
MEMORANDUM

TO: COMMUNICATIONS & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
FROM: PHILIP A. KIRALY, ASSISTANT VILLAGE MANAGER
CHERYL FAYNE-DEPERSIO, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER
KENDAL E. DEAN, MANAGEMENT ANALYST
DATE: FEBRUARY 5, 2010
SUBJECT: **VILLAGE OF NORTHBROOK COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

At the October 20, 2009, Communications & Legislation Committee meeting, staff was directed to draft a policy for that would govern the use of social networking outlets should the Village Board choose to utilize this communications tool in the future. At that time it was discussed that it would be more practical to create a comprehensive communications policy that addressed the major communication outlets utilized by the Village. This includes the Village website and newsletter, any social networking tool and NCTV. The website is the primary source of communication for the Village.

The attached Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) document details what types of information can be disseminated along with what organizations are eligible to request posting of organization specific information. The SOP also touches on the posting of inappropriate content and the acceptable actions staff can take in these situations, and has been reviewed by Counsel.

At this time, the SOP does not include a section related to NCTV as we have been advised by Counsel that additional research must be done to ensure that our policies stay true to recently passed legislation. Staff wanted to still provide the sections related to the website, newsletter and social networking to the Committee to continue progress on this initiative.

Staff will be present at the February 9, 2010, Communications & Legislation Committee meeting to discuss this item.

TITLE: Communications Policy

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Number:

Effective Date:

Revision Date:

Dept.: All

Distribution:

APPROVAL

Communications Manager

Assistant Village Manager

INDEX: **SOP**
Communications Policy

POLICY: It is the policy of the Village to ensure that certain standards are met when disseminating information through the communication outlets available. These include: the Village website, newsletter, and social media.

PURPOSE: To ensure that the Village optimizes its use of each communications medium available to effectively communicate with both internal and external audiences. The Village's website is the primary communications tool for the Village of Northbrook.

PROCEDURE: **Village Website**
No department, division or official entity governed by the Village of Northbrook can establish a site on the Internet that is independent from the Village's primary site (www.northbrook.il.us) without the expressed written permission of the Village Manager.

Standards

To provide a high level of quality, consistency, usability and value to our web communications, the following standards must be followed:

1. Posting Policy

- Content should provide timely information of general interest to the public and reflect the Village's programs, services, initiatives or areas of responsibility. Content must be approved by the Village Manager's office prior to posting.
- Content should be a resource to the public on information about the community and provide useful information to residents, businesses and visitors.
- Departments will be responsible for ensuring the accuracy and timeliness of all information posted.
- Website items will comply with all American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.
- Inappropriate content includes:
 - That which directly or indirectly endorses any person or organization not directly associated with the Village of Northbrook.

- Commentary or personal opinions.
- Photographs, music, video or graphics not having the written permission of the copyright holder or proof of being royalty-free.

2. Consistency

To allow viewers to navigate easily through the Village web site, web authors must follow the established page layouts, navigation link placement, use of graphics, font styles, etc.

Links to Outside Groups

Links to organizations within the community are allowed if the entity:

- The organization must be not-for-profit and must have a significant relationship to the Northbrook community. A significant relationship with the Village can be demonstrated by meeting one of the following:
 - Having a charter or other official recognition by a parent state or national organization that designates it a Northbrook chapter.
 - An organization(s) that serves Northbrook businesses or residents. Being one of the houses of worship located within the Village that promote non-sectarian events or fundraising for community organizations other than religious purposes.
 - A governmental entity serving Village residents. An organization of Northbrook businesses whose purpose is to support and encourage business within the Village.
- The sole exception to the not-for-profit requirement is that a Northbrook business may publish notice of an event, all of the proceeds from which will benefit a generally recognized charitable organization.

Social Media

To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, Village of Northbrook departments may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The Village encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the Village and the missions of its departments, where appropriate.

The Village of Northbrook has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the village on social media sites.

Standards

To provide a high level of quality, consistency, usability and value to our social media communications, the following standards must be followed:

1. The Village of Northbrook's website (www.northbrook.il.us) will remain the Village's primary and predominant internet presence.
 - The best, most appropriate Village of Northbrook uses of social media tools fall generally into two categories:
 - As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (example: emergency information).
 - As marketing/promotional channels which increase the Village's ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.
 - Content posted to Village of Northbrook social media sites will also be available on the Village's main website.

- Content posted to Village of Northbrook social media sites should contain links directing users back to the Village's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the Village of Northbrook.
2. Of those social media sites selected for use, the Village will use a single account with the Village logo. Additional accounts may be considered after review and approval by the Village Manager.
 3. General Government staff will monitor social media use and must review and approve all content prior to posting. Content will be reviewed for appropriateness, quality, consistency with overall Village message and branding, priority, goals, etc.
 - Departmental specific content review and approval may be delegated to that department, which may allow that department to work independently from the Village social media accounts.
 - Those departmental approvers/content providers must have that department director's approval before being considered by General Government staff for delegation of this responsibility to that department.
 - Departmental social media administrators must be in compliance with this protocol and may not establish more liberal procedures or practices without the review of the village social media administrator and approval of the village manager.
 - Departmental social media administrators must provide a monthly update as to its social media usage. This is to be reported within the department's monthly report document.
 4. Employees granted permission to use these outlets are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, county and Village laws, ordinances, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright or plagiarism, records retention, the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, the Illinois Open Meetings Act, the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, and privacy and information security policies and protocols established by the village.
 5. Employees representing the village via social media outlets must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Village of Northbrook.
 6. Employees who fail to conduct themselves in a professional manner, and/or are found in noncompliance with any personnel manual policies, administrative protocols, and department rules and regulations, will be subject to the corrective action procedures found in the personnel manual. Violation of this protocol may result in the removal of department pages from social media outlets.
 7. Content posted to social media sites by Village staff shall not include any of the following:
 - Content in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures.
 - Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.
 - Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.

- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
 - Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
8. Users and visitors to social media sites shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between Village departments and members of the public. The Village reserves the right to remove user-generated content, including comments and links to external content, in the following instances:
- Obscene content that, when considered as a whole, predominantly appeals to prurient interests.
 - Content in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures.
 - Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
 - Solicitations of commerce.

These guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained, including the time, date and identity of the poster when available.

9. The Village reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law.
- The Village must be able to immediately edit or remove content from social media sites.
 - The Village will not engage in any two-way conversation on any social media tool.

Newsletter for Public Announcements

To enable Village organizations to use the Village newsletter for communication of public service notices regarding community events and information.

Standards

Following are the criteria that must be met in order to utilize the newsletter for public service announcements:

1. The organization must be not-for-profit and must have a significant relationship to the Northbrook community. A significant relationship with the Village can be demonstrated by meeting one of the following:
 - Having a charter or other official recognition by a parent state or national organization that designates it a Northbrook chapter.
 - An organization(s) that serves Northbrook businesses or residents.
 - Being one of the houses of worship located within the Village that promote non-sectarian events or fundraising for community organizations other than religious purposes.
 - A governmental entity serving Village residents.
 - An organization of Northbrook businesses whose purpose is to support and encourage business within the Village.
2. The sole exception to the not-for-profit requirement is that a Northbrook business may publish notice of an event, all of the proceeds from which will benefit a generally recognized charitable organization.

3. The announcement shall be for giving notice of meetings or services only and may contain no language tending to promote a political or religious position.
4. Any other requests for use of the newsletter for public service announcements must be brought to the Village Manager for approval.

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