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MOTION NUMBER: 15-10-602	
SUPERSEDES: NEW	
TITLE: SOCIAL & DIGITAL MEDIA POLICY	

PURPOSE

To give direction and set requirements which must be adhered to as the Town of Peace River participates in the realm of social media.

This policy is not intended to curtail or infringe upon an employee’s Charter right to freedom of speech or expression. Rather its intention is to make it possible to clearly distinguish between official engagements from Town owned accounts and personal accounts of Town employees. This will assuage any public confusion regarding communication from the Town online.

In that sense it is an extension of pre-existing Town policies, such as the Employee Code of Conduct and the Confidentiality Agreement, into the digital realm.

The scope of the policy includes all employees, contractors and agents.

BACKGROUND

The Town of Peace River’s (TOPR) official presence on some social media sites contributes, in an official capacity, to discussions on TOPR programs, services, policies, bylaws and so forth. Social media also offers a free vehicle for advertising Town events and promoting Town activities, while allowing the community to engage with the Town.

Due to the increasing prevalence of digital communications, including social media, it is imperative the Town maintain a strong presence in the digital realm. These tools are freely accessible and offer an efficient and cost effective way to disseminate Town information in the community. However, due to the instantaneous nature of social media, Town participation can open the Town up to a number of risks and potential liabilities. An effective social media policy helps to mitigate those risks.

This policy refers to freely accessible online tools used to produce, post and interact using text, images, video, and audio components with the goals of sharing, collaborating or networking. Included but not limited to are: blogs, social networks, videos and photo file sharing, folksonomic tagging, podcasting, vodcasting, wikis and similar tools.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Town of Peace River supports the use of social media for informational and promotional purposes. Departments within the Town of Peace River (Family and Community Support Services, Peace River Museum, Archives and Mackenzie Centre and so forth) are permitted to have an official presence on third-party social media sites provided they consider and submit in writing their communications objectives to the Chief Administrative Officer for approval and understand the broader implications and risks in using social media.

The justification for allowing alternate official accounts for the museum and community services department is that both those groups have a specific mandate that includes community engagement. By allowing them their own space within social media they will have the tools needed to more adequately meet those mandates in an increasingly digital world.

Other departments may, from time to time, also need to engage with the public. Due to the sporadic nature of these communication needs it makes more sense that their engagement is handled through the main Town accounts.

TOPR EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA – AS AN AUTHORIZED SPOKESPERSON

Only authorized spokespeople, or their designates, may represent the Town of Peace River online. All posts must be approved by the Communications Coordinator in advance of posting. When posting on behalf of the Town of Peace River employees are bound by the same confidentiality policies and code of conduct that governs employee behaviour in the non-digital world.

Regardless of the media utilized, Town of Peace River employees must not act in a manner that could potentially harm or jeopardize the reputation of the Town of Peace River. Employees must ensure that any comment on matters of policy is appropriate to their employee role.

While social media offers an avenue of communication, it should never be considered as the sole means of disseminating information. Whenever possible social media posts should direct users to the Town's official website and any content posted on social media should also be on the website.

As with traditional forms of media and communication, all information flowing into or out of the Town via social media must be approved by the Communications Coordinator, as per the communications plan. This ensures that all posts can be monitored effectively.

TOPR EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA – AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN

As private citizens, Town of Peace River employees have the same rights of free speech as all other citizens; however, they may not represent the Town of Peace River on their own personal social media sites and they are reminded that they are bound by the official Oath of Confidentiality and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and that they are not to disclose information or content that they are not specifically authorized to disclose.

Acting as a private citizen, a Town of Peace River employee must use a private email address and make every reasonable effort to make it clear that their contribution to social media sites is as a private individual and not as a Town of Peace River spokesperson.

Personal social media accounts should be clearly distinguish themselves from Town accounts. This may be done in many ways such as the inclusion of a statement in the bio page indicating the account is a private one, containing personal content. User names for personal accounts should be chosen in such a way that no reasonable person would assume a personal account is representing the Town.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Social media – Includes but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Foursquare, blogs, YouTube, Vine, or any other self-publishing digital platform.

Official presence – A dedicated page or channel on a social media site that has the official Town of Peace River logo and is used for the purpose of informing or communicating with citizens or visitors concerning a TOPR program, facility or site.

Personal account – Refers to an employee’s personal social media account.

User – Anyone who accesses our digital properties and social media pages, anyone who interacts online with the Town, or residents, in short any person using social media.

Personal information – Information about an identifiable individual. In the context of social media, an individual’s name, information such as their email address or username if it includes the individual’s name, a portion of their name, or is otherwise identifying in nature (e.g. jane.smith, smithjane, jsmith, etc.) or is a pseudonym (e.g. painter18) that is attributable to an identifiable individual by using other readily available information.

- **Non-identifying or individual anonymous** information is defined as information about a specific individual; however, the identity of the individual is not known and cannot easily become known by accessing other readily available information. This does not qualify as personal information.
- **Aggregate, statistical or anonymous information** is defined as information about groups of people or about specific individuals who are not and cannot be identified. This does not qualify as personal information.

Published information – Personal commentary or other information or content posted to a web site with the intent of being accessible to a wide community of followers or the public at large without the need for, or reasonable expectation of, direct or indirect familiarity, association or relationship (e.g. weblog or “blog” postings and comments). This does not include information posted on personal online diaries or information intended or believed to be communicated only between known “friends” or a broader, but still limited, circle of acquaintances.

User-created content (UCC) – Comments, ratings, reviews, tags, opinions or responses provided by an individual or a group on a social medial site concerning content posted on the site, or a topical issue, or the individual’s original non-professional creative or modified content that has been posted or published to a site. This type of content is also known as user-generated content (UGC) or consumer-generated media.

Appendix to the Policy

ISSUES AND RISKS TO CONSIDER

Some issues that need to be taken into account include: public relations and operational risks, records management and security, FOIP, privacy and legal rights such as, but not limited to, copyright, intellectual property rights, liability and so forth.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND OPERATIONAL RISKS:

- The reputation and ability of the social media channel site(s) to reach the target audience.
- Whether terms of use of the social media channel site(s) will achieve the department's/the Town of Peace River's goals (e.g. to establish a legitimate organizational presence).
- The appropriateness of content being posted.
- The date and/or criteria upon which content and use of the site will be reviewed or discontinued/removed.
- Risk issues regarding: reputation, privacy, FOIP and legal issues (liability, protection of copyright and intellectual property) that may be incurred by the Town of Peace River and users accessing the social media channel site.
- That Town of Peace River images, video and other content posted to social media sites can, and likely will be, downloaded and re-used in other ways on other sites. Content might be altered or re-posted to the same site or to other sites. The Town of Peace River will ensure this risk is acceptable for all content posted to these sites.
- Residents and visitors have the means to readily and easily access necessary and important information regarding Town of Peace River programs, sites, facilities, services, policies and bylaws without a need to register as a user of a social media. For example, Town of Peace River information is directly accessible to unregistered users of a social media site and that information is also available on a Town of Peace River website.
- Incorrect information cannot be easily corrected and therefore needs to be published correctly the first time.

AUTHORIZED SPOKESPEOPLE

The Chief Administrative Officer shall authorize employees to be spokespeople. These can be department heads or other employees, as appointed.

The Town of Peace River will post, monitor, respond, contribute and seek to influence social media conversations, in a manner that is identifiable as being made by or on behalf of the Town of Peace River by authorized spokespeople.

Authorized spokespeople must ensure all content posted on Town of Peace River social media channel:

- Is either 'unrestricted' information that is appropriate for routine public dissemination or is 'protected' information that has been approved for publication or dissemination by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Authorized spokespeople must monitor the TOPR social media channel and:

- Review all user-created content before it is posted to the public facing social media channel site, if the social media channel site, if the social media tool allows, or as soon as possible after it is posted.
- Where possible, modify display settings so that user-created content is off the primary landing page.
- Apply established and posted or linked Town of Peace River rules of engagement or participation standards, with respect to abusive, hateful, defamatory and other inappropriate comments or content, including information that jeopardizes the privacy of others.

Authorized spokespeople responding to content on a Town of Peace River social media channel or contributing on behalf of the Town of Peace River to other pages or sites:

- Must identify themselves as a TOPR spokesperson.
- Must ensure their responses are consistent with messaging approved by the department, wording must be kept consistent with the audience or objectives of the site.
- All spokespeople are bound by this policy, the Oath of Confidentiality and the FOIP Act.
- Every reasonable effort should be made to respond to questions via social media in a timely manner.

LEGAL LIABILITY, COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Any content placed upon social media sites should be Town of Peace River-owned or, if licensed, licensed to the Town of Peace River, should contain provisions which would allow the Town of Peace River to provide worldwide, fee-free, non-exclusive licenses to third parties in perpetuity.

Artists or named personnel whose works may be posted to social media sites must be informed of this possibility so that they may waive their moral rights.

It should be understood that anything posted by the Town on social media could be downloaded, modified and shared by any user. As such content should be prepared and posted in a fashion that takes this risk into account.

Under Canadian media law social media is considered to be a publishing platform. This means posts on social media are subject to the same kinds of constraints regarding defamation that other publications, such as newspapers, are.

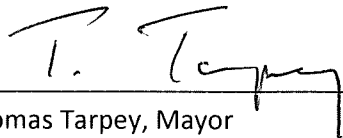
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY INCLUDING RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY


Content posted by the Town of Peace River or a member of the public to a third party social media site is managed entirely by the site operator according to its established terms of use.

A record of all substantive content (e.g. text, images, video and documents) posted by the Town of Peace River employees or agents to a Town of Peace River social media channel or other site and moderating activities and response must be maintained by Records Management.

REFERENCES

- FOIP Act
- Communications Plan
- Town of Peace River confidentiality agreement
- Town of Peace river employee code of conduct


Thomas Tarpey, Mayor


Christopher J. Parker, CAO

Date Reviewed:	Signature: