

## **Colchester's Weekly Town News**

For the Week of March 1, 2013

**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: Hannah Peacock, Assistant Director**

This week at the library, we've had four story times, adult yoga, and our monthly intergenerational book discussion. We also had the first half of our practice SAT exam. Tutoring is ongoing, four days a week, and thanks to an expanded program we still have openings - call 878-0313 to sign up. Don't forget preschool music, which happens every Wednesday at 12:30 pm. We'd also like to let people know that we'll begin accepting book donations again in May, shortly before the Summer Book Sale. Owing to space issues, we would ask that you hold off on donating books until that time - thank you for your understanding.

### **IT – Alice Greig – Technology Department**

Nothing to report.

### **Police Department –Chuck Kirker, Police Chief**

Over the past week, Colchester Police investigators have been working on a series of burglaries that occurred to unoccupied seasonal residences along East Lakeshore Drive. On February 18<sup>th</sup>, officers responding to an alarm found a camp had been forcibly entered. A search of the area with the assistance of a canine team, failed to locate the suspect. This week, three more camps were found to have been entered in a similar fashion and the crimes are believed to have all occurred on the night of 18<sup>th</sup>. Most crimes are solved with the assistance of the public; through reports of suspicious activity or calls of crimes in progress. As the weather starts to turn warmer, we again ask our community to be vigilant in reporting situations or circumstances that seem out of place and keeping vehicles and residences locked.

### **Rescue & Technical Rescue Squads - Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief**

Rescue responded to 15 EMS calls this week, and transported 13 people to the hospital. Nothing to report from the technical rescue team this week.

### **Parks and Recreation – Glen Cuttitta, Director**

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

Staff is working hard this week at February Vacation Camp. Also getting ready for handling the registrations for summer activities. It has been a while since our Winter Program Brochure was delivered in December. There are still many programs that have yet to be offered. Take a look online and see if there is one that may interest you. We have just finished planning for a new running event. On June 8<sup>th</sup> (Colchester 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary) we will be hosting the Colchester Causeway 5/15K race which will take runners from Airport Park to the Causeway. This is a race that is sure to provide some great views. Stay tuned to the Summer Brochure for more details.

In the Parks Division, we continue to help with snow removal at Town buildings and making sure that the ice rink and ski trails are usable at Airport Park. Preparations are being made for spring/summer projects and getting cost estimates. We will soon have our seasonal park employees returning. Spring is just around the corner.

### **Public Works – Bryan Osborne, Director**

**LED Street Light Upgrades** - 155 lights have been upgraded out of the planned 796. Work has continued off of Main Street and East Lakeshore Drive. Work has also expanded to areas off of Severance Road including Eagle Park, Forman, Giffin, Kylies Way, and parts of Hidden Oaks Subdivision Also, just over half of Country Meadows Subdivision off of Roosevelt has been completed.

**Exit 16 Sidewalk Project** – Bids have been received for construction with the low bidder approximately 30% under budget. 90% of the project will be funded with state and federal grants. Project is on schedule to be constructed late spring early summer this year.

**Capital Paving Program** - Specifications have been prepared and final quantities are being finalized for the 2013 Capital Paving Program. Paving is planned on Blakely Road from the Bayside intersection to Mallets Bay Avenue, Mallets Bay Avenue from Blakely Road to Lavigne Road, Creek Farm Road, Pine Lane, and Shetland Lane.

### **Planning & Zoning - Sarah Hadd, Director**

The Planning and Zoning Office has dealt with several health complaints within the past week as well as zoning violations. One of these situations was a property that was for sale and scheduled for a closing or a sale date. All banks generally require that the Town certify that a property is in conformance with zoning regulations before funding the purchase of a home. Sometimes homeowners may do work to a property and not realize that a permit was needed and an “after the fact” permit can be applied for and received to cure the violation and allow the sale of the property. The case this week unfortunately involved unpermitted septic work as well as building work in which the septic lines could not be fully located due to the frost in the ground. It is possible that the work may not be able to be approved “after the fact” as the septic may be under the new pool. While the Department attempts to work with all buyers and sellers to find solutions to violations that will let the property transact or “close”, work done without permits is always done with risk. Please remember to check with our office as to whether or not permits are needed and if you have unpermitted work, please contact our office as far in advance of a closing as possible so that we may work with you to find a solution.

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**Clerk's Office – Karen Richard, Town Clerk**

Please remember to vote on Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>. You can come into the office to vote until 4 p.m. on Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>. The community dinner and town meeting will be held at Colchester High School on Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup> beginning at 6 pm. We look forward to seeing you.

If you want to know the outcome of all of the ballot items please check the town website on Tuesday evening. Sometime between 7 pm and 8 pm the unofficial results will be posted.

**Assessor – Bob Vickery, Assessor**

Nothing to report.

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

On March 4, 2013 beginning at 7:30 p.m., the Town and School hold a Town Meeting in which the FY 14 budget and other issues are discussed. There will be a community dinner before at 6 PM. Please attend to learn more about the budgets or get general questions answered. You may also go to the Town's website, [www.colchestervt.gov](http://www.colchestervt.gov), for more information about the FY 14 budget.

**Town Manager's Office – Al Voegele, Town Manager**

A new Town Manager has been hired and will be introduced to the townspeople at the Community Dinner in the Colchester High School cafeteria preceding the (regular) Town Meeting in the school auditorium. The new manager is Dawn Francis who previously served as Deputy Town Manager in the Town of Essex and more recently has been the Co-Director of Government Affairs for the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce. Dawn will join the Town's staff on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

In addition to the Selectboard introducing Dawn to the Town at the Community Dinner the Colchester Delegation members to the Vermont General Assembly will also be present to report on legislation pending before the General Assembly and answer citizen questions.

This past week the Town Manager and the Planning and Zoning Department experienced once again the sadness resulting from the long term consequences of people failing to secure building permits when adding additions to their homes. Certificates of Occupancy (CO) are needed when selling a home at the time of a closing. These certificates affirm that the house and property conform to existing State and municipal building, waste water and land use codes. Town officials in the Planning & Zoning Office have to apply the law and assure all residents are treated the equally. These officials have very little flexibility in administering the issuance of a CO. Citizens need to know they have "no stomach" and gain no joy for dashing the hopes and aspirations of both buyers and sellers.

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

As a final reminder three Town events will be occurring over the next four days. They are in order of occurrence: (1) on Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> the Police Department will be having an open house from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Everyone is welcome including children who can see the inside of a police car and see the police motorcycle; (2) on Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup> beginning at 6:00 PM there will be a community dinner preceding the Town Meeting (beginning at 7:30 PM) at the Colchester High School and finally on Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup> the Town polls will be open from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM for citizens to vote on municipal and school questions.

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