

COMMUNICATION 132090

Received from Amanda Charania, Communications Coordinator
Addressed to Committee of the Whole
Date June 22, 2021
Topic Amendment to Social Media Policy

SUMMARY

On March 23rd, 2021, Council approved a Social Media Policy to be used by Staff to govern the behavior of both staff and the public posting on the Town's platforms.

COMMENTS

Staff has noticed an increase in engagement with residents on social media, particularly on Facebook, primarily in relation to posts which inform residents of policy or by-law decisions/changes/reminders. The expectation for a quick response to questions/concerns/negative comments has also grown which correspondingly increases the amount of time staff is required to spend monitoring, gathering information and replying.

As a result, Staff has proposed the following options for Council's consideration as an amendment to the Social Media Policy:

Option 1 - That amendments be made to the Social Media Policy as follows:

1. an additional bullet be added to Section 3.2 Responding under the section denoted as "The Account Manager **is not expected to** reply to social media communications if:"

"Information is being shared via Facebook that relates to a change or reminder in relation to municipal policies or By-laws, and exceeds the Account Manager's technical knowledge of the respective subject area. The Account Manager will post a comment in the comments section of the post which states:

Please note, staff will not be replying to comments or answering questions within the comments section of this post. As the information in this post relates specifically to the -insert Department name here- Department, please contact – enter staff name and title here- with questions or requests for further information. We appreciate your patience. Staff will reply at their earliest opportunity."

2. The bolded words be added under Section 2.4 – Removal of Content:
 - Personal, **antagonistic, or openly hostile** attacks in which the individual is identified by name, against a staff member or member(s) of Council;

Option 2 – That the commenting option on posts to the Town’s Facebook page be turned off and the Social Media Policy be amended to delete mention of comment removal, expectations for respectful interactions within the comments section, monitoring and responding. The Account Manager will identify the appropriate staff person to contact with any questions/concerns/requests for further information from the public within the body of the post.

Option 3 – That the current process remains in place as outlined in the Social Media Policy. Account Managers are to confirm with their supervisor as to the amount of time they are permitted to spend monitoring and responding to comments each week outside of their regular working hours.

If at any time Council feels the policy should be reviewed and/or changed to address ongoing operational issues, it can be brought to the attention of the Communications Coordinator for consideration of recommendations for potential further revision.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approves Option 1-making amendments to the Social Media Policy as outlined in the Communications Coordinator’s report dated June 22, 2021.