

**For February 28, 2022**

**Information on the Malletts Bay Sewer Project from the Colchester Selectboard**

From Your Colchester Selectboard:

The Malletts Bay Sewer Project is an environmental abatement project supported by: Colchester Selectboard; Colchester Planning Commission; Colchester Recreation Board; Colchester Conservation Commission; State Senator Dick Mazza; and, Colchester Representatives Brennan, Taylor, Austin and Chase.

The Malletts Bay Sewer Project is also supported by your State of Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources, a 300-member strong organization which has deemed the project eligible for \$5.1M in Pollution Control Grants, a 30 year 2% U.S. Environmental Protection Agency subsidized loan; and \$5.2M in other federal grants. On February 22, Agency Secretary Julie Moore re-confirmed support, noting "we are supportive of the project." ANR provided the same answer to the Colchester Sun. This stands in contrast to the misleading statements made by the "Friends of Malletts Bay," who implied that the Malletts Bay Sewer Project is not supported by ANR.

The "Friends of Malletts Bay" continue to insist that the Town is proposing a sewer project in support of a massive "Lake George" style redevelopment of Malletts Bay, even posting pictures of Lake George on their web site. Again, the Malletts Bay Sewer project is an environmental abatement project. If it was intended to be an economic development project, it would be the most flawed and failed project in the Town of Colchester's history.

An economic development project would need to radiate at least 1/2 mile inland from Malletts Bay, to provide for increased development, and would need hundreds of thousands of gallons of sewer capacity to support it. The Town's proposed project addresses only the compact area defined by those properties directly abutting West Lakeshore Drive from Prim Road to the Bayside intersection, the properties directly abutting East Lakeshore Drive, and Goodsell Point, all of which are inadequate for on-site septic. The proposed project contains only 20,000 gallons of additional capacity beyond what is needed to connect the existing properties within the proposed service area.

The "Friends of Malletts Bay" are in possession of the Town's sewer capacity and design data. This data shows the system only has 20 years of 1% growth for

residential and 0.75% of growth for commercial. The "Friends" are not sharing this as it does not support their scare tactics and false narrative about growth.

The "Friends of Malletts Bay" claim that their plan has not been considered by the Town. The Town's volunteer Planning Commission considered the "Friends of Malletts Bay" proposal in their alternative's analysis. The Planning Commission, over seven months, conducted a public evaluation of alternatives including public forums, walking tours, guest speakers, and a bus tour of community septic systems. The Commission concluded that the Malletts Bay Sewer Project was the most effective and cost-efficient way to address human waste bacteria in Malletts Bay now and in the future. This conclusion was consistent with the recommendations of the four year, \$2M U.S. Environmental Protection Agency funded Integrated Water Resources Management Plan.

**In summary the "Friends" plan:**

**1.  *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 addressing both stormwater and wastewater. This effort began with a \$2M U.S. Environmental Protection Agency funded study recommending both stormwater improvements and the proposed sewer.
- Stormwater has a full-time manager and two maintenance staff vs. a part-time manager and one half-time maintenance staff for sewer.
- Town-wide stormwater capital investments in the next 30 years are planned at \$28M vs. \$17M for sewer. In the last 15 years, \$4M in investments have been made for stormwater vs. \$0.25M for sewer.
- 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.  *Purposefully misrepresents the growth possible with Sewer.***

- 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 based on a vast array of development restrictions.
- 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 that had been delayed due to COVID are now back underway to evaluate zoning on East Lakeshore Drive which will be completed prior to the construction of the sewer project.

- Town's sewer treatment capacity and pipe capacity only allow 20 years of 1% annual growth for residential and 0.75% of growth for commercial.
- Floodplain, Shoreland, and Wetland Protection zones substantially limit development.
- Abandonment of the Circumferential Highway limits development. Projects that generate significant amounts of traffic will be denied Act 250 permits.

### **3. Despite continued arguments that the Town's water quality sampling results do not warrant the construction of sewers in Malletts Bay, the "Friends of Malletts Bay" are proposing a Sewer for Malletts Bay!**

The "Friends" Plan:

- Addresses only 26% of the problem by serving only 75 properties vs. 289 in the Town's plan.
- Lacks an understanding or fails to accept that within the Town's plan proposed service area of 289 properties, wastewater systems fail at 3-4x the rate of other systems in town, due to their inadequate lot sizes, depth to groundwater, distance from the surface waters, depth to bedrock and inadequate soil.
- Will cause the loss of \$8.7M in one-time State and Federal Grants.
- Will cost residential properties over four times as much at \$4,208 per year vs. \$993 proposed by the Town.
- Instead of transporting wastewater from the Bay to a modernized wastewater treatment facility in South Burlington, it dumps it into the ground next to the Bay.
- Requires that land purchased by the voters for a community recreation center be used as a Leach Field.

People come to live, work, play and learn in Colchester because of the people and the natural beauty. The Malletts Bay Sewer Project is one of many environmental abatement projects supported by your Town, whose policy is directed by 85 volunteer members of Boards and Commissions and implemented by your Town staff.

Town environmental efforts include: Conversion of street lighting to energy conserving LED's; Pumpkin Patch and Roosevelt Solar Farms now producing 2/3 of the electricity consumed in the provision of municipal services; proposed Macrae Solar Farm that will achieve the final 1/3; Stormwater Utility which added 50% more annual resources for stormwater issues; \$4M in stormwater investments in the last 15 years; \$28M in stormwater investments in the next 30 years; Town winter salt reduction efforts; Town electric car and charging station; and Town energy conservation efforts in every town building, to name a few.

In addition to these physical environmental improvements, the Town has also developed and adopted substantial environmental regulations and efforts including Shoreland, Floodplain, and Wetland Protection Districts that protect the environment and substantially restrict development within our most environmentally sensitive areas; the Colchester Town Plan; Colchester Regulations for Development; Colchester Sewer and Stormwater Ordinances; Colchester All-Hazards Mitigation Plan; and the Selectboard Energy Policy Committee.

Please consider the Selectboard's proposal to the voters, given our past performance stewarding Town services and our regulation of the community in an environmentally responsible manner.

Sincerely,

Your Colchester Selectboard

*Pam Loranger, Chair      Tom Mulcahy, Vice Chair      Jacki Murphy, Clerk*

*Herb Downing, Member      Charlie Papillo, Member*

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**TOMORROW, 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 TODAY, February 28<sup>th</sup> by 4:30pm.** Use our GREEN Drive-Up Drop Box between the Town Hall and Police Department Buildings.





## Colchester Town News

VERMONT

*Colchester – What do you want to do today?*

**TOMORROW, 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 TOMORROW 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>

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