

Policy No. 2017-02

Social Media Policy

Applies to: All Town staff, Town committee members,
Council and Public

Effective Date: Wednesday, August 22, 2018



Section 1: Policy Purpose:

The Town of Greater Napanee encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the Town and the mission of its departments.

The Town is committed to using social media for the purposes of broadcasting and promoting Town objectives, initiatives, programs and news through professional and strategic communications.

The Town of Greater Napanee recognizes that the Town's accessible website, www.greaternapanee.com, will remain the Town's primary and predominant internet presence. However, the Town acknowledges that social media is also needed to assist online audiences to visit the Town's website for further information.

This policy serves to:

- A. Protect the Town of Greater Napanee's reputation and ensure consistency and professionalism with how the Town communicates with the public via social media;
- B. To establish protocols, criteria and courses of action for:
 - o Appropriate monitoring and administration of the Town's social media pages;
 - o Determining/adopting new social media pages/accounts for the Town;
 - o Providing timely, effective and accurate information and responses;
 - o Establishing a mechanism to address controversial or sensitive matters relating to online content about the Town;
 - o Warranting appropriate protection of privacy of the public who engage or interact with the Town via social media;
- C. Provide Town employees, Council, committee members and the public with an understanding of the policies and procedures surrounding the acceptable corporate and personal use of social media pages as they relate to discussing the business of the Town of Greater Napanee.

Section 2: Policy Scope:

The following policy has been developed to establish standards and expectations for all Town employees, Town Council and Town committee members that discuss, share or comment on the Town of Greater Napanee's social media pages, as well as any member of the public who engages with any of the Town's social media pages.

Section 3: Policy Administration

All Municipal staff, Council and Town committee members are bound by the terms of the Town of Greater Napanee's Social Media Policy.

Section 4: Definitions:

Town of Greater Napanee Social Media: Official social media pages created and managed by Town staff. For an up-to-date list, visit www.greaternapanee.com.

Social Media Content: Content that is planned and developed by the Town's departments and posted or intended to be posted on Town social media pages.

Social Media Moderator and Contributors (Designated Employee(s)): Town staff tasked with posting, updating, monitoring and reviewing content on corporate social media pages.

Online Communications: Refers to the communications of information through the internet for any purpose (i.e. information sharing, marketing, engagement).

Public Statement: A declaration made by a Town employee or representative in any public forum, which relates to the Town of Greater Napanee, its employees and/or its business. This includes statements made in blogs, online forums or discussions, social networking pages, and elsewhere in the public record.

Official Record: Anything which is created in the regular course of conducting Town business and which documents the business of the Town, regardless of format. Official records document decisions, policies, procedures, transactions, activities, commitments, obligations, ownership, entitlement, legal rights, etc. of the Town and are relied upon by the Town or proof of such or to support Town business.

Official Town Social Media Pages:

Audiences should only associate posts published on the verified Town of Greater Napanee social media pages or posts which contain the Town logo and/or contact information as authentic Town posts.

Other social media pages/accounts that have "Greater Napanee" in its page name or reference the Town, are NOT official Town-administered pages. The posts and/or discussions on these pages do not reflect the views or corporate identity of the Town of Greater Napanee.

Please see Appendix A for the list of the official social media pages that are managed by the Town of Greater Napanee.

Section 5: Site Administration:

- A. The Town's official social media pages are monitored regularly during business hours: Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.;
- B. The Town will make every effort to respond to concerns and questions on its social media pages. Town staff aim to address all appropriate comments within 3 business days (excluding holidays and weekends). This turnaround time may be impacted by staff availability and resources;
- C. The Town has appointed designated employee(s) whom will serve as a centralized resource for the oversight of the Town's social media. Please see Appendix B for the Town's designated employee(s).
- D. Login and passwords are confidential and will be stored with the Town's designated employee(s). Passwords will not be changed without the approval of the designated employee(s);
- E. It is the responsibility of all Town departments to provide content to the designated employee(s) on services, events, resources or updates pertaining to their department for posting.

Section 6: Site Goals:

The primary goals for the Town of Greater Napanee's official social media pages are as follows:

- A. Increase awareness of municipal services;
- B. Enhance existing corporate communication methods;
- C. Distribute time-sensitive information quickly;
- D. Correct misinformation;
- E. Utilize social media tracking/analytical tools to better evaluate the Town's communications and marketing efforts;
- F. Ensure that posts remain professional and pertinent to the Town's corporate identity;
- G. Ensure responses to messages are made in a timely manner;
- H. Use social media to lead online traffic to the Town website for more information.

Section 7: Site Selection/Establishing New Accounts:

- A. Town employees wishing to create additional social media pages shall suggest the idea to the designated employee(s) or the designated employee(s) shall initiate the proposal for a new social media page his/herself;
- B. Criteria for adopting new social media pages will include, but not be limited to, research that:
 - o Demonstrates the need for the specific page;
 - o Demonstrates the originality of the specific page;
 - o Identifies appropriate staff resources that would be required to establish and maintain the new page;
- C. If the designated employee(s) thinks there is a need for a new social media page, the designated employee(s) will present the proposal to the Senior Management Team. The Senior Management team shall make a final decision, or refer the proposal onto Council for further decision;
- D. Login and password information of new accounts will be provided to the designated employee(s).

Section 8: Site Content:

8.1 Where possible, all social media pages shall:

- A. Have the Town's logo and/or contact information;
- B. Refer to the Town's website.

8.2 The Town invites community members to post, share and discuss, while treating each other with respect, and, in addition, content posted to the Town's corporate social media pages shall be related to Town business.

8.3 i) The Town will not tolerate inappropriate posts or comments that include, but are not limited to:

- A. Profane or inappropriate language or content; sarcastic or disrespectful comments;
- B. Content that includes personal attacks on an individual or a specific group;
- C. Discriminatory content;
- D. Content considered to be in oversight with municipal Human Resources, Health & Safety and other policies, disrespectful or insulting to Town staff or representatives or content

that discusses politically charged issues and/or statements, political rants or attacks on the Town of Greater Napanee;

- E. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- F. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- G. Content related to any industries or businesses or related to sales, advertising or promotions falling outside of the boundaries of the Town of Greater Napanee;
- H. Promotion or opposition to a candidate for municipal, provincial or federal election;
- I. Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- J. Information that discloses personal information as protected in the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). Please refer to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act for more information:
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90m56>
- K. Information about any identifiable individual, unless the identifiable individual has provided written consent to the Town of Greater Napanee in advance;
- L. Plagiarized or copyrighted material;
- M. Accusations or messages that impersonate or misrepresent someone else;
- N. Any other content that is believed to be inappropriate in the opinion of the Town of Greater Napanee's staff.

ii) The Town reserves the right to remove any content that is posted for any reason or at any time.

If a member of the public believes a submission on any Town social media violates the policy, please report it immediately to the designated employee(s). Any content that is deemed inappropriate will immediately be dealt with and if an issue arises will be brought to the attention of the CAO.

Section 9: Use of Photos and Videos:

The Town of Greater Napanee reserves the right to use photos and/or videos from any Town of Greater Napanee public functions on its social media pages that does not reveal the identity of the person(s) directly or indirectly. In a case where the person(s) are identifiable, the Town of Greater Napanee photo release form must be obtained and signed for all images before posting on the Town's social media pages.

Section 10: Public Posts:

Members of the public wishing to have content posted to the Town's social media must send a request via email to the designated employee(s). For the request to be approved for posting, the submission must:

- A. Normally occur within the boundaries of the Town of Greater Napanee and/or the County of Lennox & Addington;
- B. Be open to the public and receive special approval;

And follows one of the following characteristics:

- A. Funded in full, in part or sponsored by the Town of Greater Napanee;
- B. Organized or funded by another level of government;
- C. Organized by a government-funded agency or board;
- D. Organized by a Town advisory committee;
- E. Organized by a registered charitable organization operating within the Town of Greater

- Napanee;
- F. Organized by a service club operating within the Town of Greater Napanee;
- G. Organized by one of the Town's Stakeholders. Please see appendix C for a list of the Town's Stakeholders;
- H. Not a commercial or for profit business.

Section 11: Use of Social Media by Employees, Council Members and Committee Members

Any Town employee, Council member or committee member engaged in online interaction on the Town's social media pages or any online conversation that involves information about the Town on a private page is also required to meet a social media standard that mandates:

- A. Communications on the Town's behalf should be based on current, accurate, complete and relevant data. The Town will take all reasonable steps to assure the validity of information communicated via any social media, but it is the employee's/Councillor's/committee member's responsibility to assure accuracy in the first instance;
- B. Online postings do not reveal any confidential information. If there are questions about what is considered confidential, employees should check with their Department Head and Council or committee members should check with the Town's Clerk;
- C. Social media and other types of online content sometimes generate media attention or legal questions. Employees, Council and committee members should refer these inquiries to the Town's Clerk and/or CAO and not become an official Town spokesperson;
- D. If employees encounter a situation while using Town social media that threaten to become hostile, employees should disengage from the conversation and notify the CAO;
- E. Ensure that privacy, confidentiality, copyright and data protection laws are adhered to, and must not make comments that are considered defamatory or libelous;
- F. Employees/Council/committee members shall not discuss the Town or any of its employees/Council members/committee members in a negative way through personal social media pages;
- G. The designated employee(s) will respond directly to online comments and inquiries that are generated by the public. If the designated employee(s) does not know the answer, he/she will consult with his/her Manager or relevant coworkers to confirm the information for a response;
- H. Town staff shall not use their personal social media pages during work time, unless they do so during their break or lunch hour;
- I. Only the designated employee(s) will have administrative access to any Town committee social media pages.
- J. Other Town policies, i.e. Human Resources and Harassment in the Workplace, shall be followed while communicating online.

Section 12: Social Media Disclaimer:

- A. A link between the Town's social media pages and any other website does not imply an endorsement or sponsorship by the Town of that website, or the creator of that website;

- B. The Town does not guarantee users' privacy on third party social networking websites, as users are subject to the terms and conditions of the specific application on that website;
- C. The Town will not be responsible for losses or damages suffered from using third party social media or websites. Users participate at their own risk, and in doing so accept that they have no right of action against the Town related to such use;
- D. The Town may monitor online content for factuality and appropriateness and will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the content posted is accurate at the time of posting. However, accuracy and timeliness are not guaranteed and may not be reliable; as such, users acknowledge that the Town makes no such guarantees;
- E. The Town is not responsible for the authenticity or suitability of content posted to its social media by members of the public. A comment posted by a member of the public on any Town social media is the opinion of the poster only, and does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by the Town of Greater Napanee, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Town of Greater Napanee;
- F. By using the Town's social media pages, users acknowledge and consent that their comments or messages may become part of the public record and used in official Town of Greater Napanee documentation. It is at the Town's sole discretion which comments will be archived or used;
- G. In the event of a discrepancy between the information contained on the Town's social media or corporate website, the information contained on the Town's corporate website shall be deemed accurate.

Please see Appendix D for General Online Etiquette Guidelines

Appendix A:

The Town's official social media pages are as follows:

- A. "Town of Greater Napanee" Facebook page
- B. "Greater Napanee Hometown Market" Facebook page
- C. "Greater Napanee" Twitter page
- D. "Town of Greater Napanee" Live App.
- E. "Greater Napanee Emergency Services" Twitter page – managed by the Town of Greater Napanee Emergency Services Department
- F. "Arts and Culture Advisory Committee of Greater Napanee" Facebook page – managed by Town staff.

Other official pages that the Town of Greater Napanee manages include:

- G. "Diggin' Downtown Napanee" Facebook page – managed by staff of the County of Lennox and Addington, the Napanee BIA and the Town of Greater Napanee.

Appendix B:

The Town's designated employees who are responsible for monitoring and maintaining the Town's social media accounts are currently the Communications Intern and the Intern's designate, the Economic Development Coordinator.

Appendix C:

The Town's Stakeholders that the Town may share social media content for general promotional purposes with are as follows:

- A. The Napanee Business Improvement Area;
- B. Lennox and Addington County;
- C. Napanee Chamber of Commerce.

Appendix D:

General Online Etiquette Guidelines:

- A. Consider whether social media is the best way to communicate;
- B. Do not send information that you wouldn't want forwarded to a large audience;
- C. It is better to offer a humble opinion and write with reason and diplomacy than to preach it;
- D. Commentary should be expressed in such a way that it can't be misrepresented or misunderstood. Keep in mind that brief, well written messages have a greater impact;
- E. Spelling and grammar are important: Write, edit and proofread. Use professional, but easy to understand language;
- F. Be the first to correct your own mistakes;
- G. Understand that content contributed to a social media page could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Consider responses carefully and think about how it will reflect on you and/or the Town.