



Jonathan Spector <jonathan.spector@gmail.com>

EDC paying for COIs

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To: Jonathan Spector <jonathan.spector@gmail.com>

Hi Jon,

Thanks to the EDC and the Select Board for funding the Certificates of Insurance for non-profits selling food on The Green during Foliage season. On October 18th, The Vermont Standard ran a column I wrote about the importance of COIs and how the EDC stepped up to find this requirement for non-profits. Here is the link to the column;

https://vermontstandard-vt.newsmemory.com/?publink=375b66aac_134ad8f

Thanks again for the support as we try to figure out how to best serve the needs of residents and guests during a busy time of year.

Best,

Seton McIlroy

Sent from my iPhone

One person's red tape is another person's policy

Ever wonder where the term, “Red Tape” comes from? Actual red tape was reportedly first used in the 16th century Spanish government to hold together dossiers of critical importance to the Council of State. More benign administrative documents were bound with ordinary string. In the days before paper clips, staples and brightly-colored Trapper Keepers, the red tape served as a way to both organize and color code the government's important paperwork.

As with many European traditions, this one made its way to the new world and quickly became standard operating procedure in the early days of the United States government. Red tape was used to secure pension records, government bonds and reinforce book bindings. The practice of using the crimson string on official US government documents ended sometime in the 1980s. However, there is enough surplus string that one can buy it fashioned into jewelry or desk accessories from the U.S. National Archives gift shop.

Today, of course, the idiom, “red tape” is used to describe government rules and regulations that are perceived as being onerous, inefficient or ineffective. For a politician to say they are going to “cut government red tape” is an easy applause line even when they don't specify the actual problem or, more importantly, a solution. One person's red tape can easily be another person's practical policy.

Even in a small government like the Village of Woodstock, staff and elected officials both constantly balance the need to maintain the safety and solvency of our community with the wants and needs of our residents. A recent example of the Trustees' efforts to thread this needle is the requirement for a Certificate of Insurance (COI) for people or groups using public spaces like East End Park or The Green. Like any other property owner, the municipality may be legally responsible for injuries that occur on municipal property. And, like any other property owner, the municipality has insurance to cover any incidents or accidents that occur. In order to protect taxpayers, Woodstock ordinances require anyone receiving a permit to use municipal land or

buildings to have a COI to cover potential accidents that occur during the respective event. This insurance covers both the person or group and the municipality.

When the Trustees partnered with local non-profits to sell snacks and lunch on The Green as a fundraiser during the busy foliage season, they were required to obtain COIs. Some of the groups were concerned that the cost of the insurance (which could cost hundreds of dollars) would significantly diminish the amount they could raise for their causes. The municipality turned to the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) for recommendations of how we could both support our local groups, while also protecting the taxpayers and the non-profits. VLCT provided access to one-day insurance at a substantially lower cost. To further reduce the financial burden on the non-profits, the Woodstock Economic Development Commission voted to cover the cost of the COIs as part of their mission to support local initiatives that contribute to what makes Woodstock great.

I am proud that our government and community were able to support local nonprofits, provide much-needed lunch options during foliage all while protecting everyone from potential liability. It truly does take a village and sometimes, a little red tape.

Seton McIlroy is the chair of the Woodstock Village Board of Trustees.



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