is Town Meeting Day - Please Vote!**

Sample Ballot: <https://colchestervt.info/sampleballot>

The deadline to return your voted Town Meeting absentee ballot is Monday, February 28<sup>th</sup> by 4:30pm. Use our GREEN Drive-Up Drop Box between the Town Hall and Police Department Buildings.

On Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, bring your voted absentee ballot to the Colchester High School Gym. There will be a drop box at the HELP DESK.

You may also vote in person on March 1<sup>st</sup> between 7:00 am to 7:00 pm at the Colchester High School Gym at 131 Laker Lane (off Blakely Rd.).

Voter registration info: <https://colchestervt.info/VoterReg>



To the Colchester Community

I am writing to encourage your support of the Town of Colchester Selectboard's proposal to the voters for the Malletts Bay Sewer Project.

This project addresses human waste bacteria in Malletts Bay. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency funded a \$2M study which identified that the 289 properties within inner Malletts Bay have insufficient lot size, poor soils, inadequate depth to ground water and bedrock, and inadequate separation from the lake, and therefore could not support properly functioning septic systems. The study also concluded that the construction of sewers in this area was the most efficient and effective way of addressing the human waste bacteria in the inner bay. Approximately 93% of these properties are residential with a failure rate of 3-4 times the rate of other on-site wastewater systems in our community.

The project is funded by grants and user fees. The State of Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources has determined the project eligible for substantial grant funding and a U. S. Environmental Protection Agency low interest loan. **No local property taxes or local option taxes will be used for the construction or future operation of the system.** The user fees will be paid only by the 289 users along the inner Bay.

This project will not change the nature or character of Malletts Bay. State law allows for rebuilds in current footprints but new development is substantially restricted. Following community outreach meetings with considerable public input, the Town Planning Commission and Selectboard implemented new zoning along West Lakeshore Drive in 2016 which placed significant restrictions on development. A similar effort for East Lakeshore Drive is currently underway and will be completed before the construction of the proposed sewer project. People like Colchester the way it is. The zoning does not provide for Lake George style development and the proposed sewer system is not designed to accommodate it now or in the future.

The Colchester Planning Commission also reviewed sewer options over seven months in 2019. This evaluation was performed in a public setting with substantial community input. Their report determined that the Malletts Bay Sewer project addressed the issues more fully and with less cost than other options.

Malletts Bay is the crown jewel in our community. There is a reason that your elected and appointed boards and commissions have been working on a solution since 1964. We have one-time, use it or lose it federal funding for this project. Let us preserve it for now and the future by voting yes for this project that is funded with grants and user fees.

Respectfully,



Senator Richard Mazza

## **Letter about Malletts Bay Sewer Project from Your Colchester Representatives**

Colchester Residents!

Your four Colchester Representatives to Montpelier have each decided to support the Malletts Bay Sewer Project coming up for a vote on the Town Meeting Election Ballot.

Inadequate septic systems on and near Malletts Bay should not be putting human waste bacteria into our lake. The small lots cannot support properly functioning septic systems. That conclusion is backed by extensive analysis. Historically, these residential systems fail 3 to 4 times more frequently than systems in other parts of Colchester. Experts in the field of water quality have investigated the options and concluded that the most efficient and effective way to address human waste bacteria in the inner bay is by constructing a sewer system.

The financing of the project is very favorable. No Colchester property taxes will be used. The funds the Town receives from the Local Option Tax will not be used. Instead, it will be funded entirely from grants and user fees paid only by the 289 users within the proposed service area. Other Colchester residents will not pay for this project.

Zoning along West Lakeshore Drive puts significant restrictions on development. That's a policy consistent with what the Colchester Planning Commission's outreach efforts have found to be the desire of Colchester residents. Development of zoning restrictions along East Lakeshore Drive are in the works and will be completed prior to construction of the Sewer Project.

The Colchester Planning Commission considered all available sewer options, took public testimony, and concluded that the proposed sewer system is the best solution for addressing human waste problems in the bay.

For nearly sixty years Colchester's elected officials, boards and commissions have listened to residents and considered alternatives. Current grant funding opportunities make this the time to get the job done. Your Colchester State Representatives urge you to vote "yes" for the Malletts Bay Sewer Project.

Your Colchester Representatives,  
Patrick Brennan, Chittenden District 9-2  
Curt Taylor, Chittenden District 9-1

Sarita Austin, Chittenden District 9-2  
Seth Chase, Chittenden District 9-1

---

**Subscribe to the Town Newsletter:** <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/jkMAO2v>

For more information or to comment, call 802-264-5509 or email [townmanager@colchestervt.gov](mailto:townmanager@colchestervt.gov)