

# TOWN OF SMYRNA SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

## **Purpose**

This policy establishes guidelines for the establishment and use by the Town of Smyrna ("Town") of social media sites (including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) as a means of conveying Town information to its citizens.

The intended purpose behind establishing Town social media sites is for the Town to disseminate information about the Town to its citizens.

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

For purposes of this policy, "social media" is understood to be content created by individuals, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the Internet. Examples of social media include Facebook, blogs, MySpace, RSS, YouTube, Second Life, Twitter, LinkedIn, Delicious, and Flickr. For purposes of this policy, "comments" include information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communicative content posted on a Town social media site.

## **General Policy**

1. The establishment and use by any Town department of Town social media sites are subject to approval by the Town Manager or his/her designees. All Town social media sites shall be administered by the Media Services Manager or his designee(s).
2. Town social media sites should make clear that they are maintained by the Town and that they follow the Town's Social Media Policy.
3. Wherever possible, Town social media sites should link back to the official Town website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with the Town.
4. The Media Services Manager and/or his designee(s) will monitor content on Town social media sites to ensure adherence to both the Town's Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the Town.
5. The Town reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable law. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained by the Media Services Manager for a reasonable period of time, including the time, date and identity of the poster, when available.
6. These guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink.
7. The Town will approach the use of social media tools as consistently as possible.
8. The Town's website at <http://www.townofsmyrna.org> will remain the Town's primary and predominant internet presence. No other website, blog, or social media site shall characterize itself as being the Town's primary or home internet site.
9. All Town social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.
10. Town social media sites are subject to the Tennessee Open Records Act. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to Town business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be a public record subject to public disclosure. In addition, all Town social media sites shall comply with any and every other applicable Town policy, including the Computer Use Policy, Ethics Policy, and Records Retention Policy.
11. Comments on topics or issues not within the jurisdictional purview of the Town may be removed.

12. Employees representing the Town government via Town social media sites must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the Town and in accordance with all Town policies.
13. All Town social media sites shall contain a clear and conspicuous statement that the purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between the Town and its citizens.
14. No official of the Town shall use a Town owned or created social media site or a non-Town social media site to discuss or deliberate any matter with another Town official when such communication is or could reasonably be deemed to be in violation of the Open Meetings Act, T.C.A. §8-44-101 et. seq.
15. This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time.

### **Comment Policy**

1. As a public entity the Town must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.
2. The intended purpose behind establishing Town social media sites is for the Town to disseminate information about the Town to its citizens.
3. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on Town social media sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction by the Media Services Manager or his/her designees:
  - a. Comments not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comments;
  - b. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language;
  - c. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, or national origin;
  - d. Defamatory or personal attacks;
  - e. Threats to any person or organization;
  - f. Comments in support of, or in opposition to, any political campaigns or ballot measures;
  - g. Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale;
  - h. Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;
  - i. Encouragement of illegal activity;
  - j. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
  - k. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party.
4. A comment posted by a member of the public on any Town social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the Town, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Town.
5. The Town reserves the right to deny access to Town social media sites for any individual, who violates the Town's Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.
6. Departments shall monitor their social media sites for comments requesting responses from the Town and for comments in violation of this policy and notify the Media Services Manager of any necessary action.
7. When a Town employee responds to a comment, in his/her capacity as a Town employee, the employee's name and title should be made available, and the employee shall not share personal information about himself or herself, or other Town employees.
8. All comments posted to any Town Facebook site are bound by Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, located at <http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>, and the Town reserves the right to report any violation of Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities to Facebook with the intent of Facebook taking appropriate and reasonable responsive action.