

# The Municipality of Lambton Shores

Policy # 85  
Effective Date: March 8, 2017

## **Social Media Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

The Municipality of Lambton Shores (the “Municipality”) supports the use of online resources to promote the Municipality and enhance two-way communications with the public.

This policy establishes guidelines and standards for the “acceptable use” of the Municipality’s social media and web sites.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to Municipal social media sites and pages which permit the posting of comments, documents or photographs.

The Municipality of Lambton Shores’ social media is coordinated through the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), or designate of the Municipality. As trends and corporate communication goals change, Lambton Shores’ social media platforms may be expanded or condensed. Any addition or removal of platforms will occur under the direction of the CAO.

The intent is to use social media to promote relevant and timely information found on the Municipality’s website and from third party organizations, directing audiences whenever possible back to Lambton Shores’ website.

For official social media platforms and hashtags, see Appendix A.

Paid advertising in specific facilities (i.e. arena boards) which can be purchased falls outside the application of this policy.

### **3. Definitions**

**Social media** means the web-based technologies and sites and includes blogging, microblogging (Twitter), photosharing (Flickr), video sharing (YouTube), webcasting (Blogtv), and networking (Linkedin, Facebook, wikis, blogs, discussion boards) which allow users to interact with each other by sharing information, opinions, knowledge, photographs and interests.

**Social Media Moderators** are individuals responsible for populating, monitoring and responding on social media platforms.

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.

**Political Material** means comments or posts made by politicians, supporters or otherwise, for the purpose of political gain.

**Committee of Council or Board** means a Committee or Board established by the Council of the Municipality of Lambton Shores.

**Staff** means any paid employee of the Municipality of Lambton Shores. Includes all seasonal, part-time, full-time, and contract employees.

#### 4. Procedures

##### a. General Guidelines

- Posting on a social media site is not considered official notice or an official complaint submission to the Municipality of Lambton Shores
- All sites will be maintained by a designated social media moderator(s) who is trained regarding best practices for social media use, internal protocols, procedures and guidelines.
- All municipal social media accounts, along with their login and password information, will be owned by the Municipality of Lambton Shores and not the individuals managing the content. The Municipality will maintain a list of all approved social media accounts and their login and password information.
- Social media moderators will be trusted to have access to login and password information of one or all social media accounts.

Social Media Moderators (full access) include:

- CAO or designate(s)
- Clerk or designate(s)
- Director of Community Services or designate(s)
- Treasurer or designate(s)

Authorized Editors (limited access) include:

- Will be at the discretion of the Social Media Moderators

##### b. Creating a Municipal Social Media Site

Municipal staff wishing to form a new social media site or page will seek approval of the CAO or designate using the form and process prescribed in Appendix B. All new social media sites are required to undergo the prescribed process before being formed. Sites that are formed outside of the prescribed process will be required to be removed.

The staff liaison for the committee proposing the new social media account is required to complete and submit the form in Appendix B.

Where possible, all social media accounts will clearly indicate that they are owned and administered by the Municipality of Lambton Shores.

Where applicable, all social media accounts should conform to the Municipality of Lambton Shores brand.

c. Administering Municipal Social Media Sites

Social media sites will be monitored during the Municipality's regular business hours of Monday – Friday between 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. If deemed necessary a response will be provided in a timely manner. Promotional messages may be scheduled after business hours or on weekends.

When a Social Media Moderator leaves the Municipality, all passwords will be changed for those municipally-owned social media sites to which they had access.

An appropriate disclaimer or other terms and conditions, as approved by the CAO, must be posted to the Municipality's social media webpage, which will be accessible from each municipal social media site. See Section 6 for disclaimer.

Content of Municipality of Lambton Shores' Social Media sites will be monitored by Social Media Moderators who are responsible for:

- Correcting misinformation and ensuring content is up-to-date;
- Ensuring responses to wall posts, in-box messages and discussion comments are made in a timely manner;
- Removing any post containing information that is listed in section d of this policy;
- Denying access to or blocking users who continue to post inappropriate or offensive comments.

The Social Media Moderators will make every effort to respond to concerns and questions directed to our social media accounts, at staff's discretion it may be requested that the discussion be redirected with either our phone or email support channels. The reason(s) for this request would include but may not be limited to, privacy concerns, character limitations or the amount of detail required for answering a question.

d. Internal/External Content Standards

Content, comments, or links containing any of the following will not be permitted (or, in some cases acknowledged) on any Municipality of Lambton Shores social media outlets. The Social Media Moderator reserves the right to remove posts/links containing the following at his/her discretion:

- Comments that disclose confidential information, or compromise the impartiality or integrity of staff or Council;
- Defamatory statements, allegations, inferences, impertinent, disrespectful or improper matter
- Threats to any person or organization;
- Comments not directly related to the particular post or article;
- Slanderous remarks, obscene language or sexual content;
- Content that promotes, fosters, 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;
- Commercial endorsement or solicitation: includes content that is commercial in nature and that attempts to endorse, advertise or sell the products or services of an individual, business or organization;

- Personal religious content: includes content that promotes an individual's religion or religious service.
- To promote organizations with a political mandate and/or clubs with exclusive membership;
- To support or promote or services geared specifically to activities related to ratepayer or tenant/landlord associations;
- Promotion of political candidates;
- Promotion of political material;
- Promotion of illegal activity;
- Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Content that is known to or may be considered to violate a legal ownership interest of any other party.

The Municipality of Lambton Shores reserves the right to block/ban specific users from the Municipality's official social media channels whose activities do not comply with the above criteria.

If a submission violates the above guidelines, or in any other way is deemed as inappropriate at the discretion of the Moderator(s), the submission will be removed in its entirety from the site.

e. Sharing/Following/Retweeting Guidelines

Social media applications shall be executed following the same guidelines as other Municipal communication applications such as Policy 042 Municipal Signage. Posts containing information identified in Section 4(d) will not be retweeted/shared, etc. Information on the following will be permitted:

- Municipal sponsored events and activities;
- Municipal services;
- Public Health and Safety (i.e. road closures, inclement weather, etc.);
- Emergency Services;
- Community events and/or community group events, which are open to the public and where membership is not required to participate in the event;
- Public Service Announcements from other government agencies; and
- Recognition of local achievements (i.e. business awards, sports team accomplishments).

f. Employee Use of Social Media

- Any official correspondence shall come directly from the official municipal social media pages and not through staff/volunteer/Council personal pages.
- The use of social media will adhere to:
  - Lambton Shores policies and guidelines.
  - Enforcement of these policies will be as per the process outlined in each policy.
  - Follow the guidelines and terms of use laid out in this policy.
  - The terms of service of that applicable social media platform.
- Employees, Council and committee/board members must ensure that privacy, confidentiality, copyright and data protection laws are adhered to, and must not make comments that are considered defamatory or libelous.

- As a representative of the Municipality of Lambton Shores, it is expected that any time a public statement is made regarding the Municipality (including on personal social media accounts), that the individual (employee, Council or committee/board member) making the statement would be held to the same standards of professionalism that they would be at work.

g. Council/Committee/Board Members and Social Media

- Members of Council are welcomed and encouraged to participate in social media, through their own accounts, while respecting the Council Code of Conduct. Members of Council are encouraged to follow the official Municipal sites and to share content.
- If known to the Moderators, the Municipality of Lambton Shores social media sites will follow any current Member of Council's social media accounts that are used to promote municipal and community information (i.e. strictly personal accounts will not be followed). All accounts owned by Members of Council will be un-followed, and no further material will be shared on Municipal Social Media sites as of the start of the nomination period for any municipal elections or by-elections.
- If any accounts belonging to non-incumbent candidates are being followed, they will also be un-followed and no further material will be shared on Municipal social media sites as of the date that they file nomination papers.
- Any violations of the Council Code of Conduct will be dealt with according to the resolution process outlined in the Code.

## 5. Privacy and Legislative Requirements

Do not put personal information on municipal social media sites. By posting photos, videos, etc. to municipal social media sites, the poster is making that content public. At the discretion of the Municipality, any information, photos or videos that are shared or posted to an official municipal social media account may be reproduced by the Municipality for promotional and other purposes with the appropriate permissions and acknowledgement of the source.

Comments and messages solicited by the municipality and collected for the public record using social media will be treated like any other form of communications received by the municipality and will be subject to the provisions of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

## 6. Disclaimer

Municipal Social Media Sites and Web pages (the "Sites") are intended to be accessible by a public audience.

A person who "posts" content to a Site is referred to herein as a Poster. Postings are subject to the policies of the social media platform which operates the Site or page and also, where not in conflict, to the policies of the Municipality.

By posting comments, photos, videos or other content to one or more of the Sites, the Poster represents that the Poster owns or has the right to post such content and intends to make that content public.

Public content is available to anyone who uses the social media platform and others (via online search engines, application program interfaces, and other forms of media, such as television and magazines).

Information specifically collected as part of an official Municipal public engagement exercise will be kept in accordance with the Municipal Records Retention By-law 48 of 2002.

The Municipality may, at its sole discretion, use content posted to a Site for any purpose.

Posters and other persons use the web, social platforms and the Sites at their own risk. The Municipality is not responsible for any loss or damages suffered by a person who uses a Site or a link contained on a site.

## **Appendix A**

Lambton Shores' current platforms include:

Official Website | [www.lambtonshores.ca](http://www.lambtonshores.ca)

Official Facebook Page | [www.facebook.com/lambton.shores](http://www.facebook.com/lambton.shores)

Official Twitter Account | [www.twitter.com/LambtonShores](http://www.twitter.com/LambtonShores)

Official Instagram Account | [www.instagram.com/LambtonShores](http://www.instagram.com/LambtonShores) (currently not in use)

Official Hashtags | #LSEmergency

**Appendix B**

**Request for Formation of New Municipal Social Media Site**

Please submit this completed form to the CAO or designate for review. If necessary, Council may be involved in the decision making process. You will be consulted with further questions and provided a response to your request by the CAO or designate in writing.

***NOTE: The Committee/Board Staff Liaison is required to complete the following form for submission to the CAO or designate.***

Requesting Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Staff Liaison: \_\_\_\_\_

Department and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

**Proposed Details of New Social Media Platform**

Name of new account: \_\_\_\_\_

Platform(s) to be used: \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) responsible for content: \_\_\_\_\_

How often will the site be monitored: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide details for the following questions. Use additional pages if necessary:

1. What is the purpose for establishing the site?

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2. Why is a new site required?

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3. Why can't Lambton Shores corporate site be used?

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE USE ONLY

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Comments from on request:

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Check one:

- Request Granted       Request Denied

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_