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The Charlotte News

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2021 | VOLUME LXIII NUMBER 16



Tom Cosinuke and Annie Kelton are the proud owners of a newly appointed champion apple tree.

Photo by Vince Crockenberg

READ MORE ON PAGE 8

Proposed changes to Town Plan & Land Use Regs: A primer from the Planning Commission

Peter Joslin

CHAIR, CHARLOTTE PLANNING COMMISSION

At Town Meeting, Charlotte residents are being asked to vote on a set of proposed updates to the Town Plan and Land Use Regulations. These proposals were developed by your Planning Commission, with input from residents, the Selectboard, and reviewed by our town attorney, over the past 2 ½ years.

It's important to understand the relationship between the Town Plan, LURs, and the process by which development does (or does not) occur in town. The Town Plan is a policy document that sets forth the goals and objectives for Charlotte's future, in many dimensions, including land development, energy use, town facilities, and conserving natural resources and the open landscapes, which are core values for residents. The LURs are the main rule book that reflect the goals, policies and planning maps within our Town Plan.

Charlotte's Town Plan was last updated in 2018 and approved by residents' vote in 2019. The plan and LURs are living documents that need to be regularly updated to stay current with changes in state law, community values, and changes in the environment, such as an aging population, reduced school enrollment, the need for more diverse housing options, a changing climate, etc. If we don't update the LURs, they risk becoming irrelevant, thus becoming more difficult to apply to development projects reviewed by the town and the state.

On the warrant for your upcoming Town Meeting vote are four separate articles proposing changes to our Town Plan and Land Use Regulations:

- Article 6 proposes a Town Plan map change for the East Charlotte Village Commercial District (ECVCD) that extends its boundaries by ± 24 acres from existing (± 20 acres now), to ± 44 acres. The new boundary affects 16 parcels vs. 10 parcels now. This is a separate article because it would change the zoning district map in the Town Plan.

- Article 7 would change the LURs to adjust the allowed density for the East Charlotte Village Commercial district from 5 acres per unit to 1 acre for residential development, and permit wastewater and water lines to connect outside the commercial district to support projects inside the district. It also reinforces that all projects must maintain and respect the historic character of the area.
- Article 8 would update the LURs to enable the growth of accessory on-farm businesses, as required by the Vermont Legislature in 2018. This version includes less restrictive rules that provide Charlotte farmers opportunity to develop new farm-related accessory businesses, while still enforcing town standards.
- Article 9 proposes several minor LUR updates and corrections to address glitches, grammatical errors and obsolete sections. For example, it eliminates farm cafés as a use (to be replaced by accessory farm businesses), clarifies types of allowed outdoor storage, and adds and updates many key definitions, such as "Right of Way" and "Impervious Surface."

Some residents have raised questions and concerns about the proposed Town Plan map and LUR changes for the East Charlotte Village Commercial District (Articles 6 and 7). During its review and hearing process, the Planning Commission produced a theoretical buildout analysis of these proposed changes, posted to the project page on the town website. It said that up to 45 units could potentially be built within current rules, while up to 65 units could be built with these changes. However, it's very important to recognize that all development in town is also constrained by septic and water capacity, and other variables, including zoning standards and housing market demand.

As with all proposed development, any projects in the East Village are subject to a robust and comprehensive review by the Planning Commission and Zoning Board,

SEE **LURS** PAGE 2

The dream is real



Charlotte artist Cap'n Dan titled this work "2 Dream"—it's both a request and a state of mind. The artwork is photography of handmade paper collage.

Art and photo by Cap'n Dan.

East Charlotte Village LUR amendments: An analysis of the issues

Chea Waters Evans
EDITOR

It's the biggest topic of the year—you've read about it in the paper for months, you've been to the Planning Commission Meetings, seen the Front Porch Forum posts, and read varying opinions in letters to the editor. Without Town Meeting for discussion and questions this year, it's up to you to figure out on your own what you think. And you're still not sure what the real story is with Articles 6 and 7 and how they will affect you.

Following are some of the most common questions we've received at *The Charlotte News* regarding the East Charlotte Village Land Use Regulation amendments that are on the ballot on March 2. In trying to present both sides of the issue, I've summarized and condensed comments and opinions from letters to the editor, past articles and public comment during multiple Planning Commission and Selectboard meetings.

The article by Peter Joslin (see page 1) from the Planning Commission gives a history and explanation of the particulars of each article; here are the confusing parts, hopefully explained.

Why do some think the ECVCD LURs will cause positive development?

Allowing the commercial district to expand in East Charlotte will open opportunities for property owners in that zone to develop communities of affordable and senior housing. More dwelling units in the village area means acting on the mandate set forth in the Town Plan to offer a range of more affordable housing options in Charlotte for seniors and families of varied incomes.

Why do some think the ECVCD LURs will cause problematic development?

It's unclear how many housing units will ultimately be constructed in the expanded commercial district. Because impact studies

will not be completed until there's an actual possibility of development in an area, there's no way to tell in advance how increased housing density will affect traffic, the environment, taxes and wastewater issues in the surrounding area.

Why do people support Articles 6 and 7?

People who support Articles 6 and 7 acknowledge that, in order for a community to thrive, there must be some form of development; passing these amendments doesn't necessarily mean there will be quick, haphazard, damaging development in the area, it just means that the opportunity now exists to create thoughtful and meaningful growth. The Town Plan and a 2010 survey of East Charlotte residents indicate that there is a desire for improvement and growth in the area, and these articles open the door to make that happen.

Why don't people support Articles 6 and 7?

People who don't support Articles 6 and 7 are concerned about the repercussions of passing these articles without consideration of the impact of expanding sewage capacity under the roads to nearby neighborhoods. They are also concerned that the priorities and people in the area have changed since the survey was initially done 11 years ago, and that once the door is opened to development, it will be too difficult to manage—like putting the proverbial toothpaste back into the tube. Some also think that there needs to be more time, more discussion, more planning and more study before a permanent change to the LURs is approved.

How could this be considered spot zoning?

Spot zoning is creating a law or laws specific to one area to suit the development needs of one particular project or property. Because Articles 6 and 7 apply only to the East Village Commercial District and not other commercial

SEE **AMENDMENTS** PAGE 19

Meet the Candidates Night: Save the date

There are two contested Selectboard races this year, and the candidates are coming out (metaphorically) to discuss town issues and meet the voters. The Charlotte Grange and *The Charlotte News* are teaming up yet again to facilitate the discussion and offer voters an opportunity to ask questions and get to know the candidates and their opinions on the issues that affect our town today.

Meet the Candidates night is on Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 7 p.m. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the meeting will take place on Zoom. The link to join the meeting is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88627161701?pwd=cS9FMnprcGZZ-V0dSVEIRMG9wUFRtZz09>

Meeting ID: 886 2716 1701 Passcode: 148029

To keep the discussion running smoothly, Charlotters can submit questions in advance to Editor Chea Evans at chea@thecharlottenews.org or ask them via chat during the meeting.

Town

LURs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

who are bound by the LURs. If anyone has any doubt about how these rules are applied by our citizen boards, just look around you: Charlotte remains a beautiful community that has retained its rural character, with a combination of working farms, forests, individual houses on large lots, and open landscapes, with stringent protection of our natural resources.

No one is suggesting we abandon our high standards. At their core, these changes are about fine-tuning the rulebook (LURs) to allow limited, very targeted growth in an existing village center. Whatever projects are proposed will be held to the same high standards as are applied elsewhere in town and would be rejected if they don't meet those standards.

It's also key to place these proposed changes in the context of Vermont land use policy, as embedded in state law (24 VSA 4302) and in our Town Plan. Vermont and Charlotte encourage development in established village centers, while discouraging sprawl development across open landscapes. This was reinforced by the results of a 2010 study (see: <http://bit.do/2010-ECV-study-rpt>), which asked residents what they value about the East Village, and what changes they want to see going forward. Many respondents prioritized modest village growth in housing, and some kind of café or community gathering place, while maintaining the historic character of the village area.

But the current minimum of five acres per housing unit that's now required in the village center directly contradicts these goals in the town plan. This makes it very difficult

for even modest development to proceed. Hence, the Article 6 and 7 proposals. If adopted, they would allow mixed use and planned residential projects in the East Village Commercial District with diverse housing options for people to live, work and recreate. That's the goal.

The Planning Commission will be posting more information in the next couple of weeks, including a follow-up article, a video panel discussion, questions & answers with more details, and posts to the Front Porch Forum. We urge everyone to learn more about these proposals before you cast your votes. For more information, see the project page on the town website (at: <http://bit.do/LURs-amends-docs>), or contact Larry Lewack, Town Planner, at 425-3533 ext. 206, or via email at: townplanner@townofcharlotte.com.

Selectboard candidates weigh in on commercial district expansion

Ethan Putnam
COMMUNITY NEWS SERVICE

After two recent public comment sessions on the proposed increase of the East Charlotte Village commercial district's borders and allowable density, some Charlotte Selectboard candidates gave their views on the topic.

Mike Dunbar, a candidate for both the two-year term and auditor, and the owner of the Charlotte Crossings building, opposes the

move. Dunbar said he does not support the amendment to the Town Plan that increases the size of the East Charlotte commercial district or the proposed zoning changes.

"If the town's direction is to concentrate housing in town centers, which is the direction that a lot of Vermont towns are taking, then it should apply to the entire town, including the West Charlotte Village, in addition to the East Charlotte village," Dunbar said.

Dunbar said while he believes town centers

need to move toward increased density, the selective changes didn't sit right with him. "The purpose of [the zoning changes] is to preserve open spaces and not have every house in your rural area have five acres. I agree with that methodology. But not in applying it selectively."

When asked the same question, Lewis Mudge, director of Central Africa for Human Rights Watch and candidate for the two-year term, said the current Town Plan called for density already.

"If the question is there should be no density in the village, then really what we need to do, this shouldn't be sorted out at the zoning board and Selectboard level, frankly, this should be: 'We need to reevaluate our town plan'," Mudge said.

He went on to say that he believed in increasing density and foresaw increased development in East Charlotte's future, so to him the question was, 'How would that density need to evolve and how does it take shape?'

"There are folks in the East Charlotte village who are not happy with this," Mudge said.

He himself had no stake in the matter, Mudge said, and he has not yet decided how he will vote.

While Mudge said he sees this as a balance between development and protecting access to countryside and open land, he also made clear his support for more affordable housing.

"My wife and I put every cent we own into buying a place in Charlotte," Mudge said. "It's an expensive place to buy. And you know, I'd love the opportunity to have folks move in with kids or move into an area like the village and not have to wait the 10 years professionally that I had to in order to accrue the capital."

Justin Bora, owner of Bora's Welding & Repair, who is running for the three-year term, said he had not had time to take a look at the issue and therefore could not offer an opinion by press time.

Frank Tenney, a Charlotte native running for his third term on the Selectboard and who is currently on the Zoning Board of Adjustment, didn't respond to multiple requests for comment.

Community News Service works in a partnership with The Charlotte News and other local media outlets to provide opportunities to University of Vermont students.



The Charlotte News

Mission Statement

The mission of *The Charlotte News* is to inform our readers about current events, issues and topics, and to serve as a forum for the free exchange of views of town residents and community volunteer organizations on matters related to Charlotte and the lives of its residents.

Editorial independence

The Board of Directors retains full authority over all editorial and advertising content in *The Charlotte News*. While we are funded by advertising revenue and donor contributions, our news judgments are made in accordance with our mission and independent of all sources of financial support, including support given through our affiliated 501(c)3 organization, The Friends of *The Charlotte News*.

Letters, Commentaries and Obituaries

Consistent with our mission *The Charlotte News* publishes letters to the editor, commentaries and obituaries from our readers. All letters, commentaries and obituaries are subject to review and approval by the news editor of the paper and to the following rules and standards:

- Letters to the editor, commentaries and obituaries should be emailed to news@thecharlottenews.org as attachments in .doc format. All letters, commentaries and obituaries must contain the writer's full name, town of residence and, for editing purposes only, phone number.
- Letters may not exceed 300 words, obituaries 500 words and commentaries 750 words.
- The opinions expressed in commentaries and letters to the editor belong solely to the author and are not to be understood as endorsed by either the Board of Directors or the editorial staff of the paper.
- All published letters and commentaries will include the writer's name and town of residence.
- Before publishing any obituary, we will need proper verification of death.
- All submissions are subject to editing for clarity, factual accuracy, tone, length and consistency with our house publishing style.
- Whenever editing is necessary we will make every effort to publish each submission in its entirety and to preserve the original intent and wording. We will confer with writers before publishing any submitted material that in our judgment requires significant editing before it can be published.
- The news editor makes the final determination whether a letter to the editor, a commentary or an obituary will be published as submitted, returned for rewriting or rejected.

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Report from the Legislature

Budgets and broadband, tax increase decreases



Rep. Mike Yantachka

The Vermont House has worked productively in the last two weeks. We approved the annual Budget Adjustment bill (H.138), a mid-year technical adjustment to keep the state's Fiscal Year 2021 budget in balance. H.138 passed

with strong support and included investments to support the Legislature's continuing response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Much of the adjustment was a result of reallocating unused Coronavirus Relief Funds, which were supposed to expire at the end of last year but were extended by the \$900 billion relief bill passed by Congress last December. CRF money was redirected to assistance for the hard-hit hospitality industry, for emergency food, hotel housing for the homeless, and rental assistance, for support of Vermont State Colleges, and for completion of broadband expansion projects.

Speaking of broadband, the pandemic has highlighted the necessity of high-speed internet for education, work, and communications. The Energy & Technology Committee has been working on a major bill to accelerate

broadband deployment to every part of the state. Building on the Communication Union District model that was authorized in 2015 and enhanced last year, availability to planning grants and low-cost loans will be provided to CUDs to build fiber networks throughout Vermont. CUDs are organized by towns that want to build fiber to the areas where for-profit internet service providers find it unprofitable to reach. Most for-profit companies build their infrastructure along the main arteries with a higher residential density. Fiberoptic lines cost about \$33,000 per mile to build. The more subscribers within that mile, the lower the cost per subscriber.

Local telecommunications carriers like WCVT or Consolidated Communications also provide internet service. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently accepted bids from traditional carriers to extend broadband in rural areas under the Rural Digital Opportunities Fund. With the objective of getting service



to every Vermonter as quickly as possible, we are encouraging CUDs and telecom providers to work with each other to avoid duplication of effort. The rate at which high-speed broadband can be built depends not only on funding but on the availability of skilled line workers and of the required materials, both of which are in short supply. Our

bill will also include funding for workforce training in partnership with Vermont Technical College. Even with this support, broadband to the "last mile" will take years to accomplish. We will continue to work on the details of the bill over the next few weeks.

There's good news on the 9.5 cent education property tax rate increase that created a stir in December. Improved non-property tax revenues in the Education Fund and input from school districts have resulted in a reduction to roughly a one cent increase. This may change as more information about actual budgets becomes available, but it is not expected to

change dramatically.

Also on the education front, the sustainability of the pension funds for teachers and state employees has become a top priority with the release of a recommendation from State Treasurer Beth Pearce that would increase contributions and decrease benefits. The source of the underfunded pension fund problem was a decision by the Legislature in the 1990s to underfund the system based on overly optimistic assumptions about investment returns. The unfunded liability is \$1.5 billion at present and is expected to grow by another \$600 million if remediation steps are not taken. The Legislature is studying the report and seeking alternatives by working with all parties to assure Vermonters that they will have their retirement benefit while also curtailing the unfunded liability. Pension contracts are an obligation that should not be set aside. Teachers and state employees should not be penalized for the fiduciary mistakes made by government. We must solve this dilemma fairly.

I welcome your emails (myantachka.dfa@gmail.com) or phone calls (802-233-5238). This article and others can be found at my website (MikeYantachka.com).

Around Town

Congratulations:

to **Annika Gruber** and **Lila Taylor** whose poems were selected to appear in the Burlington Free Press' Young Writers Project on Jan. 29. Calling her poem "Mind Watcher," Annika wrote about how movies project what a person's mind sees through that person's imagination. In a current setting these days in theaters, due to coronavirus infestation, the author sits alone as her thoughts parade their way across the screen. Soon the theater fills as people from the author's future "trickle in." As the author left, everyone left with her and the next person came in to begin his viewing. And so it went.

In an "Ode to Strangers," Lila talks about moments she has shared with strangers, most often happening in spots and at times when they are unexpected—a "warm smile from an elderly woman walking down the street," someone opening a door for her, a kid looking up at her with an earnest glance as he hands her the hat she dropped. She says that while they are all strangers, they are "all aware of each other's presence yet completely inside their own worlds." She ends her poem by saying to all the strangers she sees, "Although we've never met, I think I miss you most of all."

to **Courtney McDermott** and **Margaret Eagan** who had their poems selected to appear in the Feb. 5 Young Writers Workshop of the Burlington Free Press. Margaret's "Letters" asks the reader to answer whether we are all just "inky swirls scrawled across the page"—letters—just "As and Ts crossed before the end?" Our lives depend on vowels.

Courtney's poem is titled "Something Simple." In it she says that "while life seems to form out of many simple things, we seldom think of them at the time they occur." The author goes on to say she is always thinking of last year, yesterday—"something I never bothered to appreciate at the time, or something you (reader) didn't." She closes by asking simple questions that she will "never bother to think about again."

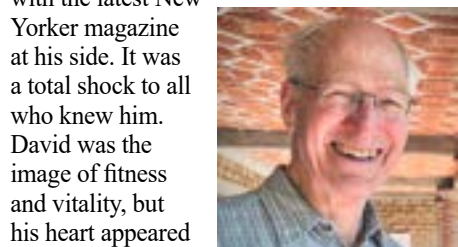
Sympathies:

are extended to family and friends of **Rita Kieslick Johnson** of South Burlington who passed away Jan. 27 at the age of 94. She and her husband, Donald Johnson, began the Overhead Door Company of Burlington, which grew over her tenure to include offices in three other towns in New Hampshire and Vermont. Following her retirement as the company's president in 1999, its management was picked up by members of her family who continue to run it. She is survived by her daughter, Lynn, and Lynn's husband, Tony Cairns, of Charlotte and Bonita Springs, Fla. Her family included seven grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

are extended to family and friends of **Norman Leduc**, now of Rockledge, Fla., previously of South Burlington, who passed away Jan. 27 at the age of 82. He married his wife, Jeanne Laberge, in Charlotte, and they lived for a number of years on their farm on Cheesefactory Road in South Burlington. His brother-in-law Louis Laberge of Charlotte died before Norm did. The family asks that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made to ReflectionsLSC.org.

David Watts (1945-2021)

In the wee hours of Saturday morning, Jan. 16, 2021 David died in his sleep on the couch with the latest New Yorker magazine at his side. It was a total shock to all who knew him. David was the image of fitness and vitality, but his heart appeared to fail him after 75 active years. If you knew David at all, you knew him entirely because he was just as he appeared—generous, kind, enthusiastic, principled, optimistic and loving—no pretensions and a real mensch.



David Watts

The best day of his life—David stated often and emphatically—was the day he became a father. He adored his three sons, Tucker, Ethan and Brooks Bond-Watts, and his wife,

Lynne Bond—his partner and collaborator in parenting and adventure. Delighted as his family grew, David dearly loved Tucker's wife, Kristen, Brooks' wife, Diana, and their two children, Katie and Misha. His niece Molly was like a daughter to him; his brother Lanny was his very best friend; his sister Linda was a dear life-long connection; Omar Granados came to be seen as an "honorary son." David got such joy from his family and friends, and from their families and friends. The circle was ever expanding and David ever welcoming.

David's life is difficult to summarize because it extended in so many directions. A day on the ski slopes, camping in the woods, canoeing, and roaming the world with friends and family, especially with his sons, brought him pure delight. As David strolled through Burlington, his companions would often call him "the Mayor" because everyone seemed to know him, folks from all walks of life. David explained that what he loved best about his occupation as a lawyer was his opportunity to "learn everyone's stories." Nothing satisfied him more than the ability to help family, friends, and clients find ways for life to flow more justly and smoothly.

Born in Middletown, Conn., April 23, 1945, to Fay Bennett and Rowland Watts, David spent his childhood years in Usonia, New York, and graduated from Pleasantville High. Usonia was an unusual, experimental, collaborative community that his parents helped to shape. The commitment of Usonian community members to social justice and equity profoundly affected David's goals and actions throughout his life—his pursuit of a legal career as well as volunteer activities that focused on social justice, economic and housing equity, developmental disabilities rights, and family law; and his extraordinary generosity and skills in collaboration, especially supporting those with more limited resources.

A graduate of Haverford College (1967) and Antioch School of Law (1975), David established strong friendships that remained central to his adventures and soul-searching

conversations throughout life. He began his legal practice at Vermont Legal Aid, acting on what he preached and believed. The majority of his law practice was shared with Stephen Blodgett, an important partner, mentor and friend. Paul Volk subsequently joined their firm as well. David was "thinking about retiring" next December 2021 (at age 76!).

Of David's many community and volunteer activities, he was an enthusiastic member of the Charlotte Land Trust. He loved the thoughtful and collaborative spirit and action of the group and was convinced that it made a huge contribution to our community. Perhaps most important to him was his shared leadership of Volunteer Vermont. In response to the racist arsons of many southern Black churches during the mid-1990s, David helped to organize youth and adult service trips from Charlotte and surrounding towns to Summerton, South Carolina, for 15 years, to rebuild community centers and places of worship. He was also instrumental in founding the nonprofit Volunteer Vermont, LLC to raise money for building supplies and trip expenses.

In light of the current pandemic, no formal gathering or celebration of David's life is currently planned. We encourage donations to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the ACLU, and to any local food shelf. Please know that David's family deeply appreciates whatever friendship and care you brought to his life.

The **Charlotte News**

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Lettters to the Editor

Support for Lewis Mudge’s candidacy

To the editor:

I am writing to offer my support for Lewis Mudge’s candidacy for the two-year Selectboard seat. I have found Lewis to be intelligent and committed to Charlotte not just as a place where he has chosen to reside, but where he and his family want to grow roots and give back to their local community.

I strongly believe that in order to better the world in which we live we all need to contribute in some meaningful way. That can mean volunteering at your local food bank, coaching youth sports or acting as a teen mentor, or it can mean serving on your local planning commission or as an elected official. Lewis shares these values both in his professional career as Central Africa Director for Human Rights Watch and in his candidacy for the Charlotte Selectboard. I believe he has a unique set of experiences and skills that he can bring to our town government, and I think he will do so in a respectful and diplomatic manner.

Lewis has a balanced and thoughtful perspective on our community. He is sensitive to what makes Charlotte special that it inspired him and his family to move here in the first place, but he also recognizes that change is inevitable and neither good nor bad on its own. Instead that change should be guided thoughtfully and transparently to achieve the best possible outcomes for our town’s future. In Lewis I believe we will have a Selectboard member who is open to discussion, welcoming of ideas and respectful of our community values. I am confident that he will work hard for our collective best interests.

Lastly, I am encouraged that we have a number of local residents who have thrown their hats in the ring for the two available Selectboard seats. I think we owe them a debt of gratitude as well as to those currently serving and those who have served in the past. The recently passed former Secretary of State George Schultz’s favorite quote was, “Democracy is not a spectator sport.” That has never been more apparent than now. We need committed people willing to serve for the greater public good. But it is also a reminder that our democracy is dependent upon all of us to continue to do our best to contribute in any number of ways, the most basic of which is to exercise our democratic right to vote. So, while the purpose of my letter is to support Lewis’ candidacy, more importantly I would encourage each of you to get informed and simply get out and vote. You can request a mail-in ballot from the Town Clerk or you can vote in person starting Wednesday, Feb. 10. Thank you for your consideration of Lewis Mudge’s candidacy.

Your neighbor,
Evan Langfeldt

Vote for Lewis Mudge for Selectboard

To the editor:

Lewis brings new energy and will be an asset as a member of the Selectboard. He is eager to learn, is a good listener, and wants the best for the residents of Charlotte. His educational background with advanced degrees in law and government will complement this work.

He has a young family that includes his wife and three children, with two in CCS now and their third child will start kindergarten in a couple years. Lewis is a resident living on Greenbush Road. His recent community

activities have included joining the Town Conservation Committee, and communications published in *The Charlotte News* regarding human rights and voicing his opinion regarding the future of East Charlotte. He is a member of the Charlotte Congregational Church, participating as a Sunday School teacher.

Professionally, Lewis is the Central Africa Director at Human Rights Watch. With his recent job promotion, he works remotely from home in Charlotte with occasional trips to Africa. Previous to his current assignment, Lewis completed an assignment with the Peace Corp in Lesotho, Africa, and Habitat for Humanity in North Carolina, plus several consulting and research activities with human rights issues. He also has extensive financial and management experience.

Lewis is investing in Charlotte for the long term. Please support his candidacy.

Thank you,
Lane Morrison

Frank Tenney for Selectboard

My name is Frank Tenney, currently vice chair of the Selectboard. I am on the ballot for the Selectboard three-year term.

First and foremost, I would like to thank all Town employees and volunteers for their amazing dedication and commitment to public service during this time of global and local uncertainty.

The Board has been very busy lately meeting 4, 5 and even 6 times a month. I have attended almost all meetings, and I am up to date on the current and future issues facing the Town.

A partial list of the items discussed or completed recently include:

- 1) The Library addition
- 2) The electric charger station at Town Hall
- 3) The completion of the State Park Road section of the Town Link Trail
- 4) The rollout of the application process and fee schedule for the West Charlotte Village Municipal Wastewater Ordinance
- 5) A new committee to explore and develop the idea of a Charlotte Community Center
- 6) The preemptive removal of Ash trees in the Town Right-of-Way
- 7) A committee to investigate a sand shed to reduce wasted materials and time
- 8) An update to the master plan for the Charlotte Beach, and
- 9) The proposed amendments to the Land Use Regulations and Town Plan Map by the Planning Commission.

The Town Plan and Land Use Regulations updates are important issues for all residents. The Planning Commission has spent two years of open meetings to bring a recommendation to the Selectboard.

These changes will appear on the ballot.

Article 6 – Town Plan Update – This expands the land included in the East Village Commercial District.

Article 7 – Land Use Regulation Update – This reduces the 5 acres residential lot size to 1 acre in the East Village Commercial District and allows septic to be transferred from this district to the Rural District.

Article 8 – Accessory-On-Farm Business – This creates a new separate set of regulations governing these types of businesses.

Article 9 – This corrects grammatical mistakes and updates definitions throughout the Land Use Regulations.

Lettters to the Editor

LETTERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

All of these Articles can be voted on individually. I have heard many comments for and against these recommendations. I voted to place the updates on the ballot since to do otherwise could deny residents the chance to make these decisions for themselves.

I look forward to continue working with the current Selectboard: Matt, Louise, Jim, and whoever wins the two-year term. Even though many people have asked, I will not be littering the roadsides with signs, posters or mailboxes with flyers.

Please help me continue working for Charlotters another three years.

Respectfully,
Frank W. Tenney

Tenney for Selectboard

To the editor:

When Frank Tenney ran for a seat on the Selectboard in 2019, I wrote the endorsement below:

“I have worked with Frank as a member of the zoning board for three years and I have followed his first term as a Charlotte Selectman. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of the town and its regulations. This is priceless when developing and implementing policies that shape the town.

He works well with everyone in Town Hall, is a stickler for detail, and is a good listener. He is thoughtful, honest, and has no agenda other than the responsible preservation and evolution of our community. When you bundle all this into a Charlotte native, Frank makes a valuable contribution that we cannot afford to lose.”

Since then, the Selectboard has made him the board’s vice chair, and his commitment to Charlotte has been plain to see.

Ironically, the era of Zoom town committee meetings has made it easier for everyone to be engaged. You don’t have to leave home.

Frank has taken advantage of this by listening in on the Trails, Recreation, Planning, Park & Wildlife Refuge, and Senior Center meetings. And he is on the Conservation, Energy, Community Center, and Salt Shed committees.

His commitment to Charlotte deserves our continued support.

Thanks,
Stuart Bennett

Trails Committee says yes on Article 4

To the editor:

This year’s Town Meeting will not be like any previous, but the all-volunteer Charlotte Trails Committee is again asking you to vote in favor of Article 4 to fund continued construction on the Town Link Trail that eventually will connect Mt. Philo, the West Village and the Town Beach. Vermont mandates that towns vote each year for funding of multi-year projects like the Town Link Trail.

There are many reasons why trails are a worthwhile investment in our community—improved quality of life, attracting taxpaying families to our town, and a safe way to exercise off of busy roads. But even better proof is in the pudding: because of COVID-19, we counted 220 pedestrians and 110 cyclists using the Town Link Trail during a 10-day period in June. Even on a chilly, gray weekday afternoon in November, there were over 20 pedestrians and a half-dozen bikers on a single section of the trail. These numbers are echoed across Vermont and the country. According

to a UVM study published in December, 70 percent of respondents in Vermont walked outside more because of the pandemic, citing mental health and general well-being as chief benefits. Nationwide, trail usage was up by as much as 80 percent over 2019, according to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.

The growth in trail usage was notable enough for Governor Scott to mention it in his recent annual budget address: “Through the pandemic, we have seen increased use of our trails, paths and parks as folks looked for healthy ways to get out of the house. Let’s make them even more attractive and accessible.” He added that outdoor recreation projects “improve communities, grow economic activity in the areas that need it most, and strengthen our Vermont brand.” It is important that Scott mentioned accessibility. Vermont offers ample challenging terrain for serious hikers, cyclists and skiers, but only municipal trails are wide, smooth and level enough for all kinds of trail users, including children, parents with strollers, and the elderly.

The Trails Committee, which works at the direction of the Selectboard, has been a responsible steward of taxpayers’ hard-earned money. Many have enjoyed the new section of the Town Link Trail that was completed along State Park Road this fall, keeping your tax money in the community by using a Charlotte construction company to do the work. Previous sections of the trail were completed on time and on budget. Trails themselves are among the least expensive forms of community infrastructure. Charlotte has benefited from volunteers spending countless hours planning trails, preparing the ground for construction, putting up signs and kiosks, making GPS maps, and maintaining trails once they are built.

There is a final reason for supporting Article 4. New federal and state grant money that will be available later this year and in 2022 requires local communities to contribute to the costs of trail projects. A favorable vote on Article 4 will position Charlotte to apply for those grants.

Thank you to the citizens of Charlotte for supporting this incredible town asset over the years. We will continue to work hard for you to connect and increase our trails in town. Please vote YES on Article 4!

The Charlotte Trails Committee

Vote NO on LUR Articles 6 & 7

To the editor:

We serve as volunteer members of Charlotte’s Zoning Board of Adjustment. We interpret the intent of the Land Use Regulations to help residents obtain permits for building projects.

However, we write today as Charlotte citizens who care about the future of our town.

We don’t support the proposed amendments to Charlotte’s Land Use Regulations in Articles 6 and 7 that will be on the ballot on Town Meeting Day 2021.

The proposed LUR amendments are part of a broader, thoughtful development initiative that was launched over 10 years ago. Discussions and surveys engaged residents in the plans for development of East Charlotte. The result was a master plan for developing the East Charlotte Village Commercial District with specific recommendations, released in 2010.

Residential development that is “affordable, attractive and walkable” is one of the recommendations.

Other recommendations include maintaining community character, preserving historical properties, enhancing recreational facilities, and encouraging development of commercial

This is one trick pony



How it’s done is a mystery, but this little horse on Greenbush Road is perfectly balanced on the fence...even with snow all around.
Photo by Janice Heilmann

properties like coffee shops or a pub.

These recommendations have been incorporated in the Town Plan, and a key step in moving ahead with the plan is amending the LURs.

We don’t believe the proposed LUR amendments do justice to the range of recommendations in the master plan.

The proposed changes simply relax the LURs to allow greater density of residential development in East Charlotte. That opens up the possibility of development at odds with the intentions of the master plan.

Furthermore, in taking a piecemeal approach to Charlotte’s development, the Town is engaging in “spot zoning.” That is, making a change for a single permissible situation that would not be appropriate for continued growth and development of the community. Spot zoning is generally frowned upon in community development scenarios.

Without the broader context, it’s difficult to picture what East Charlotte will look like in the future.

What will East Charlotte look like after the proposed development? Will we have more wealthy seasonal residents? More young working families with school-age children? More senior citizens? All of the above? What do we consider affordable housing for these populations? What do we consider “attractive?”

By not fully addressing the requirements for residential development as agreed by Charlotte residents in the Town Plan, the proposed amendments to the LURs risk opening the door to development that was not intended or imagined by Charlotte residents in the planning process.

In order to make our votes on the LURs considered and thoughtful, we want a clearer picture of how Charlotte will develop and who will be our new neighbors and the things we will see when driving or walking through the future East Charlotte commercial district.

Until we see that clearer picture, we will vote “No” on the proposed amendments. We ask you to consider doing the same.

Lane Morrison and Matt Zucker

Editor’s note: Matt Zucker is married to Claudia Marshall, who is the publisher of The Charlotte News and the president of its board.

Beware of zoning changes

To the editor:

I’m writing to ask Charlotte voters to take a look at Articles 6 and 7 on the Charlotte Town Meeting ballot which could have significant and swift implications for the character of our town. This is a case where the effect is greater than the sum of its parts.

Existing zoning regulations are nearly the same in East and West Charlotte and allow for appropriate growth and development including Affordable and Senior housing. However, the new proposed changes only impact East Charlotte and would significantly increase the amount of development that could be possible. This includes doubling the land area of the East Charlotte commercial district, allowing for sewage pumping to other parts of town, and decreasing the minimum lot size from 5 acres to 1 acre.

At first glance going from five down to one acre per lot doesn’t seem unreasonable. However, keep in mind that density bonuses already allow 20 Senior housing units, or 10 Affordable housing units, mixed into ¼ acre lots. This multiplying effect would allow the growth potential of the commercial East Charlotte Village to increase from 15 units, today, to upward of 60 units in the future. Why should East Charlotte Village be rezoned to allow five times the density of West Charlotte Village?

Those attending the past few public Charlotte Selectboard Meetings have learned that the properties targeted for potential dense development have insufficient sewage capacity due to poor soils. As a result, sewage would be pumped across borders and potentially into existing nearby neighborhoods. This is completely crazy but would be formally allowed under the new regulations.

We have seen no village plan that would propose infrastructure improvements and address the very real problem of pedestrian/traffic safety. Should these elements be an afterthought and dropped into the taxpayer’s lap?

Let’s promote reasonable growth in East Charlotte and keep zoning density consistent with West Charlotte.

Please vote NO on Articles 6 & 7.

Rick Leonard

Letters to the Editor

LETTERS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Not everyone voted for the Town Plan

To the editor:

First off, I want to offer an apology to Chris Snyder for calling the Kwiniaska development a “debacle.” Poor choice of words.

To the lay person driving by, it’s a bit of a shame that open space is now gone. Do we want the E. Charlotte Village to look more like Shelburne? That’s not why my family lives here. Would it be nice to fix up what we have? Sure.

Second is a quick reminder about the Town Plan and how we got into this predicament about the future of E. Charlotte. As I understand it, the Planning Commission’s job is to help facilitate the Town Plan and bring any changes to residents for a vote.

It’s important to remember that not everyone voted for the Town Plan and not everyone has to agree with how it’s executed. The proposed expansion of the E. Charlotte commercial district and changes to residential density in the area (Articles 6 and 7) are good examples of this.

We are a small town that likes to take it slow. Call me crazy but five acres to one for residential—along with sewage movement outside the village district and an expansion to the commercial district—sounds fast. And the potential impact is still unclear at this late stage in the process.

We have plenty of opportunities available under the current land use regulations in the E. Charlotte Village District. Just because they don’t suit the developer du jour, doesn’t mean we should change them.

Vote NO on Articles 6 and 7.

Alex Bunten

Insights into Charlotte zoning history

To the editor:

I wanted to share some of the history of Charlotte Town Planning.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, I served on the Charlotte Town Planning Commission (three years as a member and seven chairing the commission). This was a time of growth in the town. It included the

possibility of a town sewage plant, senior housing, and the goal of maintaining as much as possible of the rural character that so enhances Charlotte.

The commission began the work of creating the first town plan for Charlotte and possibly the state. Without a plan, the town zoning was set at one-acre residential zoning. To put change and growth temporarily on the shelf, the town initiated “Interim Zoning.” This put Charlotte zoning at a 10-acre minimum for any growth until the town plan could be developed and voters would approve the plan. During this time, surveys were generated that helped direct the “then future” projected for the town.

The main goal, at that time, was to keep our farms and rural beauty and develop a plan without taxing residents, schools, roads and vistas. At this time, the federal government was helping fund sewer systems and wastewater plants, and the Charlotte Selectboard was reviewing possibilities. Working together, what resulted was the decision to pass on the sewer proposal.

The issue of planning for senior housing was also considered. At that time, there were no commercial bus routes running that would accommodate seniors living south of Shelburne and Burlington. And public transportation was important. It was determined that, if senior housing were to be developed down the road, it should occur adjacent to Route 7, which would accommodate bus transportation. The other determination was to maintain Route 7 as a funnel without new access and egress. The light at 7 and Ferry Road came a number of years later.

We considered various zones for residential and rural designations and the feasibility of development rights to provide equity for farmers. There were many hearings, and I fielded some angry phone calls (often while trying to put supper on the table), staying accountable to Charlotte’s farm families who could justifiably state, “My farm is my money in the bank.”

Sadly, most of Charlotte’s farms have disappeared in the past 40-plus years. Saving them should have been a function of the town plan.

The first Charlotte Town Plan was considered an improvement over the old one-acre zoning. For me, it was less than its potential. Five-acre zoning was approved at Town Meeting and maintained until improvements made by subsequent town plans.

As I read about the new zoning proposals for East Charlotte, I see some of the same issues that were addressed over 40 years ago. East Charlotte has remained a rural stop at a four corners and maintained its character. Changing zoning acreage and density will impact traffic, road maintenance, safety, school enrollment, town budgets and taxes and forever, the character of the land. Is that Charlotte’s future?

Nancy Flinn

Proposed changes to East Charlotte Village

To the editor:

We are within days of voting on changes that will forever alter the gentle landscape and quiet character of our sweet little village. Some of us have been watching this slow and painful process of the Planning Commission, and recently the two Selectboard hearings, which were unimpressive to this observer.

Only one Selectboard person had the courage to do the right thing!

As president of the Sheehan Green community for 20-plus years, it is possible that I could speak for some 30+ voters. The Selectboard heard directly from some of them, others wish to not be so vocal. I have been asked to represent a high percentage of them and will attempt to do so with this letter.

Mr. Schneider’s letter in *The Charlotte News* of January 28 alerts us as to what is ahead for our little village of East Charlotte if we vote “yes” on Articles 6 and 7. We are on the cusp of becoming another Columbia, Md.

Let’s talk about what the Planning Commission and the Selectboard are asking us to approve!

- A. Change in density from 5 acres to 1,
- B. Increase of the commercial district acreage by 20+ acres, or 122% increase!
- C. Increase in new residential housing could be up to 75, (the numbers are without specifics from the P.C.)
- D. The ability to pump sewage/septic under the road or across the street. (We know where it is coming from but we don’t know where it is going!) “No answers available but we have our suspicions.”
- E. Different set of LURs (land use regulations) for similar commercial districts in the same town! (Why would we do that?)
- F. No request by the PC or Selectboard for any impact studies before voting! (That seems to me like buying a home and then inviting the house inspector in to see what’s wrong with my decision!)
- G. Absolutely no discussion of the infrastructure needed or the cost to the taxpayers.

Here is the last question: Where will the sewage treatment facility be built?

In summary, it appears to me and others that these proposals will benefit a few to the detriment of many! Please vote “no” on Articles 6 and 7.

Richard Stowe
President of Sheehan Green Homeowners Assoc.

Civility and truthfulness above all else...please!

To the editor:

In the last issue of *The Charlotte News*, you

published a letter by Alex Bunten containing personal attacks on several East Charlotters by name and members of our Planning Commission and Selectboard by reference. In addition, you allowed Alex to make up “facts” about the proposed East Charlotte Zoning Changes up for vote on Town Meeting Day and my plans for my property.

The plan Alex declared that I have for the land behind his house is to put 10 to 12 houses on one acre lots. That is not my plan and the zoning changes only affect four or five acres of my property. Therefore, my net density gain under the new zoning map is three or four units, total. I would like to put the Sheehan house on one acre, but my corner is currently zoned for five-acre lots and the eastern two corners are zoned for one acre lots. I would like to work with the Grange to provide them with more parking and perhaps water and septic capacity if possible. And, I want to do the senior housing allowed under current regulations but made practical by the new regulations. Watch for more details in the next *Charlotte News*.

I believe that Alex’s letter failed to meet the published standards for a Letter to the Editor in *The Charlotte News* and I think that the Board of Directors should review his letter and their policies regarding letters at a future Board meeting.

Most Charlotters know that Alex served honorably as the editor of *The Charlotte News* for several years. One would like to think that the journalistic standards he upheld as editor would have led him to state his opinions as opinions and dispense with all of the name calling.

What some Charlotters may not know is that Alex owns the old Baptist Church in East Charlotte which sits on about half an acre. Three of the folks he attacked by name are his adjoining landowners. Alex’s letter was not a personal expression of his opinion about a civic matter, but a below-the-belt attack on his neighbors unworthy of inclusion in a newspaper founded by the Charlotte Congregational Church.

I’d like to correct Alex’s attack on retiring Selectboard member Carrie Spear. She does not have a conflict of interest in the proposed East Charlotte Zoning change as her store is already in the village commercial district so the additions to that district have no impact on her property. Opposing the zoning change to enlarge the village commercial district would have been a conflict of interest in potentially eliminating competition from businesses that might be built in the expanded commercial area.

The Town of Charlotte does have a conflict-of-interest policy which allows for the creation of a municipal panel to review conflict of interest charges. I have encouraged the Selectboard to activate this panel and I hope you will too. The community has a right to know the truth when a conflict of interest charge is levied against a public official and the official has the right to have their good name cleared if they have done nothing wrong.

I appreciate *The Charlotte News* coverage of the proposed Zoning changes and hope you will continue to provide factual articles and appropriately written opinions in the editions leading up to Town Meeting Day.

Sincerely,
Clark Hinsdale

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Call Andrew at 802 318-6228 or Michael at 802 777-8757 or email any questions to 2848greenbush@gmail.com



Opinion

Taking issue with \$110 per life

Mike Donoghue
CONTRIBUTOR

Something is way out of whack.

Isabel Jennifer Seward, a teenage driver, was fined \$220 for her part in a double-fatal vehicle crash that killed an elderly Ferrisburgh couple last fall in Charlotte.

Were it not for a freelance journalist, we never would have known where to place our outrage.

Chet and Connie Hawkins died in the head-on crash, after Seward, who was 16 at the time, crossed the double yellow-line, striking them.

Seward received a civil traffic ticket for an offense listed as “driving on roadways laned for traffic.” She pleaded no contest to the civil traffic ticket and was assessed \$220 by the Vermont Judicial Bureau. Her mother paid the fine.

Sure, you can be angry a fine was issued in light of the death of two individuals. Or you can be angry about the fact many efforts were made to conceal Seward’s identity from the public eye.

The fine was only made public after reporter Michael Donoghue made a public records request, which Vermont State Police ignored for more than a month. Vermont’s records law requires a prompt response—but also allows up to 10 days for delays in special cases.

When State Police finally filed a response, it had redacted several parts of the civil ticket, including Seward’s name and hometown, Atlanta, Georgia.

And yet, Seward’s fate started with the State Police.

They issued a news release the day of the crash, withholding Seward’s identity. Two days later, the VSP eventually disclosed it. (And much later, the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles provided Seward’s name, hometown and complete crash details in the public accident report filed by State Police.)

Chittenden County State’s Attorney Sarah George was upset with Vermont State Police for releasing Seward’s name as the driver in the fatal crash. George did not want the name public if there was any chance Seward might undergo confidential proceedings in Vermont Family Court for her driving. George could file criminal charges in adult court as well, if warranted. Vermont State Police countered that they had relied on the department’s transparency policy and several legal opinions, the Vermont Constitution, the Vermont Public Records Law and the rules of the Vermont Judiciary—all of them siding with transparency for public records.

Here’s the wrinkle: Since last July, state attorneys, including George, were directed to send cases involving juveniles initially to family court, except for the most serious crimes. Once the case is at family court, the state’s attorney is free to move it to adult criminal court, but needs to indicate the reason for the move is “in the interest of justice.” Adult proceedings are public.

The day after Seward’s name was released by Vermont State Police, Department of Public

“Chet and Connie Hawkins died in the head-on crash, after Seward, who was 16 at the time, crossed the double yellow-line, striking them.”

Safety Commissioner Michael Schirling directed a gag order on all State Police, preventing them from providing any news releases with names of juveniles, including if they are killed or injured. As written, the order also appears to restrict public release about child abductions, AMBER Alerts, missing skiers, overdue hunters and other cases involving children. Schirling’s gag order remains in effect today.

However, the Vermont Judiciary maintains Seward’s name and information are public. And Vermont Attorney General T.J. Donovan has stated that he sides with public transparency in the Seward case.

State Police noted Seward might face legal action in Vermont Family Court as a juvenile, which would be confidential. Vermont Family Court has few options in juvenile cases. Vermont closed its juvenile jail last year. A judge could impose counseling or community service, according to lawyers and

others familiar with family court proceedings. The Vermont Department for Children and Families would be expected to monitor a juvenile long distance for the court.

We concur with the attorney general that you must come down on the side of transparency when it comes to releasing names of teenagers involved in fatal crashes. Also, they need to be public for serious crimes or providing names of children that have been abducted or lost. Period.

If they are given a license, and the responsibility to drive, minors deserve the rights and responsibilities that come from their actions—especially if those actions lead to death.

Earlier this week, an 18-year-old man fired off a round at the University Mall in South Burlington. His alleged actions caused injury. More than likely, he will face a consequence far more severe than a fine, and his name has been plastered all over the news for two days now.

What we hope is four-fold: We hope that the Seward case will be held up as a transparency issue, especially for cases involving minors and serious crimes (especially with death resulting). We hope Schirling’s gag order will be called out and lifted for being short-sighted. We hope when minors commit serious crimes, they are held responsible. And we hope—beyond all else—that no one’s life is reduced to \$110.

This op-ed originally ran in the Rutland Herald/Times Argus.

Town

All hail Old Craggy: New champion crowned

Vince Crockenberg
CHARLOTTE TREE TRIBE

The Charlotte Tree Tribe is pleased to announce a new champion tree, one not previously on the Hamilton Roster: an apple tree owned by Tom Cosinuke and Annie Kelton on Sanctuary Lane. Affectionately known by its owners as Old Craggy, the tree measures 101 inches in diameter—though at 3 feet rather than at 4 ½ feet (hence the asterisk). Deputy Tree Warden Sue Smith and I agreed that Old Craggy deserved a waiver of the standard requirements by virtue of living to what appears to be a grand old age.

If you have a candidate for champion status, including one for a species not yet on the roster, contact me (vince.crockenberg@gmail.com) or Sue (ssmith@gmavt.net) to schedule a visit to confirm the tree's identity and circumference.

A constantly updated Hamilton Roster, which includes information on where the current champion trees reside, can be also found on the Charlotte News website and on the town website.



Featured on the cover: Tom Cosinuke and Annie Kelton are the proud owners of a newly appointed champion apple tree.
Photo by Vince Crockenberg

The South Charlotte Farm and Viewshed Project



Photo courtesy headoverfieldsvt.com

Kate Lampton
CHARLOTTE LAND TRUST

John and Carol Snow have owned property on the east side of Route 7 near the border with North Ferrisburgh since 1994. A few years ago, they subdivided their house, outbuildings and some of the acreage from the open farmland that spread from near Route 7 up toward Mt. Philo Road. Their hope was to create a lot that could be sold to a farmer and to see the land remain in agricultural use. "We learned," John said, "that land does not keep itself open. It needs to be worked."

Meanwhile, Bryan Seward and Katie Rose Leonard had been searching for land to become Katie Rose's own farm, after several years of managing and working on farms for others.

"We've been searching for the perfect place to start a farm since my first growing season 7 years ago," Leonard said. After meeting and discussing the possibilities, John and Carol realized they had found their farmer, and Katie Rose and Bryan knew they had found their farm. "As we reflected on our hopes for this land we realized that our vision of keeping it open and worked required some new partners who could share that vision. We found them in Bryan and Katie Rose," Carol said.

The Charlotte Land Trust and the Vermont Land Trust are working in partnership to conserve the Snows' 71 acres of excellent farmland that is also a major portion of the Mt Philo viewshed. Other than a house for Bryan and Katie Rose that will be built on adjacent unconserved land, the farmland will be preserved for continued agricultural use. Major funding commitments have been received from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and the Town of Charlotte Conservation Fund. CLT is committed to raising \$25,000 toward funding for the project in time for a closing in March.

The South Charlotte Farm and Viewshed Project is a striking example of the multiple benefits of land conservation. From the summit of Mt Philo, the most visited state park in Vermont, and from Mt Philo Road the view of the Snow property is a prominent part of the patchwork of fields, streams and woodland that compose this iconic Champlain Valley scene. Conservation will protect the scenic vistas of the property and its place in the larger viewshed. Almost the entire acreage to be conserved is ranked in the highest categories of agricultural soils. Conservation will also protect a small wooded section of the property traversed by a tributary of Kimball Brook with protection guidelines in the conservation easement specific to water quality and wildlife habitat.

Conservation is about preserving land, but it is also an economic driver. Conservation will make this land affordable enough for a young couple to purchase it as their first farm, becoming an important addition to the agricultural economy of Charlotte. Katie Rose will grow a diversified organic mix of produce and flowers. An existing farm structure on Route 7 is being converted to a farmstand. Katie Rose said, "For us, conserving this land is about ensuring it remains an active part of Charlotte's incredible working landscape and is forever protected from over development. It's also about accessibility for generations of farmers to come."

More information about Katie Rose's new farm can be found at www.headoverfieldsvt.com. If you would like to help conserve this special land, donations for the project can be made to the Charlotte Land Trust, P.O. Box 43, Charlotte, VT 05445. To donate online please visit: charlottelandtrust.org.

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Correction and ommission

In the Jan. 28 issue, the article "Assistant position in the works, other Selectboard business," we incorrectly explained the plowing situation on Plouffe Lane and the parking on its nearby trails. The trails are owned by the town; the road is not a town highway. Gregg Beldock currently plows Plouffe Lane, in a fashion which creates a berm that blocks entry to the parking area at the Town's parcel. The Selectboard hired Karol Halack to plow the Town's driveway and parking area.

In thanking our much-appreciated volunteers in our Dec. 17, 2020 issue, we inadvertently left out Junior Tuiqere, who cheerfully and efficiently delivers newspapers to various newsstands in the area. Thanks, Junior!

**Send us
your photos!**



Charlotte events, people or places.
We want to publish your photos.
Email them to:
news@TheCharlotteNews.org

The Charlotte News

Into The Woods

Giving forestry “The Agriculture Treatment”

Ethan Tapper
CONTRIBUTOR

When forest management is done well it makes our forests healthier, more complex and more resilient; provides incredible habitat for wildlife; and produces local, renewable resources. Responsible forest management supports many things we value, from healthy local economies and ecology to the culture and the character of our communities. As someone who believes in forest management, a big part of my job involves diffusing misunderstandings about it, asking people to reexamine deeply rooted misconceptions about forestry and logging. I do this because I genuinely believe that forest management can be part of how we build a better world.

Recently, I’ve been marveling at the amazing culture we’ve built around local agriculture in Vermont and wondering why the same pride doesn’t always apply to local forestry. Forest management and agriculture have a lot in common: they are both types of land use, in which we manage our environment for a renewable resource. In the case of agriculture, it provides us with delicious food. In the case of forestry, it provides us with beautiful wood. But, while we love and celebrate the farms that dot our landscape and the farmers and the food that show up at summer farmer’s markets, forestry receives a much less universally warm treatment.

Like agriculture, forestry can be done in different ways and at different scales. Comparing historic and industrial forestry practices to forest management in Chittenden County is like comparing industrial agriculture in the Midwest with Vermont’s local organic farms. Like farming, forest management can be extractive and commodity focused, or it can be regenerative, producing amazing renewable resources while leaving a healthier ecosystem in its wake.

An important part of understanding our role with respect to forests and other ecosystems means recognizing that the question is not *if* we want to have an impact. Rather, it is: *what do we want that impact to be?* Humans always have and always will consume resources—the things we eat, we wear, we use to fuel our lives. Everything is made of something and comes from somewhere—and there is no way to extract, process and transport resources without having an impact on ecosystems. Depending on the resource, those impacts could be minor or ephemeral (as in the case of most renewable resources) or major and

permanent (as is the case of many non-renewable resources).

The cheapness and availability of non-local resources allows us to pretend that we can consume without costs to our ecosystems, but it doesn’t erase those impacts—it just displaces them to peoples and ecosystems somewhere else, perhaps at environmental and social costs that we wouldn’t find acceptable if they were in our communities.

In forestry, as in agriculture, if we can move past denying that our actions have environmental impacts, we can start being proactive. Using local resources, especially local renewable resources, means owning those impacts, keeping them right where we can see them. Some of these impacts—benefits to our local economies, our neighbors, the culture and the character of our communities, our working landscape—are easy to own. Others, like the initial messiness of a freshly managed forest or the buzz of a chainsaw from your neighbor’s woodlot, may be a little more challenging.

“Forest management and agriculture have a lot in common: they are both types of land use, in which we manage our environment for a renewable resource.”

Bringing our resource consumption home means that we take the radical step to confront the impacts that our lives have on our world with our eyes wide open. It allows us to actively develop a relationship with our resources, rather than consuming without an understanding of the toll we are taking on ecosystems and

peoples across the world.

The way that we use land and alter ecosystems will always be a compromise. After all, virtually every farm in Vermont (and every one of our houses and businesses) is on a site that was a forest or a wetland just a few hundred years ago. We accept these environmental impacts because they allow us to live happy, healthy lives in a beautiful place, to eat delicious food, and to be warm all winter.

In comparison, forest management is a small compromise—harvesting a renewable resource while keeping ecosystems intact, encouraging great wildlife habitat and the “ecosystem services” that make our world work, keeping our communities beautiful and functional. Treating local forestry like local agriculture is something that may require some of us to re-examine how we think about it—but it’s worth the effort.

Ethan Tapper is the Chittenden County Forester. He can be reached at ethan.tapper@vermont.gov or (802) 585-9099.

Hi, Neighbor!

Stephanie Sumner: Bringing her A-game to Charlotte Central School



Phyl Newbeck
CONTRIBUTOR

Stephanie Sumner just finished what she described as the best professional development experience she's ever had. Sumner has been the lead principal at Charlotte Central School since 2017.

Former Champlain Valley Union principal Val Gardner, who together with Peter Burrows co-directs the Snelling Center for Government's Vermont School Leadership Project, was one of her mentors in her early years at CCS and her advisor for her Certificate in Advance Graduate Studies at St. Michael's College. Gardner periodically invites those she has worked with to take part in the Leadership Project, and Sumner was happy to get an invitation and participate last year.

"It was amazing," Sumner said. "I've been lucky to participate in really great professional development during my career, but hands down this was the best I've ever had and the best growth process." Sumner praised Gardner and Burrows for their leadership, knowledge and work as facilitators. "It's a cohort model," she said "so you are with a group of educators who are your colleagues for 18 months. It's great to be able to brainstorm and problem solve and learn among people with the same goals. There was a lot of consulting

and collaborative learning. It's like a giant think tank."

The initial meetings were all at Lake Morey, but when COVID-19 hit, in-person workshops were shut down and the March session was held remotely and had to be scaled back because participants were dealing with transforming their schools to remote learning. "We continued to set up opportunities to check in with each other remotely during the school year," Sumner said. Participants were given the option of attending the July session in person and Sumner chose to do so, together with roughly half of the cohort. The October and November sessions brought almost all of the participants on-site. "In November we had a closure session," Sumner said "where we reflected and shared growth stories and wrapped up the work we had accomplished."

What Sumner really liked about the program was the way it allowed her to focus on leadership skills. "When I think about the entire experience, it really was a process of continually zooming in and out," she said. "I got to look in at myself and also at the systems we have in place and then how I go into the systems, and then come back out to reflect on what I've done."

Sumner started her teaching career in 1996 with 4th grade students and then taught either 5th grade or a combined 5th/6th grade, with the exception of one year as a

math coordinator in 2013 when she first began working at Charlotte Central School. "I'm drawn to the K-4 age group," she said. "I love to see how our students grow, change, learn new things, and recognize and feel pride at what they've learned. Elementary age kids really love school and they are happy to be here and easy to work with."

Sumner and her husband have two teenage children with whom they love to kayak in the summer and skate in the winter. Sumner describes herself as a "recovering runner" who is getting back into the sport after foot injuries. She worked with Girls on the Run for several years before she got hurt. She is a voracious reader and admits that during the pandemic she has become a bit obsessed with puzzles.

Sumner is pleased with how things have been going at CCS. "We've got a lot of things we've done well and will continue to do," she said "and the pandemic has given us the chance to step back, reflect, and prioritize." Before the onset of COVID, the CCS team emphasized play-based learning and social connections and that will continue to be prioritized. "We got more creative with how we used our campus and outdoor education," Sumner said "and that's something we'd like to put more energy into post-pandemic." The team has also designed a vision for enhanced STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) education



Stephanie Sumner Photo contributed

which they hope to continue."

Sumner said she continues to be gratified by the support she has received from the community.

"Being able to come into a school and be with the students has helped sustain me and my teachers during the pandemic," she said. "We feel very lucky that we are back in the building as much as possible because being with the kids is a fun and exciting place to be."

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Contact Editor Chea Evans at chea@thecharlottenews.org.

Out Takes

I wish I could get guns off my plate



Edd Merritt
CONTRIBUTOR

*I've been demoralized
too many times
But now I realize, ah,
ah, no more
I'm gonna get me a
gun
I'm gonna get me a gun
And all those people
who put me down
You better get ready to*

run
'Cause I'm gonna get me a gun
Cat Stevens – I'm Gonna Get Me a Gun

Guns again are an issue—this time at the University Mall in South Burlington. Although, according to news reports, no one was hit directly by a bullet, the fact that guns were the first line of retaliation between feuding groups or individuals once again raises the question of what our culture believes about the value of human life.

The U.S. differs from Great Britain in regard to even police carrying and using weapons. Of the four constituent British countries, only Northern Ireland officers all carry firearms. In the others, some specially trained fire-arms officers carry them, but most do not. This practice goes back to the 19th century and the formation of the Metropolitan Police Service and the fear by the majority of the public that armed officers were detrimental to its safety. Ten years ago there were fewer than 7,000 “Authorized Firearms Officers” and only five incidents where conventional arms were used.

Apparently, however, the continued practice by police is an annual topic of debate.

Not so here, though. I’m drawn back to the incident in Las Vegas in 2017 when a shooter staying in a hotel suite managed to get 47 weapons, loaded with high-capacity magazines, up to his suite and into two of his Nevada homes without being noticed and without having his guns confiscated. Several of these weapons carried high-powered ammunition capable of piercing police armor.

I opened the New York Times Sunday magazine December 20 last year and the main article, which addressed the debate over vote numbers in the presidential election as counted in Pennsylvania, carried along with it pictures of Trump supporters carrying loaded pistols and AR-15-style rifles plus 160 rounds of ammunition. These weapons and amount of ammunition were meant for hunting people, not game.

Coming from a hunting and gun-club family I was drawn into sporting arms at an early age.

My grandfather owned property that fronted on an hourglass shaped lake with

duck blinds on a point in the lake’s middle. Twice a day the local ducks would migrate from one end to the other—mallards, teal, redheads, canvasbacks, pintails and an occasional ruddy duck.

We would have to arrive in the blinds early in the morning to kill from the first flock. Then we would sit in cold, wet blinds for most of the day until the flocks migrated back to the other end of the lake. Thank goodness Saturday was our primary hunting day and we could listen to the University of Minnesota football broadcast while we awaited the ducks.

I never got into hunting ducks or clay pigeons even though my grandfather gave me a shotgun for my high school graduation. It hung in our home gun closet for years.

To me there is a difference between shotguns carried by my family and handguns and multiple-round rifles carried by the protesters at the capital last month. I feel strongly that these latter weapons ought to be banned because they were developed primarily to hunt people, not birds.

I have held to that opinion. Lately, however, I questioned it after reading two opinion pieces in which the authors support protecting themselves through their own gun carrying.

Charles Blow in the Times last December wrote about being Black and armed, saying that the “surge in Black gun-buying is a response to America’s failing to create a society where all citizens feel safe.” His home town in Louisiana was predominantly Black and “gun ownership was the norm . . . including in the Black community.” Before the Civil War, gun ownership by Blacks had been prohibited, and many of them saw this as an attempt to block them from defending themselves. Although Blow believes that fewer guns in his Black community would make it safer, he does note that due to the “unrelenting series of unarmed Black people being killed on video . . . gun sales to Black Americans were up 58 percent through September.” He wishes that America could have created a society that felt safe “without the need for personal firearms. . . However, it chose not to.” “Many Black people feel the need to defend themselves from their own country.” Roger Cohen, another Times correspondent, said freedom had become the muzzle of a Glock.

Let us hope that, despite the recent incident in the mall, weapons should not be a solution to disagreement.

Life on earth should not depend on our ability to threaten the death of others. Despite what John Lennon said, happiness is not a warm gun.

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Health

COVID vaccine in Vermont

Elizabeth Hunt, M.D., FAAP,
with CCS students Audrey Neilson, Kenna
Hutchins and Holly Lian, with the guidance of
science teacher Andrew Lounsbury

At the time of publication there will have been nearly 500,000 deaths in the United States from COVID-19 and over 100 million cases worldwide. There is good news on the horizon; many vaccines are here or in development. The vaccines referenced in this article or in development have largely illustrated the ability to prevent significant symptomatic infection, hospitalization and death.

COVID vaccines will help our communities develop herd immunity, where most people are protected against infection from the virus, and therefore lower the degree of overall spread. Scientists still cannot say for certain how long immunity lasts or whether a vaccine is better at preventing infection than having had COVID-19 infection itself.

We do know that mass vaccination will slow spread and death from this virus. On Dec. 11, 2020, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued the first emergency use authorization (EUA) for a vaccine for the prevention of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by the coronavirus we are all focused on (SARS-CoV-2) in adult humans.

The emergency use authorization allowed

the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 (people 16 years and older are eligible) and Moderna vaccines (age 18 years and older) to be distributed in the U.S., and the campaign began in our state on Dec. 15, 2020.

New developments emerge almost daily. At the time of publication it is likely Johnson and Johnson will have applied for an EUA for their single shot Janssen vaccine, which has been trialed in over 40,000 people (with no anaphylaxis side effects) and showed 85% efficacy in preventing severe disease. The newer vaccines are almost all 100% effective against severe disease and remain in development: AstroZeneca/Oxford, Novavax, J & J, Gamaleya National Research.

Effectiveness of vaccine against emerging variants and re-infection is an active area of study at present. In his press briefing on Feb. 2, Governor Scott alluded to ways to boost the import of vaccine to Vermont and stated that we should see more in coming weeks. There are currently vaccine appointments available through the Vermont Department of Health for Vermonters age 75 and older. The next age band will be in Vermonters age 70 and over, and then 65 years and up will follow. You need to have had your birthday and be the actual age to sign up.

Kinney Drugs pharmacies are the only Vermont official vaccine delivery partner, and you can sign up for a vaccine at



Image by hakan german from Pixabay

Kinney's on either the Kinney website or the state website. The COVID-19 vaccine should be given 14 days apart from any other vaccine.

To get your vaccine, sign up on this website: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine/getting-covid-19-vaccine>. There is a video on this website on exactly how to register. Or go to <https://kinneydrugs.com/pharmacy/covid-19/vaccination-scheduling/vt/>, or call 855-722-7878.

Here is some helpful background information on immunizations from Charlotte Central School students to round out this conversation regarding COVID-19 vaccine:

Your immune system plays a huge part in how your body protects you from diseases and viruses. One part of your immune system is something called an antibody, or immunoglobulins, that is produced by the immune system when the body recognizes a pathogen (a disease-causing organism). These act as the defense system for your body and have specific pathogens that they protect you from. They latch themselves onto specific antigens (foreign substances that the body recognizes as something harmful) and then call for another part of the immune system called lymphocytes to

come and destroy the harmful antibody.

Once they are made, the antibodies stay in your immune system to help fight off future antibodies. Vaccines contain a weakened or inactive part of the antigen that triggers the immune system to make antibodies against the weakened antigen, so that they are not harmed by the antigen, but the immune system can train itself for future encounters with a more harmful version of this antigen.

COVID mRNA vaccines are a new vaccine that scientists have made to combat COVID. The mRNA vaccines work by giving our cells a piece of something called a spike protein. A spike protein is the reason our bodies get infected by viruses. Spike proteins have little spikes (hence the name) that act like keys to get into our bodies. Once they're in our bodies they can multiply, infecting our bodies. When the mRNA vaccine puts the instructions in your immune cells, the cells then know how to make a piece of a protein that can fight off the virus. Once the cells know how to make the proteins, they break down the instructions and get rid of them. After our bodies make the proteins, our bodies can fight off the virus when we get infected, keeping us safe.

The rink's up and running

Rink master Bill Fraser-Harris has been waiting for this moment for weeks; the Charlotte Public Ice Rink is finally frozen. He said it is “so good to finally have ice and a decent, skateable surface...It was really well used over the weekend. Flooding continues, thanks to Ed and Craig for their multiple shifts in pretty cold weather, and to Dave S. for tractor work...with more snow coming for him to clear.”

Photos by Bill Fraser-Harris



Education

College app assessments are changing, but writing isn't going away

Margo Bartsch

As the COVID-19 pandemic hits the one-year mark, many changes to the college admissions process have become the new normal. During this recent 2020–21 application season, all colleges have become test-optional, and many are already announcing that they will continue being test-optional for the upcoming 2021–22 application year. In addition, the College Board, which administers the SAT, subject tests (SAT-2s) and AP exams announced last month that they will be eliminating the essay section of the SAT after the June 2021 test date and that the hour-long subject tests have been permanently discontinued. The ACT has not announced scrapping their essay. With all the ongoing changes on the horizon, families should be aware that the purpose of testing has not gone away; rather, tests have been replaced with other measurement assessments.

The SAT and ACT essays have been scored components of both exams. The written essay measures the ability of a student to write within a set time (SAT in 50 minutes and the ACT in 40 minutes), organize their ideas in a structure and with a theme, and highlight their critical analysis. The essay sections are optional, but they are scored to show a student's performance with reading comprehension, writing deduction and outline structure. The essays allow colleges to compare candidates within a standardized, timed setting and uniform essay prompt.

To continue the ability to measure a student's writing effectiveness, the Common Application (required by nearly all colleges)

has added an additional 250-word essay about the effects of Covid-19 on a student's life and learning environment. Although the essay is optional, this is an important opportunity to reflect on this past year, how a student has shifted family responsibilities and engaged in the community. Colleges want to understand character traits and values that can be extended to the college community. Writing within a short structure still requires an outline, main idea and various paragraphs to trace challenge and growth.

Also, most colleges have added essays to their specific application forms (supplemental essays). For example, this year, the University of Vermont included a choice of five essay prompts to consider: "What Ben & Jerry's ice cream flavor best describes you?" and "How do you create meaningful connections with those who have differing opinions than you?" Although the UVM essays are optional, this is a test as to how a student writes within 500 words and shares some insight about their interests with the Admissions Committee.

Some colleges have required additional essays to get to know more about the student's academic interests. Dartmouth included a choice of six prompts with most referencing authors and thought-leaders within a shorter, 300-word count. Colleges review these writing samples with similar criteria as the SAT and ACT essay. Memorable writing includes a compelling theme, logical structure and personalized tone to get to know the student and assess how they will fit into the campus community.

As for the subject tests, most parents did not have this test option when they were applying to college. The purpose of SAT-2s was to



Photo by Tirachard Kumtanom from Pexels

test subject competency in one hour within a multiple-choice format. Similar to the AP exams, the core subjects include history, math, science and foreign languages. The New York Times reported on Jan. 19 that this test was dropped to "... place a greater importance on Advanced Placement tests."

The AP exams were revised in May of 2020 to an online format. When most high schools were closed during the pandemic, the College Board created the new AP test with one essay prompt or multiple math or science equations. With the new written format, students must show their work, organize the structure of their response, and submit their analysis within the hour. Having solid writing skills to outline top points and draw a persuasive conclusion are all essential elements of the

scoring process.

The saying "There is more than one way to skin a cat" rings true with the college application process. Both testing assessments and college essays highlight the need to write structured and engaging analysis and reflections that share a student's academic knowledge and personal interests. Although various application requirements may evolve, the core root of knowledge and expression are best represented with compelling and insightful writing. Great essays reveal how a student's past will influence their future.

Margo Bartsch founded College Essay Coach, a full-service college admission business, and has been an adjunct professor in business at Champlain College and at Middlebury College.

New CCS FUND helps families in urgent need

Jen Novak
PRESIDENT, CCS PTO

The Charlotte Central School PTO, in collaboration with the CCS administration, is pleased to announce the development of the CCS Family Urgent Need Donations. The purpose of this fund is to assist families in the school community with support for purchasing children's clothing, food, school supplies, and funding for items necessary for school participation and school-sponsored, co-curricular activities.

The fund can also be used to provide short-term relief from financial stress for families of CCS students like monthly bills, utilities and transportation costs. The goal is to provide immediate support for families with an urgent need that other support services would not be able to meet in a timely manner. Families in need will work with a school counselor to empower and support them to access sustainable community resources in addition to accessing this fund.

The CCS FUND committee, made up of PTO members and school administrators, will follow important guidelines for making

decisions. These include family-centered decision-making, a clear and urgent need, and equity in the system, with families able to access funds up to three times an academic year. Families can access this fund by contacting school counselor Betsy Lloyd or CCS co-principals Stephanie Sumner or Jen Roth. Anyone requesting support through this fund will be kept strictly confidential and will be known only to the members of the CCS FUND committee.

We hope this will significantly benefit families in our community who have an immediate and urgent need. Given the

current circumstances of living through a pandemic, which has caused greater economic challenges for many, we feel this is a timely initiative. The need may be greater than ever.

The PTO will raise money for this fund through fundraising efforts and community donations. Anyone wishing to support this initiative can donate by sending cash or check to CCS PTO at P.O. Box 244, Charlotte, with a notation of CCS FUND. Donations can also easily be made by PayPal at Charlotte Central School PTO.



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Sports

Nordic and Alpine ski racers hit trails and slopes



Edd Merritt
CONTRIBUTOR

CVU's ski racers saw only members of their own team on trails as they raced through the woods and down the slalom courses. This wariness of clustering several teams together was designed to limit the possibilities of

interpersonal contact and, hence, the chance for corona infection.

January 27 saw Nordic racers carry out a 4K Classic run at Sleepy Hollow. Charlotte's Finn Mittelstadt led the Redhawk women, finishing in second place, less than a minute behind the winner from Burlington High School. Maddie Haydock and Ava Rohrbaugh finished among the top 32 skiers.

Charlotte's Matthew Servin finished sixth among men, with his teammate George DeBosse slightly ahead of him in fifth. Skyler Heininger and Sam Holmes were other Charlotters near the top of the board, and Sam Haydock completed the course in 34th place.

The Essex Carnival allowed the Alpine racers to test their slalom skills at Smuggler's Notch the following week. Both men's and women's Redhawk teams ranked first, ahead of second-place St. Johnsbury Academy and four other schools.

Among the women CVU's Olivia Zubarick, Dicey Manning and Ella Lisle took first, second and third places through their combined times. Kate Kogut placed ninth and Charlotte Couperthwait tenth.

On the men's side, six of the top ten individuals were Redhawks. Ethan Lisle placed first, Ari Diamond third, Sean Gilliam fifth, Will Bartley sixth, Peter Gilliam eighth, Cody Van Dine ninth and Kyle Marvin tenth.

Governor sets Feb. 12 as potential start date for winter sports

During a media briefing on Friday, Governor Scott said that high school and youth sports competition could start the end of this week. Snow sports



High school Nordic teams race in clusters to limit contact with students from other areas.

Photo by Al Frey

such as Nordic and Alpine skiing have been going with racers competing by themselves and only others from their team. No general spectators were present.

Moving to low-contact indoor sports, teams will be allowed to conduct virtual meets, according to Julie Moore, chair of the state's task force on restarting scholastic sports.

Megan Nick flips on a world-class stage

CVU grad from Shelburne, Megan Nick recently won her first World Cup event as a freestyle aerialist, in Yaroslavl, Russia.

Megan graduated from CVU in 2014. While a student there, her primary sport had been gymnastics. However, she and a group of gymnasts decided to attend a freestyle ski aerials tryout camp in Lake Placid, which led Megan to a national development program in Utah. Since then it has been down European slopes for her. Her first U.S. stop is this week in Deer Valley, Utah.



Megan Nick

Photo courtesy usskiandsnowboard.org

As an aerialist she demonstrates her ability to carry out tricks while in the air, coming down the slope. It requires body control that can only be developed through lengthy practice.

Rotary high school speech contest registration open

Staff report

Charlotte Shelburne Hinesburg Rotary will hold its annual high school speech contest via Zoom on March 10 at 7:30 a.m. This year's topic is "How can you and your local Rotary Clubs work together to improve your community and open new opportunities for you and other students?"

Students will deliver a five-minute speech relating this topic to teamwork and community values. The winner will receive a cash prize of \$100 and the opportunity to compete at the Rotary District 7850 contest. Winners of the District level receive an additional \$150.

To register, or for more information, contact Carrie Fenn at carriefenn@gmail.com or 802-999-1024. Registrations are due by March 3, 2021. For more information on the speech contest go to rotaryclubofcsh.org.



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Town

CVSD universal PreK enrollment is open

Staff report

Champlain Valley School District offers publicly funded Prekindergarten for children between the ages of three and five who reside in Charlotte, Hinesburg, Shelburne, St. George and Williston. They are now enrolling for the 2021–22 school year.

What is publicly funded prekindergarten education?

Publicly funded prekindergarten is defined as:

- Ten hours per week (for 35 weeks) of developmentally appropriate early learning experiences that is based on Vermont's Early Learning Standards.
- Children who reside in Charlotte, Hinesburg, Shelburne, St. George and Williston and will be 3, 4 or 5 years old and not attending kindergarten on or before September 1, 2021 are eligible for universal PreK funding from CVSD. Funding is limited to 35 weeks during the academic school year (September 2021–June 2022).

*Children must be *at least* 3 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2021 to qualify for prekindergarten funding.

What should CVSD families know about universal/publicly funded PreK?

- Publicly funded PreK services can be found in schools and qualified community-based programs (homes and centers). This link will bring you to a data base of qualified PreK providers in Vermont: <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/2020-2021-public-and-private-prekindergarten-providers-list-and-prequalification-status>.

- The state tuition rate paid to community-based private PreK providers on behalf of CVSD children attending prekindergarten during the 2021–22 school year is \$3,536.

How do I apply?

- If your child is going to attend a qualified prekindergarten program outside of the school (in the community), you will have to enroll both with the community program/provider for your child's place in the program and with your school district to ensure PreK funding for your child is sent to the program. The full registration packet is available on CVSD's website at: <https://sites.google.com/cvsdvt.org/cvsd-early-education/universal-preschool>
- If you would like information about PreK programs offered in a CVSD school contact your local school about the lottery.

If you have questions about the CVSD registration process, contact Wendy Clark at wclark@cvsdvt.org or 985-1903. If you have questions about publicly funded Prekindergarten, contact Shelley Henson at shenson@cvsdvt.org or 985-1936.



Bird invasion incoming



Photos and caption by Hank Kaestner

You may have seen some different birds at your feeder recently. This year is an invasion year for common redpolls. There are five northern Canada birds that, due to a shortage in food sources further north, will from time to time irrupt southward and enter the United States in large numbers. In past winters we have seen invasions of snowy owls (there are some in Vermont this year but not a major invasion), bohemian waxwings, pine grosbeaks and evening grosbeaks. This phenomenon happens every five to 10 years, usually during a different year for each of the species.

The invader this winter is the common redpoll. Large flocks were first seen just before Christmas along East Thompson's Point Road, and now the redpolls are beginning to discover bird feeders (of course, they are not used to that food source in their native range in the tundra of Canada). This photo is of a male common redpoll sharing the feeder with a winter-plumaged American goldfinch. Redpolls are very closely related to goldfinches.



Whereas goldfinches, and almost all other species of birds, are found only on one continent or the other, redpolls are breed across the globe in the arctic regions of North America, Europe and Asia. In 1852 they were introduced to New Zealand and now are a common bird there.

With COVID-19 keeping so many of us at home, bird feeders have become a constant source of pleasure, as we can watch from our windows as our feathered friends come for a meal.

Academic achievements abound

Staff report

Congratulations to these high-achieving, hard-working students who had great success despite the challenges of a pandemic:

Elizabeth Breen was named to fall 2020 dean's list at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass.

James Fox was named to the fall 2020 dean's list at Champlain College in Burlington.

Lily Menk was named to the fall 2020 dean's list at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University in Syracuse, N.Y.

Julie Sulva has been named to the dean's list at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, N.H.

Cooper T. Whalen, a senior at Champlain Valley Union High School, has been named one of more than 4,500 candidates in the 2021 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. The candidates were selected from nearly 3.6 million students expected to graduate from U.S. high schools in the year 2021. Inclusion in the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program is one of the highest honors bestowed upon graduating high school seniors. Scholars are selected on the basis of superior academic and artistic achievements, leadership qualities, strong character and involvement in community and school activities.

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Town

Library news



Margaret Woodruff
DIRECTOR

Although the ground is still frozen, many of us turn our thoughts to spring planting and garden planning in February. If you're looking for seeds, seed catalogs or garden know-how, the Charlotte Seed

Library can help! We make available small packets (of 6-8 seeds) of selected heirloom vegetable, herb and pollinator-friendly or edible flower seeds each spring, and offer a variety of educational programs and activities throughout the year. Our website includes reliable references on topics such as eco-friendly permaculture and garden design, composting and vermiculture, how to save seeds, managing for pests and disease, and more. Follow our blog to stay informed about current and upcoming programs.

If you need to buy seeds for this year, we urge you to do so as soon as possible. The demand is higher than ever and supplies can run out quickly. We've placed free catalogs from some of our favorite organic/heirloom seed sources in the Library's foyer (open during book pick-up hours). Help yourself. If nothing else, they will inspire you with the possibilities!

Heirloom variety seeds offered this year by the Seed Library are listed in our 2021 Seed Catalog, along with tips on saving seeds from them. The 2021 Catalog is available right here, and paper copies are in the Library foyer. Request seeds from the Catalog by emailing us at Seed@charlottepubliclibrary.org and we will arrange contact-less pick-up in the Library foyer. <https://charlotteseedlibrary.files.wordpress.com/2021/02/2021-csl-catalog.pdf>

Upcoming Programs at the Charlotte Library

Please contact the library at info@charlottepubliclibrary.org for the Zoom registration links to our programs.

Valentine Activities:

Bring home one of these "Take & Make" kits, available in the library vestibule.

Adults: indulge your craftiness with origami and cookie projects as well as tea and sweets.

Kids: make up a heart-shaped seed bomb to give to your favorite gardener for Valentine's Day. Reward yourself a cup of hot chocolate using the library's cocoa recipe set.



Coding Club

Wednesdays, 3 p.m.

Get coding with Susanna and coding mentor Charlie! All levels are welcome to learn Scratch or hone their Scratch skills. Ready to take your coding know-how to the next level? We will have a breakout room with Charlie to work on different platforms. 4th grade and up.

Book Chat

Fridays, 10 a.m.

Join Margaret for a virtual stroll through the library collections. Focusing on a different topic or theme each week, she'll share new titles and some old favorites. There will be plenty of time to share your ideas and suggestions, too!

Mystery Book Group: *One of Us is Lying*
Monday, Feb. 15, 10 a.m.

The Breakfast Club meets *Pretty Little Liars*, *One of Us is Lying* is the story of what happens when five strangers walk into detention and only four walk out alive. Everyone is a suspect, and everyone has something to hide. Pay close attention and you might solve this.

Only, Simon never makes it out of that classroom. Before the end of detention, Simon's dead. And according to investigators, his death wasn't an accident. On Monday, he died. But on Tuesday, he'd planned to post juicy reveals about all four of his high-profile classmates, which makes all four of them suspects in his murder. Or are they the perfect patsies for a killer who's still on the loose? Everyone has secrets, right? What really matters is how far you would go to protect them. Copies available at the library via porch pickup.

Men's Book Group: *Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World* by Mark Kurlansky

Wednesday, Feb. 17, 7:30 p.m.

The Cod Wars have been fought over it, revolutions have been triggered by it, national diets have been based on it, economies and livelihoods have depended on it. To the millions it has sustained, it has been a treasure more precious than gold. This book spans 1,000 years and four continents. From the Vikings to Clarence Birdseye, Mark Kurlansky introduces the explorers, merchants, writers, chefs and fisherman, whose lives have been interwoven with this prolific fish. He chronicles the cod wars of the 16th and 20th centuries. He blends in recipes and lore from the Middle Ages to the present. In a story that brings world history and human passions into captivating focus, he shows how the most profitable fish in history is today faced with extinction. Copies available at the library via porch pickup.

Rokeby Museum Book Discussion:

Discovering Black Vermont: African American Farmers in Hinesburgh, 1790-1890 by Elise Guyette

Tuesday, Feb. 23, 6:30 p.m.

Register here: <https://rokeby.org/visit/programmevents/>

Copy available at the library via porch pickup.

Library Book Discussion: *The Custom of the Country* by Edith Wharton

Thursday, Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m.

Considered by many to be her masterpiece, Edith Wharton's epic work is a scathing yet personal examination of the exploits and follies of the modern upper class. As she unfolds the story of Undine Spragg, from New York to Europe, Wharton affords us a detailed glimpse of what might be called the interior décor of this America and its nouveau riche fringes. Through a heroine who is as vain, spoiled and selfish as she is irresistibly fascinating, and through a most intricate and satisfying plot that follows Undine's marriages and affairs, she conveys a vision of social behavior that is both supremely informed and supremely disenchanted. Copies available at the library via porch pickup.

For the latest information about programs, books and activity kits, sign up for our monthly newsletter: Charlotte Library Newsletter.

The library building is closed to the public

but books and other materials available for porch pickup.

Porch pickup hours:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday:

11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tuesday and Thursday:

10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Please call or email to let us know what we can set out for you! Not sure what to read? We're happy to help select books for readers of all ages!

Library Contact Information

Margaret Woodruff, Director
Cheryl Sloan, Youth Services Librarian
Susanna Kahn, Tech Librarian
Phone: 802-425-3864
Email: info@charlottepubliclibrary.org

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The **Charlotte News**



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Town

Charlotte Senior Center news



Carolyn Kulik
SENIOR CENTER
DIRECTOR

Love keeps the cold out better than a cloak.”

~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible.”

~ Oscar Wilde

“A lot of people like snow. I find it to be an unnecessary freezing of water.”

~ Carl Reiner

Love Carl Reiner’s work. Have my own thoughts about snow. For me, when it’s white outside—with families of icicles and blankets of roof snow suspended in mid-slide—it feels like something is right with the world.

Winter season is winding down at CSC—which is not to say that there is not a lot happening—just that other than the Wednesday talks at 1 p.m., there are no new courses that start in February.

The insert for the Spring Schedule covering March through May will be in the 2/25 issue here, and it will be posted on the website. Registration for new courses and activities will begin 3/1 online at CSCZoom@gmavt.net. Please follow directions at the end of this column.

Ongoing exercise courses

‘Ongoing’ means continuing throughout the year, with no end point. Join any week, and continue as long as you wish; pay at the end of the month for the classes you attended.

You are probably aware that not all exercise is equal, but did you realize that we have courses that cover the complete range? There are those that have high intensity, challenging workouts to the more mellow sort of stretching—and everything in between. Starting on the lower intensity

side, there is Chair Yoga and Gentle Yoga, followed by T’ai Chi Ch’uan for Beginners, Essentrics™, Pilates and Pilates Plus. And, for a totally different approach to well-being that is not overtly physical, there is Mindfulness Meditation Practice with Jill Abilock on Wednesday afternoons.

Because everything is on Zoom, all courses require registration. The instructor sends the invitation/link for each class. For course descriptions and days/times, visit: CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org. For registration and payment information, please also see the end of this article.

Ending soon

2/24: Coping with COVID with Karen Chatfield

Wednesday mornings, 11–12 noon.
Last meeting: 2/24.

Registration required by prior Monday. Join your peers to explore coping strategies and share methods you have used to deal with life during the pandemic. This group is designed to provide connections and support as we navigate “the new normal” together. Please note that this group is not intended to be a substitute for therapy or professional mental health treatment. No fee.

2/24: Snowshoe Expeditions with Susan Hyde

Wednesday morning at 11.
Last outing on 2/24.

For more information, please email Susan directly at: susanforsterhyde@gmail.com. No fee.

Talks on Wednesdays at 1 p.m.

These free, interactive events are online via Zoom.

Please note that they do not require registration. The Zoom invitation/link to the talks are posted on the website the day before: CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org. The link also appears in Front Porch Forum for that week.

2/17: Nepal: Through the Eyes of An American with Sandi Detwiler

Nepal, home to Mt. Everest, is a geographically diverse and a multiethnic country situated between India to the south and China to the north. This talk will present the beauty of its people,



culture and land. Included will be pictures of our trek along the Annapurna Circuit as well as pictures of people and places in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur. A virtual visit to Nepal could be the antidote to any winter blues. ~ Sandi was an ESL teacher in American International Schools in Greece, Israel, Bangladesh, Hungary and Brazil where her husband, Rick, served as each school’s director. After 21 years abroad, they returned to Vermont in 2009.

2/24: Here’s Looking at You... Louise Nevelson! with Linda Finkelstein

The art and amazing life of Louise Nevelson will be featured in this engaging hour. Learn how a little girl who fled the Ukraine with her family to Rockland, Maine, became the most celebrated and influential American female sculptor of the 20th century—best known for her monumental, monochromatic, wooden wall assemblages and outdoor sculptures. This experience will be a feast for your eyes and spirit at the end of the winter. ~ Linda Finkelstein is a mixed media artist and former art teacher, with degrees in art history and art education.

Art exhibits

The Senior Center’s monthly art exhibits are suspended until further notice.

Keep being careful. Don’t let up. The end is in sight.

“There comes a time when the world gets quiet and the only thing left is your own heart. So, you’d better learn the sound of it. Otherwise, you’ll never understand what it’s saying.”

~ Sarah Dessen, *Just Listen*

For more expanded descriptions, as well as additional courses and talks, please visit CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org. The mission of the Senior Center is to serve those 50 and up; some course enrollments are limited, and if a course is not full, younger participants are welcome to enroll. Feel free to leave a message anytime at 425-6345; voicemail is checked frequently.

How to Register for a Course

All courses are online—and all require registration in order to receive the invitation/link.

To register, send your name, mailing address and phone number to: CSCZoom@gmavt.net. Be sure to note the title of the course in the subject line of the email. You will receive confirmation that you are registered. Please send a separate email and registration information for each course.

- Payment – If there is a fee, kindly pay by check (made out to CSC) and send to: P.O. Box 207, Charlotte, VT 05445. Be sure to note the title of the course in the memo line.
- For ongoing exercise courses, please pay at the end of each month for the classes attended. Unless otherwise stated, tally your attendance and figure \$5/class.

If fees present a hardship, don’t hesitate to request an adjustment by sending an email to CSCZoom@gmavet.net. We want everyone to be able to keep themselves healthy and engaged, especially during this challenging time.

Questions? Need help with Zooming? Please email: CSCZoom@gmavt.net, or leave a message at (802) 425-6345.

Charlotte Senior Center
802-425-6345
CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org

AMENDMENTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

districts in town, some are concerned that approving these changes for only part of town, and for only a handful of property owners, is the very definition of spot zoning.

How could it not be considered spot zoning?

The history of the intersection where the changes will take place, which is known as Baptist Corners, is varied and extends back for generations. Zoning has changed in this area multiple times, and some say that excluding just this one particular corner from the commercial district goes against the history of the area, and that including it would set the situation back to where it once was previously.

What exactly did the Selectboard vote on last week and was there a conflict of interest for any members?

Last week, the Selectboard voted 4-1 to put these articles forward to voters on the ballot. They did not vote in favor of or against the articles or amendments themselves. Two Selectboard members, Carrie Spear and Frank Tenney, own property that is currently included in the ECVCD. Spear owns a store in the East Village; Tenney’s brother owns a store in the East Village. Neither recused themselves from the vote, giving the reason that they don’t believe they stand to gain anything from sending the issue to the voters, and that they don’t think they would benefit financially or personally should the amendments pass; these decisions are generally left to the individuals potentially conflicted. Some believe that it’s inevitable that property or store owners in the village commercial district, or their families, would eventually benefit financially from increased density. Others think they should have recused themselves to avoid even the appearance of impropriety.

Classifieds

Reach your friends and neighbors for only \$12 per issue. (Payment must be sent before issue date.) Please limit your ad to 35 words or fewer and send it to The Charlotte News Classifieds, P.O. Box 251, Charlotte, VT 05445 or email ads@thecharlottenews.org.

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Charlotte Fire and Rescue Log
January 2021

Friday, Jan. 1

2:25:00 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Saturday, Jan. 2

19:51:00 Intercept
16:24:00 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
8:54:14 Patient Dead at Scene—No Resuscitation Attempted (Without Transport)
8:48:00 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Sunday, Jan. 3

22:38:00 Standby—No Services or Support Provided
18:14:00 Canceled on Scene (No Patient Contact)
14:44:00 Canceled (Prior to Arrival At Scene)

Monday, Jan. 4

21:10:00 Intercept
16:13:10 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Tuesday, Jan. 5

17:06:00 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
13:34:00 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
7:24:00 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
01:29:00 Standby—No Services or Support Provided

Wednesday, Jan. 6

16:00:00 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
14:34:00 Canceled (Prior to Arrival At Scene)

Thursday, Jan. 7

12:35:00 Canceled (Prior to Arrival At Scene)

Saturday, Jan. 9

16:34:00 Canceled (Transferred to Mutual Aid)
15:39:00 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
13:51:00 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
7:43:00 Standby—Public Safety, Fire, or EMS Operational Support Provided

Monday, Jan. 11

18:23:00 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
8:08:00 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Tuesday, Jan. 12

11:38:00 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
10:31:00 Patient Treated, Transferred Care to Another EMS Unit

Wednesday, Jan. 13

9:33:00 Standby—Public Safety, Fire, or EMS Operational Support Provided

Thursday, Jan. 14

22:07:00 Standby—Public Safety, Fire, or EMS Operational Support Provided
15:39:00 Patient Evaluated, No Treatment/Transport Required

Friday, Jan. 15

10:02:00 Intercept
1:17:00 Patient Dead at Scene—No Resuscitation Attempted (Without Transport)

Saturday, Jan. 16

8:08:00 Canceled on Scene (No Patient Contact)

Sunday, Jan. 17

21:38:00 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Monday, Jan. 18

11:06:33 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
Patient Evaluated, No Treatment/Transport Required

Friday, Jan. 22

15:43:45 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Saturday, Jan. 23

12:42:00 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
11:10:00 Standby—Public Safety, Fire, or EMS Operational Support Provided
7:00:00 Patient Evaluated, No Treatment/Transport Required

Wednesday, Jan. 27

12:17:08 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Saturday, Jan. 30

11:01:00 Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Sunday, Jan. 31

8:24:00 Canceled on Scene (No Patient Contact)

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LETTERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Vote yes on amendment and Town Plan articles

Dear Charlotte friends and neighbors,

I am calling with a sense of urgency to ask that you please become well informed about the town plan and regulation articles coming up for vote this year at town meeting. I am reaching out to friends and neighbors right now to say: VOTE YES in support of the proposed articles on Town Meeting Day.

To my recent surprise and great disappointment, I am hearing faulty messaging sweeping about, almost reminding me of Washington, D.C. This is so, so discouraging.

Please be sure you know what we are proposing, and please do not, carte blanche, believe what a few are saying...that the PC is proposing more development in the village without having done our homework...this could not be further from the truth.

The truth is that Charlotte has very detailed and robust regs today (over 100 pages), and would never let any

home be built without a thorough and complete review, including water supply, wastewater, traffic safety etc., etc. Some of you know this very well, while others possibly do not know since you may be newer residents.

In this new round of plan and regulation updates for the East Village, the proposed village-related articles are simply proposing potential to allow for a modest amount of new homes to be built on one-acre lots (vs less affordable five-acre lots) in the village commercial district only. Our regs already provide for far smaller lot size potential for elderly and affordable homes in the entire larger village district. We do not provide for smaller one acre lots for middle income homes. So, to be very conservative, we are only proposing these one-acre lots in the smaller east village commercial district only. That's it.

My biggest interest as a PC member today is to make sure my town has decent affordable places for middle income folks to reside in Charlotte and go to CCS. As a middle incomer myself, I know well that home prices have escalated so much since the 1980s,

that new middle-income families are just not able to make it work.

Many of you know that I have focused my historic community service time on land conservation, and with great success, largely because Charlotte is blessed with abundant and fabulous nature to nurture. And largely because our town has a generous desire to give money to protect our natural assets. This richness is only a problem if we do not provide for an economically and socio-diverse community. For the sake of community health and justice, we all must make this happen with purpose. It will not happen by itself. This is a very important fact to know.

So please read the Town Plan and the regs online. They are our two bibles and we must all treat them as such, and be in this together. The PC depends upon well informed residents. We love our time as community volunteers, but we can't do this without you.

Charlotte is at a crossroad, and I sure do hope our little town can be united in our vision.

Marty Illick
Planning Commission

Winter wonderland



Frost among the trees along Greenbush Road.
Photo by Lee Krohn



View from Charlotte Park.
Photo by Frances Foster

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