

THE CHELSEA MESSENGER



Fall 2024 Issue

Christine Landes - Town Manager
Mike Pushard - Selectboard Chair
Jake Soucy - Selectboard Vice-Chair
Sheri Truman - Selectboard Member

From the Desk of the Town Manager:

Greetings from the Town Manager's office! Once again, the fall season is just around the corner and that means real estate/personal property taxes will be due soon. By the time this newsletter is published, the mil rate and due dates for the 2025 taxes will be established. This year's tax amounts saw increases in the county taxes of almost \$60,000 and a school increase of just a little over \$135,000. The town's portion is budgeted to increase about \$155,000 (most of which are personnel costs, legal fees, law enforcement coverage and an increase in the bond payment for the new fire truck), however, due to decreases in revenue sharing and state exemption(s) funding, there is expected to be a slight increase in the total tax. The final number will be established by the selectboard as they evaluate the use of undesignated funds to adjust the end result to your pocketbook. We understand that taxes are never easy to pay, but here at the town office we diligently work to provide the same or increased services to all of you with no increase in costs. Boards and committees within the town continue to need members to step up and volunteer. Especially lacking members is the planning board. Without members for this independent judicial board, some projects in the town will not be able to move forward as they need review and approval by the board. Another critical piece of having board members is those individuals taking the time to review the town ordinances. Growth will happen within Chelsea, but keeping the ordinances up to date will allow for that desired growth that we as a community need and want. Two big events are being planned for the near future. In progress is celebrating the 175th birthday of the town. A day-long event is scheduled for 2025, but in order for this to happen, a lot more funding has to come in. The committee has placed a bottle bin outside the office if any of you would like to drop off your returnable containers. This is the current fundraising effort in progress but look for it to amp up over the winter. In November, the town will hold its annual tree-lighting event. Marked with the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Claus, a free dinner is being planned, a dessert auction is going to happen, card-making and cookie decorating for the kids will occur, and a beautiful tree will shine with sparkling lights. This is an event that you don't want to miss! Watch for announcements coming out in October. The November election process is in full swing. You may request an absentee ballot via the state website (<https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter-info/absent.html>) and as soon as the ballots are received here at the office it will be mailed to you. This election season is looking to be very busy and with new staff still in the learning mode, please be patient. Your vote matters and we will make sure you have every chance to cast it. As I cross the two-year mark of service to the town of Chelsea, I want to take a moment to thank those that have made this time enjoyable and successful. A lot of charm and town-home feeling comes from Chelsea, and I certainly appreciate that. The people who step up to volunteer are saints, the dedicated people that serve on the selectboard work very hard to make decisions that are in the best interest of the town, and the whole community is amazing and welcoming! I am happy to serve every one of you!

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Shoreland Zoning
by Greg Lumbert, Chelsea CEO

The Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act requires municipalities to adopt land use regulations for all areas within the shoreland zone. The shoreland zone consists of areas within **250 feet of the normal high-water line** of great ponds, rivers, and tidal waters; within 250 feet of the upland edge of non-forested freshwater and coastal wetlands; and within **75 feet of certain streams**. Distances are measured horizontally. The land use controls adopted by the municipalities must be consistent with or no less restrictive than the Board of Environmental Protection's *State of Maine Guidelines for Municipal Shoreland Zoning Ordinances*. Towns can make it more restrictive than the state. Water quality is not the only environmental issue affected by the loss of shorefront vegetation. Valuable habitat is lost, and disturbance of wildlife is greatly increased by the loss of a vegetative "screen". As a result, waterfowl, songbirds, shorebirds, and mammal populations are negatively affected. Generally, in the first **75 feet from the normal high-water line** or the upland edge of a wetland, 40% percent of the volume of trees four inches or more in diameter, measured at 4 1/2 feet above ground level can be removed in any 10-year period, although no "clear-cut openings" (openings in the forest canopy greater than 250 square feet) are permitted. The cutting must be done such that a well-distributed stand of trees and other vegetation remains. This area is commonly referred to as the buffer strip. Adjacent to great ponds and rivers flowing to great ponds, the buffer strip extends for a distance of 100 feet from the normal high-water line. Beyond the buffer strip, vegetative cutting limitations are less restrictive. In this area cleared openings are permitted provided that such clearings do not exceed 25% of the lot area, or ten thousand square feet, whichever is greater. In total, however, no more than 40% of the volume of trees can be removed in any 10-year period from the shoreland zone. The Department's Guidelines define a well-distributed stand of trees and other vegetation by a "point system". This system, which assigns values to trees down to two (2) inches in diameter, requires a certain total value of trees be maintained in each 25-foot by 50-foot square rectangular (1250 square feet) area within the buffer strip. The tree values are based on tree diameters and are as follows:

Diameter of tree at 4.5 feet above ground level (inches)	Points
2 - less than 4	1
4 - less than 8	2
8 - less than 12	4
12 or greater	8

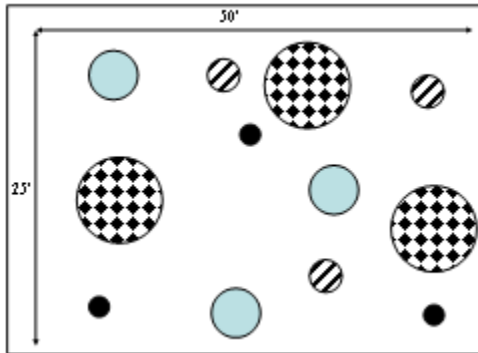
Adjacent to great ponds, and rivers and streams flowing to great ponds, a rating score of 24 or more points must be maintained. Adjacent to other water bodies, tributary streams, and wetlands, a "well-distributed stand of trees and other vegetation" is defined as maintaining a minimum rating score of 16 per 25-foot by 50-foot rectangular area. The point system was created to provide a more enforceable standard for tree cutting activities within the buffer strip.

As an example of the above rating system, adjacent to a great pond, if a 25-foot x 50-foot plot contains three (3) trees between 2 and 4 inches in diameter, three (3) trees between 4 and 8 inches in diameter, three (3) trees between 8 and 12 inches in diameter, and here (3) trees over 12 inches in diameter, the rating score is:

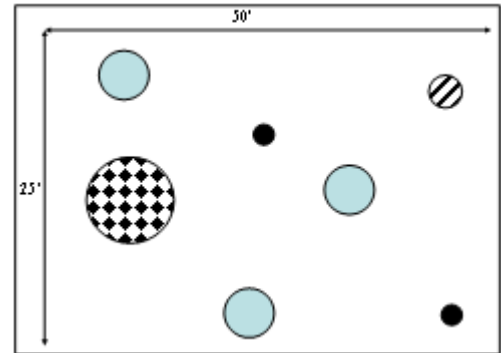
$$(3 \times 1) + (3 \times 2) + (3 \times 4) + (3 \times 8) = 45 \text{ points}$$

Thus, the 25-foot by 50-foot plot contains trees totaling 45 points. Trees totaling 21 points ($45 - 21 = 24$) may be removed from the plot provided that no cleared opening is created. The figure below is just one example of allowable cutting under the point system.

Before (45 points)



After (24 Points)



Any work done in the shoreland zone area, and 75 feet of a stream must have erosion control. Without erosion control your land, more than likely, could be washed away, reducing the amount of land you have. Work done in areas 75 feet or less from the high-water mark more than likely will require a special permit from D.E.P. in addition to a permit from the town. Dead or diseased trees can be removed under certain circumstances. You must get a permit before doing any work. If a tree is diseased, it requires a statement from a licensed arborist. Fines for not getting permits can be very high and in most cases the landowner will be required to replant the area disturbed.

***Annual Town Report
Dedicated to Sharon Burns***



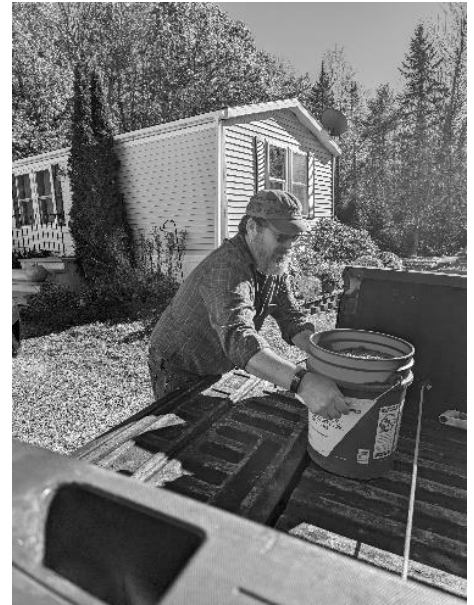
Sharon's roots in Chelsea go back to her grandparents, who emigrated here from Poland. She went to a one room school in town where her mother, for a time, was the teacher. She raised an extended family in Chelsea and, after retiring, became involved in helping the community. She became interested in the ancient, neglected cemeteries in town and spent over 10 years working to document them, restore them and preserve the history they contained. She enlisted family, friends and even the volunteer fire department in her efforts. She paid particular attention to veteran's gravesites, believing that as they risked their lives for us, they must not be forgotten. When the Chelsea Historical Society was reformed, she became a founding member. She gave her time, energy and funds to preserve and teach the history of the town of her birth. Her family and friends are proud of her contributions and thank the town for its recognition of her long time and meaningful efforts.

Sand for Seniors & Resident Sand Saturday

by Dot Grady

Sand for Seniors Program: Residents 60+ can call the town office at 207-582-4802 to have one bucket of sand (**when needed**) delivered to their home for use on stairs and walkways. Deliveries are made by volunteers, October through March.

Resident Sand Saturday: Volunteers will open the sand shed on December 7th, and will continue to do so on the following Saturday's: December 21, 2024, January 11, 2025, and February 15, 2025, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Residents can get up to two 5-gallon buckets of sand for personal use. Must supply your own buckets. Dates subject to change due to availability and weather. If you would like to volunteer and help, please call the town office at 207-582-4802.



Chelsea Grange #215

by Rick Grotton

This is the start of a busy time for Chelsea Grange. Not only do we install our new officers for the year in September, we also are working on our fair exhibit at Litchfield Fair on the first weekend of September. We are proud of the content of our booth which includes canned goods, knitting and sewing entries, paintings and wood art, fresh vegetables and herbs; all of which are made by Grange members. On Halloween evening, October 31, 2024, we will have our annual stop by and pick up a small bag of candy for children and adults too! We start about 4:00p.m. and go on until about 7:00 p.m. Please stop by and get a treat! We have received some estimates for a new lift or elevator to make use of the top floor for future rentals and get togethers. Grange Halls have always been community centers, and we want to make it easier for more citizens to use and enjoy our beloved hall. Fundraising for this cause will be ongoing. Our regular meetings are on the 2nd Saturday of the month, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The public is welcome to come and visit.



Chelsea Historical Society

by Mary Street

The next meeting of the Chelsea Historical Society will be the 3rd Saturday of September at 10:00 a.m. We will meet in person, depending on the weather, in the Riverside Cemetery on Route 226 in Chelsea. We will continue to clean gravestones. We will give hands on lessons to anyone who is interested. If the weather is bad, we will meet in the town office for coffee and cake.



PTA News
by Jennifer Brown



The Chelsea Elementary School Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meets the first Tuesday of each month in the school library at 6:00 p.m. On May 17th the PTA sponsored the Dapper Dance event for Chelsea School students and their families. It was a great turnout with everyone loving the top hats and tiaras. Families dressed to the nines and thoroughly enjoyed the music, graciously DJ'd by Derek Bouchard. Thank you to all who helped put this event on and thank you to all who came out to support us and joined in on the fun! Many of you have shown support to the PTA this year through filling the bottle bin! THANK YOU! Because of the success in this fundraising effort, we have

officially moved forward with the purchase of the digital sign. Electrical work began this month, and we anticipate the delivery and installation of the sign before the start of the school year. We are so excited to see this come to fruition! The PTA will meet in September where we will kick off the upcoming school year with an overview of the year, discuss ideas for fundraising and planning events for our students. Come ready to enjoy some pizza as we kick off the school year! We look forward to seeing new faces who want to come, have a voice, and see the mission of the PTA flourish: To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

175th Celebration
by Pat Finale

The committee has changed its meeting date and is now ***meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 6:00 p.m. at the town office.*** If that date works better for you, please come join us. Ongoing fundraisers include Rata Cutlery; folks tell us this is a wonderful product, so if you missed the big sale, don't worry, the online link is still active (contact us if you need help finding that!). Do you Clynk? The 175th Celebration has an account, and we would love to give you some stickers; perhaps use our sticker for one bag when you take a trip to Clynk with a few bags for your own account? **AND** if you don't Clynk, we invite you to drop off bottles for recycling at the bright yellow bin at the town office. The snowman raffle is already collecting gifts and prizes for the holiday drawing. Do you have a special craft to donate? Perhaps a gift certificate from your business? **AND** find your dancing shoes...our committee is looking at a fundraiser with bands, food and fun. Questions, ideas or donations should be directed to the town office.



Select Board Meeting: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:00 p.m., Chelsea Town Office.

Age-Friendly Chelsea Meeting: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 11:00 a.m., Chelsea Town Office.

Chelsea Elementary School PTA: Meets the 1st Tuesday of the month, 6:00 p.m., Chelsea School Library.

SVRSU #12 School Board: Meets the 2nd Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m., Chelsea School Cafeteria.

Planning Board: Meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:00 p.m., Chelsea Town Office.

Chelsea Grange #215: Meets the 2nd Saturday of the month, 9:30 a.m., 230 Togus Road, Chelsea.

Chelsea Fire Department: Meets every Wednesday, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Hallowell Road Station.

175th Celebration Committee: Meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 6:00 p.m., Chelsea Town Office.

Comprehensive Plan Committee: Meets the 4th Wednesday of the month, 6:30 p.m., Chelsea Town Office.

Together we can make great things happen!