



Use of Social Media Policy

Policy Manual Section: Governance – Communications and Promotions

Policy Number: G-CP-004

Authority: 144/15, 95/19

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Department Responsible: Administration

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Status: Active

Purpose:

The Town of LaSalle is aware of the importance of using social media to communicate with and engage members of the community. This policy is in place to protect the Town's identity and to ensure accuracy and transparency in online social media sites. This policy also outlines the responsibility of the Town's employees, members of Council and/or volunteers who may utilize social media on behalf of the Town.

Policy Statement:

The Town of LaSalle will ensure open, honest and clear channels of communication including through the use of social media. The key objectives are to engage the community through two-way communication, increase the awareness of the Town's services, and to improve accountability through accurate and timely information posted on the Town's social media sites.

Scope:

The policy applies to all Town of LaSalle employees and departments, members of Council, members of committees, volunteers, and any person who has been retained and/or engaged to act on behalf of the Town of LaSalle, save and except LaSalle Police Services, who use social media to interact with the public on behalf of the Town.

Policy:

Definitions:

Social Media



Social media is the use of internet websites that allow users to interact with other people to share information, provide feedback and bring people together who share the same interests. Examples of social media sites include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest etc.

Traditional Forms of Communication

Traditional forms of communication include newsletters, brochures, newspapers, radio and television etc.

Website (lasalle.ca)

The Town's website is considered to be the primary online source for information about the Town's services, programs, events etc. The Town's social media sites are intended to complement the website's information and engage the community with instantaneous two-way communication. The town's social media sites, where possible, will link to the town's website.

Procedures and Practices

The Town of LaSalle will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- The use of social media should add value to the Town's traditional forms of communication and website (lasalle.ca).
- The Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO will explore the tools that will allow residents to better communicate and become engaged with the Town. Town social media sites will be introduced, maintained and monitored by the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO.
- Town employees and departments, members of Council, members of committees, volunteers, and any person who has been retained and/or engaged to act on behalf of the Town of LaSalle who have been granted permission to post to the Town's social media sites must, at all times, conduct themselves in the best interest of the Town.
- Town employees and departments, members of Council, members of committees, volunteers, and any person who has been retained and/or engaged to act on behalf of the Town of LaSalle communicating on behalf of the Town through any external non-town social media sites must provide appropriate and



timely information that represents the Town's policies, services and programs in the best possible manner.

- Use of social media will comply with the law and codes of practice surrounding local government publicity, the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and copyright laws.
- Town employees and departments, members of Council, members of committees, volunteers, and any person who has been retained and/or engaged to act on behalf of the Town of LaSalle may not disclose confidential or sensitive information related to the Town, its business and/or affairs, elected officials, employees, volunteers, vendors, suppliers, residents or other stakeholders on the Town's social media sites or any external non-town social media sites, without prior written approval.
- Town employees and departments, members of Council, members of committees, volunteers, and any person who has been retained and/or engaged to act on behalf of the Town of LaSalle are encouraged to like/follow official Town social media sites, and to share content that has already been posted on those social media sites. Members of Council should identify where they are expressing personal views, and not the views of the corporation. Members of Council should adhere to the Town's *Council Code of Conduct* when posting to any social media sites.
- At the discretion of the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO, any information, photos or videos that are shared or posted to the Town's social media sites may be used by the Town for promotional and/or other marketing purposes with the appropriate permissions from the person posting/commenting.
- The Town's social media sites will be updated regularly and will share timely and accurate information with the public including, but not limited to, official Corporation of the Town of LaSalle business, Council decisions, public statements, information about services, programs and/or events, employee recruitment and other information related to the municipality etc.
- The Town's social media sites may be used to conduct surveys and/or questionnaires as deemed appropriate by the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO.



- Comments, posts and/or messages solicited by the Town and collected for the public record using the Town's social media sites will be treated like any other form of communication, and as such will be subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- Department Heads and/or their designate will be responsible for creating and updating the Town's social media sites with departmental, service and/or program based information. Any employee designated to post to the Town's social media sites will be trained by the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer. Those trained employees are trusted to have access to login and password information that is owned by the Town. All user names and/or passwords will be set/changed by the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO as required.
- Any posts/comments received from the public, when a response is required, should be responded to within 48 hours (in accordance with the Town's Customer Service Standards Policy), or on the next business day, by the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO. If a response is not possible in that timeframe, the Town will advise the person who made the post via that social media site. The Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer will review any negative, sensitive or controversial comments with the appropriate department and/or CAO and decide on the course of action.
- Town employees and departments, members of Council, members of committees, volunteers, and any person who has been retained and/or engaged to act on behalf of the Town of LaSalle who will be posting to the Town's social media sites will be trained regarding the terms of this policy and appropriate content and writing style.
- The Town's social media sites may be used to relay information to the community in emergency situations.

Personal Use of Social Media

- Town employees and departments, members of Council, members of committees and volunteers are free to use social media as private citizens, but are not authorized to comment on social media sites on behalf of the Town unless they have been appointed to do so by the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO and/or Mayor.



- Use of online communication is never private. Disparaging or inflammatory comments and/or unprofessional remarks made about the Town of LaSalle, its employees, members of Council, members of committees, volunteers, municipal affairs or business could be considered detrimental to the Town of LaSalle, and may result in disciplinary action.
- Public service is a public trust, and as such, it is critical that every municipal employee, member of Council, member of committee and volunteer be committed to the highest standards of ethical behavior, including while posting and/or commenting on any social media sites. Disciplinary action may be considered should any social media posts and/or comments be considered to negatively affect the public's perception of the Town of LaSalle or its employees, members of Council, members of committees and/or volunteers.

Terms of Use

- All Town social media sites will be monitored Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. The Town intends to respond to posts within 48 hours, or on the next business day. If a response is not possible in that timeframe, the Town will advise the person who made the post via that social media site.
- Comments from the public will be allowed on the Town's social media sites, but will be closely monitored by the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO for appropriateness. The Town's social media sites will include a "Terms of Use" statement that specifies what will be considered acceptable/unacceptable content. Those who post unacceptable content may be blocked, and will be contacted via that social media site to be asked to contact the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO by phone or in-person to discuss the post. Inappropriate comments may be deleted and/or hidden without notice. Inappropriate content includes, but is not limited to:
 - Provides personal information about an individual(s);
 - Profane language and/or content and/or defamatory statements;
 - Personal attacks on individuals, groups, events or ideas;
 - Content that infringes on another's intellectual property rights (i.e. copyright, trademarks, design and patents);
 - Content of a religious nature that might be deemed prejudicial;
 - Content that can be considered a commercial endorsement, advertisement or solicitation of an individual or and individual business;
 - Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination or harassment under the Ontario Human Rights Code;
 - Content with the intent to inflict harm;



- Sexual content, dangerous and/or illegal activity of any kind;
 - Content of a confidential nature pertaining to the Town;
 - Personal information about an identifiable individual other than the person posting the comment;
 - Content that promotes any candidate and/or materials for federal, provincial or municipal elections or for Council appointments;
 - Derogatory comments about members of Council and/or Town employees and/or Town services and/or other levels of government;
 - Any content that is determined to be inappropriate in the opinion of the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO.
- The Town of LaSalle logo and/or name will be included on all social media sites to clearly indicate that the site is maintained by the Corporation of the Town of LaSalle. The Town's *Brand Identity Standards Guide* will be followed for use of the Town logo.
 - The Town's social media sites will include a link to the Town's website (lasalle.ca) to provide the public a location to review all information, forms and documents related to the Corporation of the Town of LaSalle.

Criteria for Promoting Community Events

The Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer may choose to share information about community events on the Town's social media sites. The Town reserves the right to refuse or remove any event related information at any time, without notice. Those events must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Event must be open to the general public
- Organized or funded by another order of government;
- Organized by a government-funded agency or board;
- Organized by a group that is affiliated with the Town;
- Organized by a charitable organization that has a registered charitable number;
- Organized by a service club;
- Located in a facility that is owned or leased by the Town.

Accessibility

The Town of LaSalle is committed to the principle of accessibility and is required to comply with communications and information provisions in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The Town will facilitate delivery of material that the Town communicates through social media.



Responsibilities:

The Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer is responsible for this document.

Policy Review

This policy will be periodically reviewed and updated as required. This policy must be reviewed by the stated review date and approved by the responsible department.

References and Related Documents:

Town of LaSalle Brand Identity Standards Guide
Town of LaSalle Employee Code of Conduct
Town of LaSalle Council Code of Conduct
Town of LaSalle Customer Service Standards
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Ontario Human Rights Code

Attachments:

Social Media Guidelines for Council Members.