

The Corporation of the Township of North Kawartha
Corporate Policies and Procedures

Subject: Social Media Policy

Effective: April 7, 2020	Revised:	Revision No.:	Page 1 of 8	Policy No.: A09-C8
Review Date: Associated Documents: Technology Code of Conduct, section 4.4 Social Media Policy; Social Media Procedures				

Purpose

The Township of North Kawartha is committed to excellence in municipal management with a focus on accountability, transparency, communication and customer service. As a result, the Township strives to provide open access to information about its policies, services, and initiatives. The Township recognizes that social media applications are widely being utilized as communication tools with the potential to provide the public with timely information. The Township is committed to disbursing media information in a range of formats to reach a variety of stakeholders.

This policy applies to all Township staff and Council Members.

Strategic Plan

This Policy aligns with the Corporate Strategic Plan goals

“Maintain a Strong Accountable Municipal Government

- 3.1. Maintain policies that enable effective governance.
- 3.3. Provide Quality Programs and Services.
- 3.4. Provide for an effective Township Communications”

Scope

This policy will apply to the Township of North Kawartha website and all social media platforms including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest.

This policy will apply to all municipal employees and Council.

This policy will apply to internal communications and external communications.

Responsibilities

Website Administrator

Shall be the Deputy Clerk. New non-operational content must be approved by the Deputy Clerk in consultation with the CAO and Manager prior to being placed on the website and social media. The Administrator may request that information be removed immediately.

Department Managers

Department Managers shall be responsible for ensuring their website and social media content is current, accurate and timely in being made available to the public. Department Managers are responsible for communication in an emergency situation when the Municipal Operations Centre has not been activated. Department Managers shall review and monitor their respective website and social media content

to ensure it remains relevant, clear and accurate. Ensure that inquiries from the public coming through social media are responded to or forwarded to the correct Department.

Content Editors

Staff members are responsible for updating or adding content to the website or social media as directed by the Department Manager.

Definitions

“Applications (Apps)” refers to an application downloaded by a user to a mobile device.

“Calendar” means the calendar available on our website for the public.

“Content Editor” means any staff member who is responsible for adding or updating website content and social media content.

“Content Management System” is a software application or set of related programs that are utilized to create and manage digital content i.e.: the North Kawartha website. The name of our content management system is icreate and is the back door whereby editing and managing website content is accomplished.

“Department Manager” means any manager of a municipal Department. Department Managers are responsible for ensuring their respective Department content is made available to the public in a timely and accurate manner. Department Managers may delegate the responsibility of adding or updating website and social media content to their respective content editors, but retain all responsibility for content.

“Esolutions Learning Centre and icreate help” means the online platform where website help is acquired. Website manuals and other learning resources are available here. You must be signed into icreate in order to use this Learning Centre.

“External Communications” means communication with citizens, business owners, upper tier levels of government, other municipalities, and non-governmental organizations.

“Facebook” is a social networking website intended to connect friends, family, and business associates.

“Instagram” is a photo sharing website on which users can upload, share and view photos.

“Internal Communications” means communication with municipal staff, volunteers and Council.

“Newsletter” is the quarterly municipal newsletter that is created using Constant Contact and is available as a link on our website and as a direct email to subscribers.

“Objectionable Content” includes, but is not limited to: personal attacks, harassment/threatening/defamatory/abusive/offensive/graphic/obscene/explicit/hateful/racist content or content that suggest or encourages illegal activity.

“Pinterest” is a photo sharing website on which users can upload, share and view photos.

“Social Media platform” means Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest and any other future recognized social media platform.

“Subscription Service” is a website module that allows people to enter their personal email and receive news right to their inbox.

“Twitter” is a website which offers a social networking and micro blogging service, enabling its users to send and read messages called tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 280 characters displayed on the user’s profile page.

“Website” means the Township of North Kawartha website, www.northkawartha.ca

“Website Administrator” means Deputy Clerk or designate.

“Website and Social Media Content” means any content that is posted or intended to be posted to the Township website or social media.

“YouTube” is a video sharing website on which users can upload, share and view videos.

Implementation or Procedures

- a) Familiarize yourself with the North Kawartha website and all that it has to offer. The website consists of webpages and modules that serve specific purposes for engaging the public.
- b) Disclose only publicly available information. You must not comment on or disclose confidential or proprietary information.
- c) Ensure that content you post is factual, relevant and accurate and complies with the Corporate policies relating to privacy, confidentiality and disclosure.
- d) The North Kawartha website shall be the main platform for all information and all other social media platforms should be linked back to the website for the purpose of downloading files and gaining further information. Some exceptions apply i.e.: emergencies or educational material.
- e) Ensure that you are not the first to make a Corporate announcement in the public domain unless you have received approval from the Chief Administrative Officer. (ie. Funding announcement, new Township services).
- f) Only advise or comment on topics within your area of responsibility. If you are in doubt or for all other matters, alert the Chief Administrative Officer or the designated Website Administrator for consideration of an appropriate response.
- g) Ensure that posted material is not obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory, or hateful to another person or entity including the Corporation, all employees, its contractors, partners, or other business related individuals, organizations and stakeholders. If you see such material on the website or social media platforms, remove it and alert the Chief Administrative Officer or the designated Website Administrator.
- h) Be polite and respectful of others’ opinions.
- i) Social media platforms are not the place to ‘conduct business’ with a customer. Refer the customer to the business contact information.
- j) Respect the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including North Kawartha’s own copyrights and brands.

Always attribute work to the original author/source and it is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

Website Modules for Engaging the Public

News is the module used to add public notices, announcements, council news, fire bans, planning notices and any other announcements that are relevant to the public. The news module is connected to the subscription service so that subscribers will receive news and alerts posted here right to their personal email.

Alert Banner allows banner style messages to appear on the main page of the website.

Document Manager is the module used to upload documents to the website such as bylaws, reports and publications.

Photo Gallery Manager is the module used to add photos to the website within the gallery.

Polling Module is the module used to create and manage polls.

Promoting Subscribers to the North Kawartha Website

A feature of the website is a subscription service whereby people can sign up to receive Township news, planning notices, public notices, weather alerts, road closures, fire bans, Council news general notices and newsletters. The web link for this subscription service can periodically be Tweeted or added to Facebook to inform people of its existence.

Creation of Content

When creating new website or social media content the editor shall ensure that the content complies with the Corporate values identified in the Strategic Plan. New website and social media content must be approved by the Chief Administrative or the designated Website Administrator before it is made available to the public.

When creating new website or social media content the Department Manager or content editor shall ensure:

- That content complies with this policy and with the Corporate vision and values of the Township as identified in the Strategic Plan.
- That content is in an accessible format, easy to understand and written according to the Accessible guides available.
- Content must relate to the corresponding responsible Department i.e.: stay within your Department or area of expertise.
- Any requests from outside agencies to add content to the website or social media requires approval by the Website Administrator.

Accessible Writing Tips

- Use Arial 12 point font when possible.
- Use language that is simple, effective and to the point. Try not to use complicated words and jargon that people may not understand.

- Avoid using underline and italic for your messages; these effects can make it difficult for some people to read.

Corporate Use of Facebook and Instagram

- Facebook and Instagram are aimed toward social friendships and is beneficial for posting public notices, announcements, photos, events, reminders, public service announcements however, remember when writing a Facebook post, the first 40 characters will appear as a Tweet. As a business page, the public must “like” [North Kawartha’s page](#). North Kawartha does not “friend” individuals on Facebook or Instagram.
- The Website Administrator and Managers or designates are responsible for “sharing” items to our Corporate Facebook page.

Corporate Use of Twitter

- The [North Kawartha Corporate Twitter](#) account is related to the Corporate Facebook account. When something is posted on Facebook, it is mirrored to Twitter in real time.
- The Website Administrator and Managers or designates are responsible for “sharing” items to our Corporate Twitter account.
- Twitter, is targeted at updating people immediately in current time. It is good for emergencies, announcements, invitations, marketing and sharing of information from community partners. Community partners include but are not limited to: other municipalities, upper tier level of government, Chamber of Commerce, Provincial ministries, local non-governmental organizations and news agencies.
- Make the first 40 characters of information count. Good tweets are direct, short and captivate their audience. Ensure the tweet is linked back to the Township website if applicable. Maximum length of a tweet should be no greater than 280 characters
- Twitter is beneficial for promoting economic development. The intent is to follow businesses and entities within the Township of North Kawartha or businesses and entities relevant to the Township of North Kawartha. Township staff shall not add friends to Twitter but may follow relevant agencies.
- Retweeting is the process by which you share a tweet from another organization to the Township Twitter account so that it may be shared with followers of the Township Twitter account. i.e.: retweeting a job posting by the County of Peterborough or retweeting relevant public service announcements from a government agency.

Corporate Use of Social Media

The CAO or the designated Website Administrator or Department Managers will monitor the social media accounts on a daily basis, preferable first thing in the morning and respond to or forward inquiries to the respective Department Manager for their expertise. To monitor the social media accounts:

- Respond accordingly to any messages and consult with the appropriate Department for the response, if required. Ensure the CAO is made aware of any inappropriate, harassing or defamatory messages.
- Ensure that there is no defamatory or inappropriate content posted and respond accordingly if there is.

- Check the activity feed on social media for anything relevant and worthwhile to retweet or share with North Kawartha followers.

Content (to be posted on website)

The content posted by the public on social media does not necessarily reflect the views of The Township of North Kawartha. Any official content posted by The Township of North Kawartha can be recognized by the page name and the Township of North Kawartha profile photo. We reserve the right to delete, without notification, any objectionable content posted by the public. Any individual who repeatedly violates the terms of this policy will be blocked from posting to the Township of North Kawartha page and reported to the social media website.

Objectionable content includes, but is not limited to: personal attacks, harassment, threatening/defamatory/abusive/offensive/graphic/obscene/explicit/hateful/racist content or content that suggests or encourages illegal activity.

If you post content that is deemed to be spam or is for commercial purposes, as determined by The Township of North Kawartha at its sole discretion, we will delete the content.

The appearance of external links does not represent official endorsement by The Township of North Kawartha.

Community Calendar Submissions from the Public

The Township of North Kawartha Event Calendar is intended to include special community events that are open to the general public and support the concept of community involvement.

Guidelines for Community Event Postings

- **Public Events:** All events must be open to the general public. Invitation/member-only events will not be accepted
- **Location:** Events must take place within the Township of North Kawartha
- **Submission Criteria:** Events must be open to the general public and generally fall under the following categories:
Recreation
Fairs and Festivals
Community events (movie nights, musical performances, theatre)
Farmers Markets
History & Heritage
Kids & Family
Culture
Science & Nature
Visual Arts
- **Submission Process:** Submitted events go through an approval process to help ensure integrity of the listing; it may take up to three business days before the event is published.

The Township of North Kawartha will not post events that:

- Are programs, camps, lessons, courses, etc. that require paid enrolment;
- Are commercial in nature and, in the Township's sole opinion, are attempting to advertise, promote or sell products or services of an individual business unless it is a Township sponsored or sanctioned event;
- Discriminatory to any individual or group;
- Fundraising events unless they are for registered charities, non-profit organizations;
- Regularly scheduled events for an organization;

- Promote, exhibit, illustrate or manifest hate or obscene/pornographic/sexual content of any kind;
- Events that are conflict with any applicable laws, municipal by-laws or policies.

Please note that the required municipal Special Events permit for community events is not associated with posting of an event to the website. Please email the Clerk to inquire about the necessary permits for your events.

Please note that North Kawartha Public Library has a [Library Event Calendar](#) however some Library Events may be also be posted on the [North Kawartha Township Event Calendar](#).

Copyrighted Material

Social media websites are third party service providers that collect, store and manage your copyrighted material whenever you access and use the site. Please refer to the social media site's Terms of Service for particulars. Note that The Township of North Kawartha has no control over what social media websites do with your copyrighted material.

Personal Information

Social media websites are third party service providers that collect, store and manage your personal information whenever you access and use the site. Please refer to the social media site's Terms of Service and privacy policy for particulars. Note that The Township of North Kawartha has no control over what social media websites do with your personal information.

The Township of North Kawartha also collects your personal information for the purpose of including your posts on its page and for the purpose of engaging in an interactive dialogue with you through the social media website, and does so under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001 (Ontario) but subject to compliance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Ontario) ("MFIPPA") and The Township of North Kawartha's Records Retention By-law (the "By-law").

The Municipal Act, 2001, MFIPPA and the By-law prescribe rules that require The Township of North Kawartha to retain records, including records containing personal information, for a minimum period of time, to ensure that records are not disclosed without legal authorization, and that ultimately records are destroyed upon the expiry of applicable retention periods set out in the By-law.

Maintenance

Department Managers or the designated Website Administrators shall be responsible for updating and maintaining accurate information for their Department, in a professional and timely manner.

All staff who work on the website and social media platforms are encouraged to participate in order to engage the public by keeping their content relevant and informative.

Training

Onsite training on the website occurs periodically and as the budget process permits. E-Solutions Group provides the website training at our location. The designated Website Administrator is also able to assist with individual requests for help on adding and editing content.

Self-taught learning within the solutions Learning Centre and icreate help is a further way of familiarizing yourself with website content and editing functions. Please note, you must be signed in icreate to access the Learning Centre.

Resources

[E Solutions Resource Center](#)

[CNIB Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines](#)

Attachments:

Red Brick Communications; Social Media Response Chart

Website Department Responsibility Chart for the Website

Designation

CAO

Designated Website Administrator

Approved by: Motion 20-118, April 7, 2020