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Date: October 25, 2021
To: Mayor and Council
Author: Tara Hewitt
RE: Social Media Guidelines for Members of Council
Report No.: CAO-2021-06

RECOMMENDED ACTION

That the Social Media Guidelines for Members of Council as Appendix A of the Code of Conduct for Members of Council, Local Boards and Committees Policy **BE ADOPTED**, as presented.

BACKGROUND

In February 2021, Council underwent a midterm strategic refresh to identify its top priorities for the remaining Council term. During the strategic planning workshop, Council identified the desire to develop and implement a social media policy under Priority Nine – Communications.

Since then, Administration has authored two social media policies for internal staff; one applies to Town staff/contractors using their personal social media accounts, and one applies to staff or volunteers acting as administrators on Town-owned social media accounts. These policies have been reviewed by the Senior Management Team, approved by the Chief Administrative Officer, and communicated to employees through the Human Resources Manager.

Administration further developed social media guidelines for recommendation to Council and to apply to Members of Council and Committees. These guidelines were established as an Appendix to the Code of Conduct for Members of Council, Local Boards and Committees Policy and endorsed by the Town's Integrity Commissioner.

DISCUSSION

Social Media is a powerful communication tool that continues to grow in popularity with advancements in digital technology. It is a fast and effective way to gain insights about public opinion, engage with followers, and inform residents about meaningful work and decisions of the Municipality. However, Council Members should understand that the Code of Conduct applies to all aspects of their lives, including social media use, and regardless of whether they are using their elected official media account or their personal media account. Many elected officials manage a social media profile on at least one platform.

In the past few years, pressure has grown on Council Members to respond to constituent concerns through these highly public channels.

The proposed Social Media Guidelines enable Council Members to connect with citizens and leverage the benefits of their social media accounts while also:

- Maintaining confidentiality and privacy
- Respecting fellow elected officials and members of the public
- Protecting the integrity of the Council
- Avoiding conflicts of interest
- Protecting the reputations of staff, and
- Adhering to necessary provincial and federal regulations, Town policies and corporate values

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Promote the betterment, self-image and attitude of the community.

To promote a safe community.

Link to Council 2021-2022 Priorities

- COVID-19 and the health and safety of the community
- Customer Service: Training, Technology, Staff, Review Standards/Level of service
- Housing: Affordability (lot sizes, developer incentives, second dwellings, density, etc.)
- Greenhouse: lights & dark sky, odours (site plan compliance, bylaws, other tools)
- Programming Increase: Youth and Seniors
- A development plan for Downtown Kingsville / Main Street
- Financial savings: Schools closings, Migration Hall
- Economic Development: strengthen tourism/hospitality
- COVID - economic recovery
- Communications: Strategy – Policy (social media), Website refresh and other tools, Public engagement**

- Housing: Migrant Worker Housing – Inspections (Building/Fire), regulate, reduce, or increase
- Committees / Boards: Review and Report
- Policy Update: Procedural Bylaw
- Economic Development: diversify the economy, create local jobs, industrial, Cottam
- Infrastructure (non-Municipal): Union Water expansion & governance
- Infrastructure (Municipal): Asset Management Plan update, the infrastructure funding deficit
- No direct link to Council priorities

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

None

CONSULTATIONS

Senior Management Team
Integrity Commissioner

Tara Hewitt

Tara Hewitt
Communications & Public Relations Coordinator