

For the Week of October 31, 2022

Manager’s Message

Aaron Frank, Town Manager

Segment of U.S. Route 2 Speed Limit Change: After a tragic fatality in June of this year, one of our residents, Luba Routsong, addressed the Selectboard and requested assistance in reducing the speed on the segment of Route 2 from Exit 17 to the Islands. The Town of Colchester Selectboard Chair wrote a letter to VTRANS requesting the reduction. After an engineering analysis by VTRANS, the request was denied. A hearing with the Transportation Committee was then scheduled for October 25, 2022 in Berlin to reconsider their decision. S. Hero and Milton were included in the hearing and participated via Zoom.

Colchester was represented in-person by Selectboard Chair Pam Loranger and Selectboard member Charlie Papillo, Deputy Town Manager Renae Marshall, Director of Public Works Bryan Osborne, and Chief of Police Doug Allen. Ms. Routsong testified to the personal impact of her friend’s death at the intersection of Clay Point and Route 2; Tom Doud, resident on N. Harbor Road, also testified to the dangers of that intersection.

Selectboard Chair Loranger provided a summary of the hearing stating: “We presented convincing testimony to the Committee sufficient for them to reverse the denial and reduce the speed limit to 50 mph, which will be reviewed again in the future. Everyone at the meeting on both sides agreed motorists’ speed rates appear to be on the rise. We consider even this minor reduction to be a step in the right direction.”

First Responder Appreciation Day: On October 25th, 2022, Governor Phil Scott signed a proclamation marking October 28th, 2022 as First Responder Appreciation Day. The proclamation highlighted first responders’ emergency aid expertise and their courageous and selfless attributes, and thanked each and every first responder in Vermont for their invaluable contributions to communities across the State. The Town also thanks and celebrates all the volunteer and career first responders who protect and serve in our community! Click on the picture on the right to read the full proclamation!



Statement of Inclusion: At the October 25th, 2022 Selectboard meeting, the Colchester Selectboard adopted the following Statement of Inclusion:

“The Town of Colchester upholds a culture of inclusion, civility, and respect, and welcomes all persons regardless of, but not limited to, race, color, religion, ancestry, wealth, veteran status, sexual orientation, age, marital status, familial status, disability, gender identity and gender expression. As a town, we commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community. Together we will build bridges to understanding, ensuring that all who live, work and visit our town feel welcome and safe.

We embrace kindness, understanding, neighborliness, peace, tolerance and respect for and toward all. Together we can have a cooperative, sustainable and thriving community where everyone is honored and valued.”

The informational items for the meeting included a memo that discusses the Town’s diversity, equity, and inclusivity efforts, including trainings, webinars, events and more. You can learn about them here: https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/info1015_22.htm?clientSite=Colchester-vt

Town News Interviews

Defining Economic Development

An interview with Kathi Walker O’Reilly, Director of Economic Development

by Alicia Tebeau-Sherry, Town Manager’s Office, Communications Coordinator



Office building on Water Tower Hill

ATS: To familiarize others about you and the Department of Economic Development, can you tell me what services your department offers to the Town of Colchester?

KWO: Economic Development covers business retention, expansion, and relocation, and involves maintaining and creating value-added jobs. Colchester has about 700 businesses, and those businesses, as of 2021, produced \$585 million annually in salaries, so it’s an important sector of our community. To support businesses in Colchester, I work with and connect them to resources on a variety of topics, whether that is

obtaining training money, evaluating their finances, growing their business model, or any other aspect of their business. From the bigger companies to the individuals working from home, we structure the services offered on what the Colchester businesses need.

ATS: When and how did you start working for the Town of Colchester?

KWO: In the 80s and 90s, the Town used to financially support a nonprofit Economic Development Corporation called Colchester Community Development Corporation (CCDC). In

1993, I came to Vermont specifically to work for CCDC. I spent several years there and worked directly with the Town's employees, but was a separate entity. Quite a few years after I moved on, the corporation was disbanded. So, for a few years there was no economic development component to the Town. In 2007, the town manager and Selectboard brought the economic development position into the Town to be able to work more closely, rather than being a separate company. I came on board in 2013, and I'm glad to be back in the field and to be doing it for my own community.



Dell'Amore Production Line

ATS: How has your department overcome obstacles resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic?

KWO: In the last two years, a lot of my work has been COVID relief. Direct-consumer businesses did relatively well during the pandemic, but many businesses are still recovering because of residual effects from supply chain issues and rising costs. One thing we were able to do relatively quickly, with help from the Planning and Zoning Department, was to make outdoor seating allowable at our Colchester restaurants, which essentially helped these businesses survive. Generally, while things are looking up, we are not pre-pandemic yet, so I continue to track grants and other resources that can aid businesses' recovery. The effects of the pandemic are still impacting our businesses and it will continue to do so in many ways.

ATS: What does a typical day look like for you and your department?

KWO: There are none, and that's one of the things I love about it! In my position, I get to meet so many people and find out what they do, which is always fascinating to me. I also enjoy the aspect that, when a business is just starting out and may need resources, I get to help them make their ideas into a reality, and when I am working with an established business, I enjoy the problem solving that comes with how to help a business grow and flourish.



The Ellis Inn: Boutique B&B in Colchester, VT

ATS: What are you proud of that your department has completed?

KWO: In general, I am proud to bring more jobs to the Town and help business owners with whatever they need, whether that is helping them start up, securing a location that works for them, or coordinating the bus service to make sure their workers have a way to get to their jobs. Specifically, though, I am proud of the Town branding project I worked on. This was a part of the Heritage Project and we wanted it to be a grassroots

effort that involved the community, so we held a contest and asked residents to submit logo ideas and to become a part of the committee that would work on it. We had many community members come forward and join the board, including a professor of Marketing and Communications at Champlain College who lives in Town and a graphic designer, so the caliber of people on the committee and the designs we received were phenomenal. Then, the Town committee picked the winning logo, the graphic artist refined it, and we were able to get it on our stationary and, eventually, new signs that replaced the older ones around Town. Overall, it was a positive, community-focused project that I really enjoyed being a part of.



Town sign with new branded logo

ATS: How does your department collaborate with others to complete projects and services?

KWO: I collaborate with many departments in order to help make the process more efficient and timelier because time is money for any business. When I am working with a business, I try to have all the answers, rather than have the business go to all the different departments with questions. Instead of the latter, I will work with the departments to get the answers to bring back to the business, or we hold Technical Review Committee meetings, in which a potential business owner comes in with a variety questions and we have a meeting with the all the appropriate or needed department staff that would have the answers to those questions to, again, be more efficient and be able to answer all their questions at once. I also collaborate on county- and state-wide levels when a business needs it.

ATS: How can the community keep up with your department?

KWO: Once it's public information, I try to announce new businesses or awards businesses receive at Selectboard meetings or through the Town's social media or newsletter. It depends on what the business wants, so if they want it promoted, I will, or vice versa. If any community member or any businesses have any questions, they can reach me at koreilly@colchestervt.gov or 802-264-5508.

Department Updates

Town Clerks Office: VT General Election

Tuesday, November 8th, 2022
Polls open from 7 AM – 7 PM
Colchester High School

Returning Absentee Voted Ballot/Unused Ballots

- **Use our GREEN Drive-Up Drop Box.** It is available **until Monday, November 7th by 4:30pm.**



- Any US Postal Mailed voted ballots received after November 8th **will not be counted.**
- **The Town Clerk's Office counter will close at noon on Monday, November 7th.**
- **On Tuesday, November 8th,** bring your voted absentee ballot to the Colchester High School Gym. There will be a drop box at the **HELP DESK.**

The Town of Colchester is looking for interested residents to serve on the volunteer Development Review Board!

Town planning helps provide a framework for private sector development to balance the needs of the natural environment that supports human life and the developed areas where we live, work, learn, shop and recreate. By serving on boards and commissions or through public input, all residents can be meaningfully involved in the creation and administration of these regulations. Specifically, the Colchester Planning Commission generally makes rules about land use and zoning and the Colchester Development Review Board evaluates development proposals using the rules the Planning Commission creates.

Both boards are supported by staff members. The work of a volunteer board member is to become familiar with the Town Plan or Development Regulations through training provided by staff, reading the board packets and attending a meeting once a month for a few hours to provide input and make decisions based on your knowledge and understanding of the community considering the information provided.

Currently, the Development Review Board is seeking to fill 1 open Adult Member Seat and 1 Alternate Adult Member Seat. There is 1 Open Youth Member position as well.

Below is a general outline of the roles, contact information, meetings on video and meeting minutes.

Development Review Board

Zachary Maia, Developmental Planner, 802-264-5604

Matthew Gamage, Chair, matthew.gamage@gmail.com

Meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month 7:00 PM at the Town Offices, Outer Bay Room, 3rd floor.

The Colchester Development Review Board processes and approves:

- Commercial and Residential site plans
- Subdivision applications
- Conditional use and variance applications
- Appeals of the Zoning Administrator's determinations

Meetings on Video: <https://lcatv.org/colchester-DRB>

Meeting Minutes: <https://clerkshq.com/Colchester-vt> (Halfway down on left, click on Development Review Board and then minutes.)

Development Regulations: <https://colchestervt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7285/Colchester-Development-Regulations-S43-Effective-10192021>

APPLY HERE: <https://colchestervt.gov/formcenter/volunteer-forms-13/town-of-colchester-board-commission-and--67>

Upcoming Town Meetings

Selectboard: Tuesday, November 8th, 6:30 pm at the Colchester Town Offices, 3rd Floor Outer Bay Conference Room, 781 Blakely Road. Residents are welcome to attend the meeting or alternatively send a note, up to 1,000 words, to TownManager@colchestervt.gov with “Citizens to be Heard” in the Subject and their name and address in the body of the email. The email will be shared with the entire Selectboard prior to the meeting and included in the information packet at the next meeting (as the information packet for the current meeting is sent out along with the agenda).

- Watch the Meeting Online via Live Stream: <http://lcatv.org/live-stream-2>
- Agenda: www.bit.ly/Colchester-SB-Agendas

Planning Commission: Tuesday, November 1st, 7:00 pm at the Colchester Town Offices, 3rd Floor Outer Bay Conference Room, 781 Blakely Road.

Agendas available: <http://clerkshq.com/Colchester-vt>

Note: Agendas are posted at least 48 hours before the meeting, so you may find past agendas when clicking the link. Revisiting the link closer to the date of the meeting should provide you with the current agenda.

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