

Municipal Corner – Volunteers

A couple weeks ago I wrote about the contribution of municipal employees to the success of Stowe. I also want to take note of another important group of people vital to Stowe's success – volunteers.

We have several boards and commissions that wade through various public policy issues, listen to the public and serve as a jury of your peers (e.g. Selectboard, School Board, Recreation Commission, Library Trustees, Conservation Commission, Electric Commission, Cemetery Commission, Development Review Board and Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, and Board of Listers). They all contribute in their own way, but the one I am most familiar with is the Selectboard. While it can be interesting and is important work, it has its challenges, especially when you need to tell your friends and neighbors “no.”

Another really amazing group of volunteers are emergency responders (e.g. Rescue, Mountain Rescue, and Fire). They spend long hours training and then when they respond to an emergency they are often putting their personnel health at risk. I recall filling up at the gas station on my way home from my camp on a weekend and meeting up with some members of Stowe Mountain Rescue refilling their truck after a training exercise on their own time. I often think of Mark Sgantas, Stowe Fire Chief, in my office after being up all night on a call and heading off to his regular job. I've had the opportunity to ride along with Stowe Rescue and see what it was like to respond to an emergency. It can't be easy to ride up and see your friends and neighbors in distress.

There are numerous other volunteers who all contribute to the community in their own way (e.g. coaches, Historical Society members, Stowe Theater Guild actors and people who donate their hard earned money to good causes). All of these people give of their time and talents to help make *Stowe* a special place to live, work and play.

Why do they do it? I'm sure everyone has their own reasons. However, I generally sense a feeling of comradery by those working together for a common objective. There is also a personal sense of pride and reward beyond what monetary compensation can provide in giving. I also sense that they haven't given up on humanity and they still feel there is promise for a better tomorrow. In other words, they believe you have value as an individual and they believe in us as a community.

So, don't sit on the sidelines, we all have something to give. “A lot of hands make light work.”