

# MILTON INDEPENDENT

Thursday, January 9, 2020

## STICK TO IT

MHS students warn against underage drinking

By AVALON ASHLEY  
Staff Writer

According to a 2018 report from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 60 percent of high school students nationally surveyed said that they drank alcohol and nearly 30 percent reported that someone gave it to them. In Milton, 67 percent of high school seniors reported having had a drink; 71 percent across the state of Vermont.

To raise awareness amongst youth and adults, Milton High School (MHS) students in the Milton Community Youth Coalition (MCYC) spearheaded a sticker campaign to caution against underage drinking.

"Obviously we hear a lot about the dangers of [drinking]. I think for me, it's the effect of the consequences that we don't actually realize," said Megan Humphrey, a junior at MHS and the oldest in the MCYC group.

During the summer of 2019, Humphrey and fellow Milton students, Dilynn Martin, Emily Reinhardt and Tiana Randall, attended the Teen Institute, a summer camp organized by the Franklin County Caring Community with a focus on youth prevention work in schools and communities. Students attended workshops on communication skills, drugs and the brain, health and sexuality, and restorative justice, among other topics.

At the end of the retreat, the students created an action plan based on their training. One of their projects, in the works since last summer, was the Sticker Shock campaign.

In December, students descended on Frey Family Deli & Convenience in Milton to begin their campaign, sticking bright blue notices to boxes of beer and other popular alcoholic beverages. The stickers read: "Hey there, PLEASE keep this out of the hands of minors. Providing alcohol to people under 21 may result in fines up to \$2,000 & 2 years in jail."

Tabatha Kittson, Projects and Development Director at MCYC and advisor to the Sticker Shock campaign, explained that the idea behind the sticker is that it might help people stop and think before giving to a minor. "It takes the focus off of the scare tactics towards minors and puts it on adults," said

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PHOTOS BY AVALON ASHLEY

The Milton Youth Coalition began their sticker campaign at Frey Family Deli and Convenience store in Milton. (L to R) Projects and Development Director at MCYC Tabatha Kittson, MHS guidance counselor Matt Rector, Maeli Rutherford, Otis Hecker, Dilynn Martin, Tiana Randall and Megan Humphrey.

## Town proposes expanding sewer to Colchester

By AVALON ASHLEY  
Staff Writer

A group of Colchester landowners and the town of Milton have joined forces to work on extending Milton's sewer system across the town line into Colchester.

Town manager Don Turner presented the project to the Colchester selectboard at a meeting on Dec. 10, 2019, emphasizing the two towns' history of working together and sharing resources.

"No matter how this goes with this project, we want to continue this relationship," Turner told the board during his presentation. However, should the Colchester selectboard choose to not support sewer extension, Turner noted that the project would not move forward.

According to Turner, Milton's sewer plant currently does not operate at optimum capacity, costing users some of the highest rates in the county. The plant was built in 2006 to handle a capacity of one million gallons per day but currently operates at about 30 percent of that.

"We are desperately in need of users. We have capacity that we need to use. The plant is inefficient and it's definitely not working the way we wanted," said Turner. "We're lucky to have a lot of capacity, many towns don't have enough... But we aren't even halfway to current capacity. Some people are paying heavily for it."

The proposal to extend sewer was sparked when three Colchester landowners close to the town line began the process of land development, expressing their disappointment that a

municipal sewer was unavailable yet only a mile away in Milton.

In the project proposal letter to the selectboard, Principal Engineer John Pitrowiski recalled bringing the inconvenience to Turner, who, "expressed an interest in the concept of adding users to Milton's sewer system as the plant is currently not operating at optimum capacity."

Turner told the selectboard that in addition to aiding Milton's need for more users, the sewer expansion could catalyze growth opportunities for Colchester and solve the problem of aging wastewater systems. "A municipal option would be very attractive to other entities along route," he said.

According to Turner, the private landowners would pay all of the costs for extending sewer service into Col-

chester and the town would pay for legal and permitting fees accrued. A portion of the line would be forced main south of Exit 17, moving to gravity to the sewer plant.

While initial meetings with the Vt. Agency of Transportation (VTrans), the Act 250 District Coordinator, and the Regional Planning Commission regarding the project have gone well, Turner noted that, considering the history of pushback between Milton and the Conservation Law Foundation, the project may see some obstacles ahead.

Selectboard member Herb Downing questioned what Milton would do if Colchester rejected the sewer expansion. "[We'll] continue to be creative and look at other alternatives," answered Turner. "We're not going forward unless Colchester is on board."