

## For the Week of October 23, 2023

### Manager's Message

Aaron Frank, Town Manager

**Upcoming Route 2 Safety Public Hearing:** At the next Selectboard meeting on October 24, 2023, beginning shortly after 6:30 p.m., the Selectboard will hold a second public hearing about safety on the Vermont State Highway US RT 2 near Clay Point Road to consider public input on Town staff recommendations for the Selectboard to consider in anticipation of a request to the Vermont Agency of Transportation. Recommendations can be viewed here:

[https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/231024\\_02.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt](https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/231024_02.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt)

**Where can I dispose of my leaves?** At no charge, any Chittenden County resident may take leaves to select CSWD Drop-Off Centers; to Green Mountain Compost, or to the McNeil Wood and Yard Debris Depot. See their websites below for hours, maps, and more information about allowable materials.

CSWD Drop-Off Centers convenient to Colchester include:

- Essex: 218 Colchester Rd. <https://cswd.net/facility-locations/essex-drop-center/>
- Milton: 36 Landfill Rd. <https://cswd.net/facility-locations/milton-drop-center/>
- Williston: Green Mountain Compost: 1042 Redmond Rd. <https://www.greenmountaincompost.com/about/contact/>
- Burlington: McNeil Wood and Yard Debris Depot: 111 Intervale Rd. <https://cswd.net/chittenden-county-solid-waste-facilities/mcneil/>



### Additional hours for leaf drop-off only:

#### [Green Mountain Compost](#)

Sunday, November 12, 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 19, 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

#### CSWD Drop-Off Centers in [Essex](#) and [South Burlington](#)

Sunday, November 12, 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

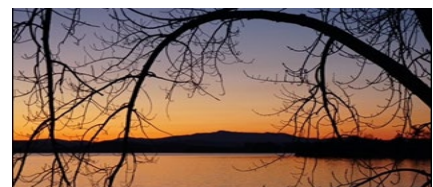
Sunday, November 19, 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

## Department Updates

### Public Works: Fall 2023 Clean Water Newsletter

With a chill in the air, fall and its beautiful colors have returned to the Champlain Valley. After a busy summer, the Department of Public Works would like to provide you with some updates and information:

*Photo Courtesy of Sue Thibault*



- Public Works Crews in Action
- Rethink Runoff - Get Involved!
- Project Updates
- FAQ: How Do We Use Stormwater Fees?

**Did you know?** A 12-oz cup of rock salt can effectively cover a 20-foot long driveway —a little goes a long way in protecting water quality.

**Stream Monitoring Volunteers Needed:** Rethink Runoff, a regional stormwater outreach and education program that Colchester supports as part of our federal stormwater permit, performs stream monitoring in waterways in Chittenden County to track levels of phosphorus, chloride, and cloudiness. This important work, performed by the ‘Stream Team’, provides insights into the health of the monitored waterway. The Stream Team is comprised of volunteers who collect these water samples, which are sent to a local lab for analysis. If this sounds like an activity you may be interested in, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/StreamTeam2024>

### **Water Terminology 101:**

**Stormwater:** Rainwater and snow melt that cannot be absorbed into the ground due to impervious surfaces, so it “runs off” into storm sewers or other drainage facilities that ultimately lead to rivers, streams, and Lake Champlain. Because this water travels across the landscape, it can pick up pollutants like pet waste, oils, trash, and other contaminants.

**Potable Water:** Drinking water provided to properties via a well or public water supplier.

**Wastewater:** Water used for cooking, bathing, cleaning, or other activities that is directed to an onsite septic system or public sanitary sewer via plumbing.

**Public Works Crews in Action:** The Town Highway Department has been active this summer with regularly scheduled maintenance and repairs. So far, they have completed 12 culvert replacements with three more scheduled before winter. Culverts are open-ended drainage pipes that are installed under a roadway or driveway and used to move water from one side to the other. The Town has recently completed a number of culvert “upsizing” projects, which helps protect our roadways and other property in the event of heavy rains.



*Crews replace a damaged culvert on Thomas Drive.*

### **Stormwater Program – FAQ:**

***Why do I have to pay a stormwater fee? Why isn't it collected as part of my property taxes?***

Properties in Colchester have always paid for stormwater. Prior to 2017, the Town’s stormwater program was funded through property taxes, with the amount each property paid for stormwater based on the assessed value of their property. It also meant that properties that are legally exempt

from paying property taxes paid nothing leaving only taxpayers to pay for Town-wide stormwater needs.

Since 2017, stormwater fees have been based on the amount of impervious surface\* on a property (see definition below). The amount of impervious surface on a property, and the amount of stormwater runoff it creates, is a far better indicator of a property's impacts on water quality than the assessed value of a property. For example, a property may consist of a one-acre parking lot where the assessed value is relatively low, yet it creates a significant impact on water quality.

The stormwater fee is a utility fee, not a tax. Therefore, even properties that are legally exempt from paying taxes are not exempt from utility fees. This results in every property in Town, including highways owned by the State of Vermont, paying their share, in a fair and equitable manner.

*\*Impervious Surfaces: Pavement, buildings, parking areas, roadways, and other hardened surfaces that do not allow rainwater to be absorbed into the ground.*

#### ***What do you spend my stormwater fees on?***

- Inspecting and repairing drainage pipes, discharge points, collection basins, and ponds
- The design and construction of new stormwater systems and water quality projects
- Street sweeping and catch basin cleaning
- Preparing required water quality plans
- Ensuring new neighborhoods have drainage systems built to Town standards
- Grant writing—over \$1 million in funding received to date to support planning, design, and construction of Town infrastructure and the purchase of equipment

#### **Public Works Project Updates:**

***Smith Creek Watershed Improvements:*** We are in the preliminary design phase of stormwater improvements in the Midnight Pass/Everbreeze neighborhoods to reduce the amount of phosphorus directed to Lake Champlain. Property owners will be invited to learn more at a public information meeting in 2024. These projects were originally identified as part of the 2017 Malletts Bay Scoping Study.



***Canyon Estates Outfall Repairs:*** The program has received \$10,000 in grant funding to address two stormwater discharge points in Canyon Estates that need to be rehabilitated.

***Macrae Road Improvements:*** In order to reduce stormwater-related erosion on Macrae Road, the Town recently completed roadway improvements where 80% of the cost was covered through grant funding.

**Middle Road Culvert Upsizing:** The Town is continuing design work on a solution to address an undersized culvert under Middle Road. Once the engineered design is completed and permits are secured, the Town will seek grant funding to install the upgrades.

**Spring 2024 Billing Information:** Annual stormwater invoices will be mailed in January 2024 with payments due February 23, 2024. Commercial property owners who take specific actions that reduce the impact of runoff to the public stormwater system, or provide ongoing public benefits related to stormwater management, are eligible for credits. For more information, please visit: [www.colchester.gov/1837/stormwater-utility](http://www.colchester.gov/1837/stormwater-utility) or the Water Quality Hotline at 802-264-5628.

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## Upcoming Town Meetings

**Selectboard:** Tuesday, October 24, 6:30 p.m. at the Colchester Town Offices, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Outer Bay Conference Room, 781 Blakely Road. Alternatively, send a note, up to 1,000 words, to [TownManager@colchestervt.gov](mailto:TownManager@colchestervt.gov) with “Citizens to be Heard” in the Subject and your name. As with in-person Citizens to be Heard, we ask that you SHARE YOUR ADDRESS. The email will be shared with the entire Selectboard prior to the meeting and included in the information packet at the next meeting.

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

**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](mailto:townmanager@colchestervt.gov)