

SECTION: Administration		POLICY #: ADM-009
Date Approved: September 21, 2015		Social Media Policy
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In June 2012, Hanover launched a social media suite. The platforms, along with the website, exist to build an accessible virtual and global presence. This policy outlines the standards and expectations of the Town's online communications and those responsible for maintaining the platforms.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to Municipal Staff, Council, Committee/Board Members and online audiences.

Principles of the Policy

Purpose

- Corporate communications
- Media relations
- E-communications
- Visual identity (brand management); integrated marketing
- Emergency communications

Objectives

- Promote a positive image of the Municipality
- Increase public awareness and global presence
- Enhance community engagement and collaboration
- Timely and effective communications to residents, visitors, business, community groups and local media

Principles

- Be credible, accurate and consistent
- Be respectful, transparent and responsive
- Be integrated, respect the municipality's time and resources
- Act as a public servant with professionalism, maintain confidentiality and protect identities
- Keep consistent with Hanover's brand
- Monitor and update regularly

Obligations

- The Town of Hanover shall comply with all terms of service/use published by Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Flickr.
- There shall be one page only per social media platform representing the Town of Hanover. Select affiliate platforms may be permitted if necessary and at the discretion of the Economic Development & Communications Coordinator and CAO/Clerk. Otherwise, all complementary opportunities will appear as sub-topic of the official page (ie. Homecoming event).
- Any party affiliated with the Town of Hanover (Council, Committees, Departments, etc.), must discuss any social media plans prior to engaging in social media, in order to ensure compliance with this policy.
- See Appendix A for platform specific requirements.

This policy will ensure:

1. The use of social media tools does not compromise public safety or the Town's image including the image of its staff;
2. The information provided through social media is in line with the Corporation's brand, vision and guiding principles;
3. Social media content does not violate individual privacy or conflict with existing municipal policies and by-laws or other regulations as applicable;
4. Social media content posted on behalf of the municipality is accurate, accessible, transparent and accountable; and
5. Persons affiliated with the Town of Hanover are cognizant that their individual actions on social media reflect on the Town.

Approved Platforms

The Town of Hanover's social media is coordinated through the Economic Development & Communications Coordinator. As trends and corporate communication goals change, Hanover's social media platforms may be expanded or condensed. Any addition or removal of platforms will occur under the direction of the Economic Development & Communications Coordinator with the approval of the CAO/Clerk.

Hanover's current platforms include:

Official Website | www.hanover.ca

Official Facebook Page | www.facebook.com/townofhanover

Official Twitter Account | www.twitter.com/townofhanover

Official Flickr Gallery | www.flickr.com/townofhanover

Official YouTube Channel | www.youtube.com/townofhanover

Official LinkedIn Company Page | www.linkedin/company/town-of-hanover

Additional Approved Platforms:

Hanover Fire & Emergency Services Twitter Account | www.twitter.com/HanoverFD

Kamp Kummoniwannago Twitter Account | www.twitter.com/kampkhanover

Together, the social media suite and website provide a hub of information. The intent is to use social media to promote relevant and timely information found on Hanover's website and from third party organizations, directing audiences whenever possible back to Hanover's website.

These sites promote accessibility, inclusiveness and transparency, and must be maintained with this in mind. The sites are not intended to replicate information, but rather streamline the process of communication. They are also meant to be interactive, engaging audiences in a dialogue. As such, timely and appropriate responses are necessary. Confidentiality and privacy of users must also be upheld.

Profanity and inappropriate uses of the platforms are strictly prohibited, and will be recorded and removed from public visibility. Any violators will be disallowed from communicating on the platforms, and will be reported to the appropriate social media party.

Procedures

There are two ways to communicate via social media.

1. As yourself (through a personal profile)
2. As the Town (designated administrative user of municipal social media sites)

Only those individuals designated as page administrators are permitted to access municipal social media sites and communicate under the brand. For message consistency, there should be no more than three regular content publishers. It is important that message style and tone be consistent with one another and our brand.

A successful page requires monitoring. The Economic Development/Communications Coordinator will manage all communications and communicators. These individual(s) are also responsible for upkeep and to ensure that content posted is up-to-date and responses provided in a timely manner (usually less than 24 hours).

Authorized administrators (full access) include:

- Economic Development & Communications Coordinator (Lead)
- Deputy Clerk/Administrative Assistant
- Administrative Supervisor (Parks, Recreation & Culture)
- CAO/Clerk

Authorized editors (limited access) include:

- Camp Supervisor
- Community Improvement Partnership Coordinator

As municipal communications are an administrative function, authorized social media administrators will be limited to designated staff.

Individual Etiquette

As it is everyone's right to free speech, we cannot control what you communicate or where you do so. However, you must remember that once an image or statement is posted, you no longer have ownership or control over the message and the message is both public and permanent. Individuals are reminded to exercise caution when participating in social media as all messages are monitored, captured and shared.

Council, staff, committee and board members using social media via their personal account must be cognizant of their role as municipal leaders and ambassadors. Inappropriate use of social media shall result in discipline, up to and including termination, as per the Town of Hanover's Personnel Policy.

Brand Etiquette

The purpose of Hanover's municipal social media is to provide timely and relevant information to our audience. Audience members include, but are not limited to, residents, visitors, businesses, governmental agencies, staff and prospective residents. Social media consumers expect a response usually within 24 hours, though in certain circumstances, an inquiry could be seeking immediate response. Staff responding to inquiries must ensure accurate information is shared and confidentiality or privacy is not compromised.

Staff will promote local events and opportunities wherever possible. Staff will not favour one business or organization over another but are expected to share opportunities equally, especially in the case of encouraging tourism.

Public Etiquette

Inappropriate, vulgar or disruptive communications from any member of the public (individual or business) which is targeted personally at individuals or businesses will be removed from the page. The message(s) will be reported and the profile blocked from further publishing on Town of Hanover social media accounts. Staff time and resources will not be wasted dealing with inappropriate behavior or rants – the person will be directed by an administrator to contact the appropriate department directly (contact information to be provided) to discuss in person any legitimate dispute or concern.

Decisions to remove public access to individuals or businesses acting disrespectfully will be made by the page administrator in concert with the CAO/Clerk.

Social Media Guidelines

Be honest and transparent about your identity.

- If you are representing Hanover in social media, identify yourself as a municipal Council, staff or board/committee member.
- If you participate in or maintain a social media site on behalf of the municipality, you will have administrative access to the official platforms and will publish under the Hanover brand.

- Never conceal your identity for the purpose of promoting Hanover on social websites.
- Ask the CAO/Clerk about circumstances when you are empowered and when you may need approval to respond directly to users on social sites.

Post accurate, concise and useful information.

- If you participate in a social network, such as Facebook, or comment on someone's blog, make sure you are contributing information that will be of use to readers.
- Don't post self-promoting material or make "sales pitches" on social websites.
- Make sure that you have all the facts before you post.
- To avoid having to post corrections or make retractions later, fact-check all information with sources before you post.
- Cite and link to your sources whenever possible.
- If you have any question about the appropriateness of posting on certain topics in your role as a municipal employee, talk to the CAO/Clerk before you post.
- If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly.
- Unlike writing for print, writing for the web should be quick, concise and easy to follow.

Be respectful.

- Always respect the dignity of others and engage in civil and thoughtful discourse of opposing ideas.
- Post meaningful, respectful comments – don't spam or make remarks that are off-topic or offensive.
- If you ever feel angry or impassioned about a subject, refrain from posting until you are calm and level-headed.
- Always give proper credit for other people's work and make sure you have the right to use something before you publish. If you do not have the right to publish someone else's work, either under the *Copyright Act* or under some sort of licence, you must ask for permission. If you do not receive permission, do not use their work.
- Be aware of your responsibility as a staff member to uphold Hanover's *Respect in the Workplace Policy*.

Maintain confidentiality.

- Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Hanover, its residents, its businesses or your fellow employees.
- If you discuss a situation involving individuals on a social media site, be sure that they cannot be identified.
- As a guideline, don't post anything that you would not be quoted in a newspaper or radio article.
- Make sure your efforts to be transparent don't violate the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Municipal Act* or any other legislation or law.

Protect your identity.

- While you want to be honest about who you are, don't provide personal information that scam artists or identity thieves could use against you.
- Don't list your home address or telephone number or any other confidential personal information.

Respect municipal time and resources.

- As stated in Hanover's *Information Technology (IT) & Mobile Devices Policy*, municipal computers and your work time are to be used for municipal-related business.
- It's appropriate to post at work if your comments are directly related to accomplishing work goals, such as seeking sources for information or working with others to resolve a problem.
- Maintain your personal sites on your own time and your own computer.

Be consistent with Hanover's brand.

- Familiarize yourself with Hanover's brand guidelines before posting logos, images and content in social media.
- Don't use the Town of Hanover name, logo, or any other Hanover marks or images on any personal online sites you might maintain or participate in.
- Don't use Hanover's name, logos, marks or images to promote or endorse any product, cause or political party or candidate.

Monitor and update regularly.

- At least one administrator will regularly monitor postings and update content.
- Aim for regular, consistent postings and updates, at least a few times a week and, depending on the platform, more frequently.
- If you make contact information available so that questions can be submitted, be sure to have the ability to respond in a timely fashion.
- Keep platforms connected (ie. Twitter and Facebook) to ensure the same message reaches all audiences.

Emergency situations

- In the event of an emergency or crisis situation, administrators of official Town of Hanover social media accounts will share only official information provided by the *Emergency Control Groups, Emergency Information Officer, and/or the Mayor*, and will be consistent with all messages released to any platform.
- No photos or information should be posted where the information was obtained while on tour of the emergency site under the authorization of the Emergency Control Group.

Appendix A

Facebook

- The Town of Hanover will use a Facebook Page, www.facebook.com/townofhanover.
- The branding of the Facebook page will comply with Town of Hanover Brand Standards.
- Approved Events, such as Homecoming, will be presented as an event, created by and housed through the Town of Hanover's Official Facebook Page.
- Contests are permitted only through a third party application, as outlined by Facebook's [promotions policy](#) but are not recommended.
- Page Managers will be limited in numbers, and approved by the CAO.
- Language & Sharing
 - Facebook posts and shares will be consistent, timely, relevant and professional.
 - Language will be first person, friendly and brief
 - Sharing will prevent duplication of information – the Town of Hanover will share information from other pages, rather than re-writing or re-linking a similar post.
 - Others will share posts from the Town of Hanover or direct audiences to the Town of Hanover Facebook page rather than re-writing or re-linking posts published by Town of Hanover
- The Town of Hanover will comply with all [Facebook Page Terms](#) and [Facebook Community Standards](#).

Twitter

- The Town of Hanover will use a Twitter Profile, www.twitter.com/townofhanover
- The branding of the Twitter Profile will comply with Town of Hanover Brand Standards
- Town of Hanover will make use of relevant hashtags (ie. #Hanover2014 for Homecoming), but will not create new profiles for special events and other groups (unless approved according to the brand standards)
- Use of the account will comply with Twitter [Terms of Service](#)

Flickr

- The Town of Hanover will use a Flickr Gallery, www.flickr.com/townofhanover
- High quality JPGs will be uploaded to the feed and sorted according to appropriate sets
- Images will be copyright to Town of Hanover
- Contacts will be permitted to download and use the images uploaded by Town of Hanover
- Third parties will not be permitted to upload photos to the Town's Flickr account (unless approved by staff and uploaded by staff)
- Uploads will comply with Flickr [Terms of Use](#)

YouTube

- The Town of Hanover will use a YouTube Channel, www.youtube.com/townofhanover
- High quality videos will be uploaded to the channel by staff (but may be provided by a third party) and will comply with YouTube [Terms of Service](#)

LinkedIn

- The Town of Hanover will use a LinkedIn Company Page, www.linkedin.com/company/townofhanover and may develop an additional profile in the future for use in professional groups
- All use of the profile(s) will comply with LinkedIn's [User Agreement](#)

Glossary

Blog is a word that was created from two words: "web log." Blogs are usually maintained by an individual or a business with regular entries of content on a specific topic, descriptions of events, or other resources such as graphics or video. "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning *to maintain or add content to a blog*.

Content publisher are individuals responsible for populating, monitoring and responding on social media platforms.

Designated administrative user are staff permitted to speak on behalf of the Town of Hanover via social media platforms.

Facebook is a social media platform founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004. The site connects people with friends, family, acquaintances, and businesses from all over the world and enables them to post, share, and engage with a variety of content such as photos and status updates. The platform currently boasts around 1.49 billion active users.

Flickr is a social network for online picture sharing. The service allows users to store photos online and then share them with others through profiles, groups, sets, and other methods.

A **hashtag** is a tag used on a variety of social networks as a way to annotate a message. A hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by a "#" (i.e. #InboundMarketing). Social networks use hashtags to categorize information and make it easily searchable for users.

JPG (JPEG) a compressed image file format. The JPEG format is best for compressing photographic images. So if you see a large, colorful image on the Web, it is most likely a JPEG file.

LinkedIn is a business-oriented social networking site with over 380 million members in over 200 countries and territories. Founded in December 2002 and launched in May 2003, it is mainly used for professional networking.

Personal Profile (Timeline) - Your timeline is your personal profile on Facebook. It includes your photos, stories and experiences. Some of the things you can do on your timeline include adding a cover photo, updating your status and sharing basic info about yourself. Each Facebook profile has a "wall," where friends can post comments. Since the wall is viewable by all the user's friends, wall postings are basically a public conversation.

Social media platform is a tool that provides users the means to build, mix and promote community engagement, conversation and user-generated material. You can also share content, such as blogs, & link them all together.

Social media suite is a connected series or succession of platforms.

Spam is unnecessary and repetitive social media content that clogs up the feeds of social media users. The term has been used to refer to junk messages since the earliest days of the Internet.

Twitter is a real-time social network that allows users to share 140-character updates with their following. Users can favorite and retweet the posts of other users, as well as engage in conversations using @ mentions, replies, and hashtags for categorizing their content.

YouTube is a video sharing service that allows users to watch videos posted by other users and upload videos of their own.