

**THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WOLLASTON**

**BY-LAW NO. 18 – 2023**

BEING A BY-LAW TO APPROVE THE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

WHEREAS Section 8 (1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, provides the powers of a municipality under this or any Act shall be interpreted broadly so as to confer broad authority on the municipality to enable the municipality to govern its affairs as it considers appropriate and to enhance the municipality's ability to respond to municipal issues;

AND WHEREAS Council of The Corporation of the Township of Wollaston deems it appropriate to adopt a Social Media Policy.

NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WOLLASTON HEREBY ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Social Media Policy, as attached hereto, shall form part of this By-law and is hereby approved for use within the municipality;
2. This By-law repeals all previous By-law and/or Motions of Council pertaining to the same.
3. This By-law shall become effective upon the date of passing thereof.
4. Where any By-law passed prior to this, conflicts with this By-law, the terms of this By-law shall prevail.

PASSED this 13<sup>th</sup> day of July 2020.

**MAYOR: BARBARA SHAW**

**CLERK: BERNICE CROCKER**

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social media is the “new normal” when it comes to communication channels. Social media is an incredible tool that will help us reach more stakeholders, residents, ratepayers, visitors, investors and partners.

While social media lacks some of the formalities of traditional communications, from a corporate perspective, each piece of messaging still needs to be insightful and serve a purpose.

The messaging that we do through social media needs to follow the rest of our communication guidelines, support our brand, our mandate and our system of beliefs. Posts, once live, need to be monitored for reaction, spread and use.

### PURPOSE

The Wollaston Township social media policy establishes and outlines the principles of use for the Township's Communications channels.

### POLICY

The Township uses online social media accounts and the [www.wollaston.ca](http://www.wollaston.ca) website to communicate municipal initiatives, goals and objectives within the community and to various stakeholder groups.

The goals of the Township's social media accounts are to inform the community of Municipal happenings and events and, to provide additional platforms for direct engagement.

The Township's social media accounts are not intended to be used for political forums or information outside the Township's intent.

### PRIMARY GOALS

- Increase awareness of municipal services and events such as public notices, upcoming Capital Projects, Township sponsored events, and other Hastings County events.
- Disseminate time-sensitive information quickly.
- Provide additional means to gather community comments and perceptions regarding the Township and its initiatives.
- Develop trust and opportunities to build stronger relationships with community members.
- Correct misinformation, remedy mistakes, or alter services.
- Utilize social media as an additional way to collaborate with the public and other municipalities on mutually beneficial programs and initiatives.
- To be used as an emergency communications tool.

### SCOPE

- This policy applies to social media use for official and authorized Municipal purposes.
- This policy shall apply to all Municipal employees and others who have been authorized by the Township's social media administrator to post information on corporate social media sites in an official capacity on behalf of the Township.  
***This policy does not apply to personal use of social media conducted on personal equipment.***

- Social media profiles and websites representing the Reeve and Members of City Council are exempt from this policy, as are sites representing individuals and Committees of Council that do not fall under Municipal employee mandate or this policy.
- Social media profiles and websites representing Members of Council will not act as official information media platforms on behalf of Wollaston Township. Any information to be communicated to the Township's followers via social media will be provided by the Township's social media administrator.
- Wollaston Council acknowledges that it is not their role to report directly on Township related business and will use their social media profiles and websites as a secondary information source once matters have been officially released by the Township.
- Council will use the designated sharing tools on the various social media platforms based on this direction.
- Council will include an "in my opinion" disclaimer as needed either within the banner of their individual social media site(s) or separately when making follow up posts to the Township's social media postings and when creating original posts pertaining to Township related business.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

The posting of content and engagement on behalf of the Municipality will be the responsibility of the Township's designated administrators. All other employees must have permission prior to posting.

Wollaston Township admins include:

1. Admin Assist
2. Administrator
3. Mayor
4. Deputy Mayor

The Township will authorize specific individuals to utilize social media in an official capacity to ensure that, as with all communications activities, communications through social media channels are accurate, consistent and professional.

When representing the Municipality on social media, employees are expected to communicate in a respectful and professional manner and in accordance with all Township policies.

Employees are not permitted to discuss personal or confidential information on social media sites, whether through public posts or private messages. Non-compliance by Municipal employees may result in discipline.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF APPROPRIATE USE**

The Township's social media followers and engagers must abide by the following principles of appropriate use or may be subject to removal. Wollaston Township reserves the right to remove posted online content, comments or links which contain any of the following from the Township's social networking sites:

- Comments not relevant to the particular posting by the Township's social media administrator;
- Slanderous or derogatory remarks, obscenities, profane language or sexual content;

- Content that endorses, promotes, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- Promotion of commercial services or products other than sponsors, affiliations, or business partnerships.
- Promotion of political candidates;
- Promotion of illegal activity;
- Spam or irrelevant external links;
- Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

## **FOR CONSIDERATION**

We work on a foundation of trust. Wollaston Township trusts and expects employees, volunteers and local board members to exercise personal responsibility when using social media.

1. Staff, volunteers and local board members who belong to social media networks are expected to read, and often respond, to questions asked of them from another member of their social network. If the question seems like it would be better answered by another member of the Municipal team, re-direct the question to Wollaston Township staff or post that you will find the answer. Even though social media makes us feel as though everything should be instantaneous, take your time to ensure your posts are accurate.

***All communications regarding Wollaston Township are expected to be positive in language, tone and intention.***

## **HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA – INTERNAL GUIDELINES**

The best communications are well planned with specific goals and anticipated outcomes. Facebook (and social media in general) is no different and before you start building a Facebook page there are a number of things to consider.

Think about some of the big questions that should be answered before you build or go live with a page:

1. What is the page for? Awareness, promotion, lobbying, data gathering, brand reinforcement or as a tool to drive traffic to a website are all good answers.
2. If you use Facebook to get information out, will you simply be duplicating your website or will you create new, timely content?
3. How much time do you plan to spend on the page after it launches adding updates, monitoring and moderating comments and looking for “likes?”
4. Who are you trying to reach with your page? Who you want to reach might help decide if Facebook is the right tool to use.
5. What is your main goal that you hope to achieve by using social media? It’s really important to set some hard goals so that you can measure your success. Measuring your outcomes will help determine if this exercise has been beneficial or not.
6. Consider the risks of using social media!!! Besides spam and page takeovers, your page could rub people the wrong way, deliver part of the story, disclose potentially confidential information, make you seem less professional or simply bore people. All of these risks are real and apply to any page. Setting your goals,

determining your audience and making your messaging clear and goal-oriented can mitigate some risk but not all.

7. Is your language going to translate well for social media? Considering who your audience is on social media, will you have to re-work messaging and content? Also keep in mind that people are reading posts on the fly, on mobile devices and usually while doing a few other tasks. Keeping the reader in mind will help with the translation.

8. Negativity on Facebook and other social media platforms is real. Are you ready to manage negative threads? This involves taking conversations offline and reaching out to those with concerns in a timely manner – which could mean evenings or weekends.

9. A Facebook page or any social media platform can certainly drive traffic to your website. If this is the case, is your website ready for more guests with up to date information and exciting content? Your social media posts can make a day brighter, provide valuable information or change an opinion. Make sure that the content you prepare is thoughtful, creative and different.

### **BEFORE YOU POST, PLEASE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:**

- Is this post timely?
- Who will care about this post?
- Does this represent the values, messaging and brand of the Township?
- Will this post stand out and get shared?
- Will this post start a conversation?

Always **THINK** before you post:

Is your post -

- **True**
- **Helpful**
- **Inspiring**
- **Necessary**
- **Kind**

### **TECHNICAL DETAILS**

Before you start posting make sure you are comfortable with the technical details. Do you know how to edit or delete posts? If you are using a mobile device you will have fewer options and you always need to be able to go back to fix typos or delete threads that can cause concern.

### **PROCEDURE**

This policy will be reviewed each year.

Social media training is recommended for all admins on Municipally-linked social media channels.