

**County Council Election Coverage**  
 Colchester Presented by **The Shoreline Journal**

Listening, understanding and acting.  
 As your dedicated District 10 municipal representative, I've made it my priority to listen, understand and act on the issues that matter most to our communities. Whether it's following local development, addressing public concerns, or improving services, I work with integrity and a deep commitment to making our district thrive. Building trust has been the cornerstone of my approach.  
 By being consistently available, transparent in my decisions, and responsive to each concern, I aim to create a relationship with residents that goes beyond policies—one built on mutual respect and accountability. I believe in solutions that are practical and impact-

ful. Working closely with county professionals and community members, I help to identify areas where change is necessary and collaborate to create long-lasting improvements.  
 From community issues to larger initiatives, my goal is to see real results that enhance the lives of Colchester residents. As your councillor, I'm here to ensure your voice is heard and that decisions reflect the values of our community. My door is always open.  
 I look forward to continuing to serve you with the same dedication and energy that has driven me from the beginning added to the foundation of 3 years experience. "I am just getting started."



Victoria Lomond

**Victoria Lomond, Councillor, District 10**  
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**Cozy Homes in Colchester, Healthier Climate for all**

*Colchester municipality's innovative and essentially cost-free retrofit programs are making life cheaper for many Colchester homeowners while also lowering a home's carbon footprint.*



Climate Crew staff (Joanna Burris on left) and volunteers.  
 Photo courtesy of Joanna Burris.

By Allison Lawlor  
 Climate Story Network

Joanna Burris is well acquainted with the Salmon River, which runs through central Colchester and the town of Truro, before rising up in to the Cobequid Hills, descending through a valley, and finally emptying into the Bay of Fundy.

Growing up in the community of Bible Hill, outside of Truro, she remembers water rushing the floodplains during high rainfall or snow melt runoffs. But in the decades since then, she's witnessed something that worries her: increased flooding activity.

"When you live in a place you start to experience how climate change is impacting that place," says Burris. "A lot of these impacts at this point are inevitable. We're going to continue to have hotter summers, have more extreme precipitation events, and wildfires. But in the long term, if we can reduce our emissions, then the impacts won't be as severe."

Seeing these climate-related changes in her community made Burris want to help, and she knew she had the skills to make a difference. Equipped with a Planning degree from Dalhousie University, she was hired as the Municipality of Colchester's first sustainability planner.

For close to six years, she has led the county toward a greener future by building partnerships, engaging stakeholders, and helping homeowners reduce their carbon footprint. She wants to help everyone play a role in the municipality's transition to renewable energy and eventual goal of meeting its emissions target of net zero by 2050.

Long before she came on board, Colchester Council had already laid the essential groundwork for their current programs. In 2009, it adopted a vision statement for a sustainable future for Colchester County, drawing inspiration from the United Nations' principles for thriving, green com-

munities. At the time, municipalities across Canada were developing integrated sustainability plans to gain access to federal gas tax funds, says Burris. The funds were for environmentally sustainable infrastructure projects — including wastewater management — public transit, and community energy systems.

In Nova Scotia, Colchester was ahead of the sustainability curve when, in 2012, it announced that it was building a compost facility to extend the life of landfills, protect the environment, and turn waste into a valuable resource.

Burris, who was initially hired to get Solar Colchester off the ground for homeowners, says that in 2019, a pilot project started providing low-interest financing for homeowners looking to install solar panels. Throughout the municipality, solar panels also started going up on municipal buildings, the goal of which was (and is) to have all the buildings net zero by 2035 — through solar and retrofits.

In 2021, Solar Colchester expanded to include more homeowners by offering another low-interest financing program called Cozy Colchester, which allows local homeowners to make energy efficiency upgrades to their homes. For some homes, solar doesn't make sense — but other energy efficiency improvements do. Participants in the programs receive financing for up to \$30,000 and can pay for the project over a 10-15-year term. They are also eligible for rebates from Efficiency Nova Scotia.

Even with rebates, many homeowners don't have the upfront money to invest in energy efficiency. That's what makes Solar Colchester and Cozy Colchester unique. They're examples of programs that fall under Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE), where the municipality pays for the retrofits upfront, and the homeowners pay back the cost of the retrofits over time.

"It does allow people to switch from oil to heat pumps. Some people replace their

doors and windows and add insulation. It does provide a good amount to do those initial steps," says Burris. "And in most cases, the savings are greater than the (monthly) payments."

A win-win anyway you cut it, not only do these (essentially cost-free) home upgrades make houses warmer, they have the added benefit of also reducing a home's carbon footprint.

Since 2019, 246 home efficiency projects, including solar and retrofits, have been financed through the programs. Since 2021, an impressive 430 free home energy assessments have also been provided.

Ted Parker looks forward to substantial energy savings and increased comfort next winter in his 50-year-old home in Lower Economy. Thanks to the Cozy Colchester program, this past March he was able to install a heat pump — a replacement for his wood stove and costly backup electric baseboard heaters. And at age 78, Parker says hauling wood for the stove had also gotten to be too much for him.

"We'd been looking at heat pumps for years," he says. "The loan with Cozy Colchester helped (us move forward with the plan)."

Parker has now turned his attention to insulating part of his home with spray foam. With the help of Cozy Colchester he expects to save more than \$600 on the cost the project.

"We've had a lot of positive feedback," says Burris. "People appreciate that the program is connected to the municipal government because it's where they pay their taxes, and overall, they have trust in their local government."

**The Climate Story Network is an initiative of Climate Focus, a non-profit organization dedicated to covering stories about community-driven climate solutions.**

**First United Church CHRISTMAS CRAFT MARKET**  
 111 Lorne Street, Truro, NS  
 Admission: Free Will donation  
 Saturday, November 2, 2024  
 9:30am - 2:00pm  
 Bags, Quilts, Wall Hangings, Placemats, Weaving, Sea Glass Art, Driftwood Art, Knitting, Cards, Jewelry, Wreaths, Hooked Mats, Wooden Signs, Spindle Art, Christmas Tree Ornaments, Christmas Decorations, Pantry Table and much more!  
 Cash, Debit, Visa/Master Card  
 Proceeds to the ongoing work of the United Church Women

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**2024 Allan Kennedy - Candidate District 11**

All candidates in the municipal election were, asked to respond to one question as follows

*The ability of Colchester communities / residents to be able to communicate with their nearby neighbours or to the other end of the county is vital. The reverse is true, it is essential the county be able to easily and economically contact area residents and business en masse. To achieve this would you support a \$25 annual fee be added to every property tax bill with proceeds used by communities to develop a "Local economic / family assistance fund" or "Aid to Entrepreneurs Fund"?*



Allan Kennedy

It is essential that the county be able to easily and economically contact residents; however, at this time, I am not in support of a twenty-five dollar fee to be added to every tax bill. Residents in the Municipality of Colchester can be negatively impacted by additional costs as we live in a climate of inflation, high interest rates and increasing assessments on our properties. Additional costs to any of our taxpayers should only occur when all funds have been exhausted. As a candidate, I would require further information and a review of current funds before considering adding any additional money for taxpayers in our community. It is difficult to keep up with every-day expenses. The idea of communication is important for Colchester

County and all options to improve communication need to be explored before any consideration is given to request additional fees from taxpayers. Residential concerns always need to be addressed, therefore, I am prepared to review and question current funds available and work together to make the best decisions for our community's future. As a candidate, I am committed to ensuring that every dollar we ask of taxpayers is spent wisely.

**Re-Elect Marie Benoit**  
**District 9 Colchester Municipal Election**  
 In the last four years, I have had the privilege of meeting many of you and listening to your concerns. Whether it is about public safety, parks and recreation, housing, or food insecurity, I want you to know I am here to advocate for your needs and ideas and try my best to get the information you need.  
 My vision for District 9 is one where we can all work together, where families can thrive, businesses can grow, and every resident feels safe and valued.  
**mbenoit@colchester.ca**  
**902-324-9011**  
**Check my facebook page**