

Colchester's Weekly Town News

For the Week of July 13, 2012

Preamble: "Colchester, Vermont, located on Lake Champlain's Malletts Bay, is a diverse, civic-minded community endowed with a rich heritage of commercial, agricultural, recreational, and educational gifts. Proud of the quality of life already enjoyed here, the people of Colchester seek to build upon this foundation to ensure economic prosperity, recreational opportunity, and an entrepreneurial spirit for future generations" – Vision Statement, Heritage Project, 2012.

By no means a total representation of all the work performed by the Town the following information highlights some activities which occurred:

Burnham Memorial Library: Rubi Simon, Director

Burnham Memorial Library - Our inaugural Farmers' Market of the season was a success, with music, good visitation and a lot of enthusiasm. In the coming weeks, we hope to build from this, and continue to add to the number and range of vendors available. Things have been quite busy with all aspects of the library, particularly summer programming; recent programs include the Owls of Vermont (with live birds), a demonstration by the Embroiderers' Guild, Parent-Child Yoga class, and a session called "Midnight Snack", where kids chose from a wide range of ingredients to create the ultimate snack!

IT – Alice Greig – Technology Department

This week we continue to replace some of the older computers and update software. We have begun testing Tablets which will be useful to Board members during meetings and will save on paper printing and cut down on the time it usually takes to prepare and copy all of the paperwork necessary for committee and board meetings.

Police Department –Chuck Kirker, Police Chief

Colchester Police has had our new Traffic Enforcement Officer in place for about one month. Six year veteran Kye Richter has been assigned to lead the police department's efforts at traffic crash reduction and quality of life issues as it relates to vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

Rescue & Technical Rescue Squads - Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief

Colchester Rescue responded to 26 calls, and turned over 1 call. Of the 26 responses, 15 were transported to the hospital.

Colchester Technical Rescue did not have any calls this week.

Parks and Recreation – Glen Cuttitta, Director

As we prepare for the reconstruction of the Causeway another project is completed. The removal of two collapsing camps and two old vehicles on Law Island will be completed by Friday. The Town of Colchester, Lake Champlain Committee and the State of Vermont were able to secure Federal Funding to have these buildings removed which had lead paint and asbestos throughout the structures.

For further information or comment, please call June Campbell at 264-5509.

The 6th Annual Bill Kohlasch Wiffleball tournament is scheduled for August 17 & 18. This is a great fundraising event for someone who had a great impact on the Colchester Community. Please call 264-5642 for more information.

Public Works – Bryan Osborne, Director

Completed paving of Porters Point Road where storm water system was repaired.

Expended 125 man hours clearing debris from 7/4 storm.

Continued negotiations with FEMA and VTrans to bring approximately \$500,000 in federal funding to Colchester to repair the Meadow Drive ditch.

Received 1111 Permit from state for Exit 16 sidewalk project. Final state review underway in advance of construction this fall. Approximately \$750,000 in state and federal grants have been secured for this project.

Planning & Zoning - Sarah Hadd, Director

The Planning and Zoning Department is fielding questions on Camp Holy Cross and Costco this week. Costco completed its final plat hearing on June 27th and has a draft approval for the proposed gas station. The findings of fact and order (written approval) are due to be signed by the Development Review Board at their July 25th meeting. The applicant has begun the Act 250 (or State) permitting process for this project with an anticipated August hearing. Work recently began on a seawall at the former Camp Holy Cross. As part of this concrete seawall installation, trees were removed and excavation has occurred. The Development Review Board (DRB) approved the project at their May meeting and the project is being built as permitted with the possible exception of eight trees that were removed although shown on the plans as to be saved. Proper erosion and sediment control are in place. The applicant was approved for a substantial replanting plan for the shoreline to offset the planned tree removal and eight trees will be added to this plan to remediate the removal. While the DRB tries to have applicants preserve as much of the native vegetation as feasible, it also recognizes each site is different and conditions on some sites will require the removal of trees in order to address bank failure and erosion. Each approved seawall has a professional engineer overseeing the project that assists in making these judgments based upon their professional experience and endorsements. Also, contrary to the Sun's article, the Building Inspector visits each seawall site prior to construction to witness site conditions, trees, and staking of construction limits. Our Department will continue to monitor this seawall and the many other seawall projects under construction in Town for compliance with their respective approvals.

Clerk's Office – Julie Graeter, Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer

The Town Clerk's Office has the tax bills in the mail. Please look at your bill for the correct rate and homestead tax credits. The first due date is August 15th. We have the State Primary Election on August 28th. Starting Monday, July 16th, absentee ballots/voting will be available at the Town Clerk's Office.

Assessor – Bob Vickery, Assessor

Nothing to report – on vacation.

For further information or comment, please call June Campbell at 264-5509.

Finance – Joan Boehm (Asst. Town Manager/CFO)

Al Voegele and I have met with the Citizen Financial Committee and have finalized the survey to be sent randomly to a sample of over 1,000 voters. This will help us determine priorities for the FY 14 budget. This survey will also be put on the Town's website in the middle of August.

Town Manager's Office – Al Voegele, Town Manager

The high point of this week was the offer by the State Department of Taxes proposing a settlement to the Town and PACE in a six year dispute over the tax status of this nonprofit corporation which operates in the old convent owned by the Sisters of the Religious Hospitallers of Saint Joseph who started and ran the (old) Fanny Allen Hospital on Route 15 in Colchester. This is a significant win for PACE to continue its operation on behalf of the Sisters serving infirm and elderly people so they can remain in their homes instead of being admitted to nursing homes for their ongoing care. The settlement also returns to the Town the education tax the State included on the Grand List for the years 2008-2012. Many people, whom the Town is most appreciative, assisted the Town and PACE in achieving this outcome.