



Policy	Social Media and Communications and Community Engagement Policy	Policy No.	70
Effective Date	November 16, 2021	Approved by	Council
Date Amended		Resolution	R155/21
Date Established			

PURPOSE

The Village of Anmore recognizes the importance of applying professional standards to support consistent, clear, accurate and transparent communications and community engagement with public audiences. This policy outlines the goals and objectives of communications and community engagement, the standards followed by the Village, and specific considerations for social media, media relations and messaging/content approval.

PRIMARY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Development and implementation of communications and community engagement are overseen by the Manager of Corporate Services in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Communications and community engagement shall align with Council's Strategic Plan vision and goals, protect the reputation of the Village and its brand integrity, build respectful relationships with media, and ensure timely, responsive communications and engagement with key audiences, including residents, community organizations and other affected stakeholders.

The following are the primary objectives to support achieving goals:

- Increase awareness of Council activities, meetings, agendas and decisions;
- Increase awareness of Village activities such as capital projects, new initiatives and Village sponsored events;
- Increase awareness of time-sensitive information and public service notices (e.g. changes to garbage collection, watermain flushing);
- Increase understanding of Village programs, services, bylaws and other regulatory requirements;
- Increase and improve timely release of information and community engagement;
- Instill trust and build stronger relationships with community members;
- Increase awareness and understanding of opportunities to volunteer with the Village: and

- Improve collaboration with residents, local service groups and other agencies on mutually beneficial programs and initiatives.

To support these objectives, the Village will leverage a mix of communications tactics, including a mix of printed materials such as newsletters, posters and signage, and digital platforms such as the Village website and social media. For community engagement, the Village will use a variety of tactics to provide multiple opportunities for audiences to share input and feedback. As well, because social media is an interactive platform, it can also be used as a customer service mechanism to respond to questions. The following are some of the primary uses for Village communication tactics:

- Share information about Village programs, projects, services, events, bylaws, regulations and initiatives;
- Recruit volunteers;
- Promote Village events;
- Correct misinformation and address rumours;
- Share information from other organizations when it is relevant to Anmore residents;
- Provide information on bylaw and regulatory requirements; and
- Address issues and concerns.

DEFINITIONS

“Social media” refers to common digital communications platform 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

“Communications Tactics” means communication tools or methods used to share information with audiences and includes printed forms of communication such as newsletters, brochures, newspapers, sign boards, and media releases as well as digital tools or methods, such as websites, social media, blogs and videos.

“Village” means the Village of Anmore

“Media” refers to representatives of print, broadcast and online media outlets that are recognized as official media.

“Stakeholder” refers to any individual, group of individuals, elected representative or organizations with a specific stake or interest in an issue, project, initiative or Council decision.

“Community Engagement” is the process of informing and seeking input from audiences and involves a range of levels based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.

“IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation” refers to a widely used model that is designed to assist with the selection of the level of public’s role in any public participation process.

“International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)” is the established professional standard for community engagement that includes principles and best practices as well as the IAP2 Spectrum for Public Participation levels.

“Spokesperson” refers to an individual with the authority to speak to media and the public on behalf of the Village.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Village Council members, staff, and any person who has been retained and/or engaged to act on behalf of the Village.

POLICY

This policy relates to communications and community engagement for the Village, including identifying principles and standards, designating spokespeople and media relations requirements, outlining use of social media and providing guidance for message and content approval authority. Communications and community engagement adhere to International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) principles and best practices, and use the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.

All communication tactics must adhere to the Village’s branding and logo use standards and use of the logo is only approved when the Village is an owner, sponsor or partner. The Village logo cannot be used by Council or Village staff for personal communications, such as on personal social media accounts or other communications tactics, and external use is strictly prohibited without the express consent of the Village.

Village Social Media Use

The Village’s social media sites are intended to complement other communication tactics used by the Village with a focus on providing timely and engaging content that can be linked to more information when needed. Social media also provides a mechanism for public relations and to engage with the community for input and feedback.

All Village social media sites shall be monitored periodically during regular business hours Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Village intends to respond to posts on its social media sites

within 48 hours, or on the next business day. If a response is not possible in that timeframe, the Village will advise the individual who made the post via that social media site. Comments from the public will be allowed on the Village's social media sites, but will be closely monitored for acceptable content. The Village will only respond to comments on the Village's social media sites.

The Village'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 appropriate staff member by phone or in person to discuss the post. The following forms of content are not permitted on Village social media sites and may be deleted and/or hidden without notice:

1. Profane language or content;
2. 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;
3. Comments that support or oppose political campaigns;
4. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
5. Solicitations, advertising or endorsement of any financial, commercial or non-governmental agency;
6. Comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity;
7. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
8. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
9. Comments that provide personal information about an individual other than the person posting the comment; or,
10. Personal attacks or bullying of any nature.

If a Village Council or staff member sees a posting that violates the terms of use of this Policy, they should not respond to the post, but rather, should report the post to the Manager of Corporate Services.

All social media use must adhere to the privacy restrictions as mandated under the *Freedom of Information and Protection and Privacy Act* (FOIPPA) BC and any other provincial or federal privacy legislation.

Personal Social Media Use

Village staff may not use the Village's social media sites for their own personal activity or comments, and staff activity in social media during work hours should be related to their position with the Village, with the exception of work time breaks.

Village staff may not use their work email address to set up personal social media accounts, with the exception of specific business and professional networking tools and sites, such as LinkedIn, that would be used for business purposes.

Village staff members are not permitted to publish or comment via social media in any way that suggests they are doing so in connection with or as representatives of the Village. Even if staff members do not explicitly identify as a Village employee, others may identify a person as Village staff by name, place of work, a photograph, or content. Staff shall include when commenting or publishing any information related to the Village that they are expressing a personal view by stating "in my personal opinion" or "personally" to communicate that they are expressing their personal views.

When posting to social media sites, Village staff should consider, among all other relevant criteria, how posted comments or views may affect his or her ability to perform his or her job, his or her level of professionalism, and the Village in general. An employee's duty of confidentiality to the Village does not end after business hours or when employment ends. Confidential information includes any non-public, financial, operational, technological, personal, or anything else that is not already public.

Village staff members are advised that comments made on any social media site regarding Village operations, coworkers, supervisors, residents and businesses could impact their employment with the Village. The Village periodically monitors social media, and if any staff communications (on personal or Village sites) is discovered that is in breach of this policy, in breach of law, or that contributes to a hostile work environment, that staff member could be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. These guidelines are provided to help staff make appropriate decisions about what to post online and are meant to apply only to work-related postings and are not meant to infringe upon personal interaction or commentary.

When individual members of Council publish or comment via personal social media or traditional communications, they should identify that they are expressing their personal views, and not views of the Village or Council as a whole.

Media Relations

Village media relations include communications with media where an individual, either Council or staff, is acting as a spokesperson for the organization and delivers messages related to Village matters such as Council decisions and Village policies, projects and services. This differs from Council media relations, which involve Council members responding to media from a personal perspective as an elected official. Council media relations include discussion, debate and opinion being expressed by individual Council members and are considered separate from this policy.

The approved spokespeople for the Village:

- The Mayor or Acting Mayor is the primary spokesperson for communicating with members of the media.
- The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) provides back up in this role if further information or clarification is required on an operational matter.
- Department Managers are also approved to speak to media as subject matter experts, and as spokespeople with the approval of the Mayor and/or CAO.

Individuals acting as spokespeople for the Village are required to use their official titles to provide credibility and ensure clarity when delivering an official response from the Village. Media relations outside of the Village, including interviews involving business or volunteer organizations, must be kept separate, and individuals are responsible for ensuring their Village titles are not used.

In the event of an emergency situation in the Village involving Sasamat Volunteer Fire Department, the RCMP or activation of the Village Emergency Operations Centre, designated spokespersons are permitted to speak to the media and make public safety announcements. Examples include the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief, the RCMP Media Relations Officer and the Village Emergency Program Manager.

Village staff contacted by the media must forward the call to the Manager of Corporate Services. If the Manager of Corporate Services is not available, the call is forwarded to the CAO, who will notify the Mayor/Acting Mayor and coordinate the media interview and spokesperson support.

All proactive notices to media, including news releases, public service announcements, program notices and community bulletins must be approved by the Manager of Corporate Services along with sign off from the CAO and Mayor prior to release.

During an activation of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), all communications and media policies are superseded by the approved EOC policies and protocols.

Message and Content Approvals

The Manager of Corporate Services works with the CAO and department managers as necessary to develop the messaging and other content required for communications tactics. The authority for approving content is as follows:

The Manager of Corporate Services and/or CAO approves final content for use in communications tactics for:

- Operational information, such as communication related to Village programs, services, projects, bylaws, regulations, initiatives and events based on approved policies and Council direction;
- Regularly scheduled information such as Council agendas, highlights and other meeting notices;
- Information from other organizations that is relevant to Anmore residents; and
- Messages and standby responses for issues that are already approved as part of a strategic communications and/or community engagement plan or through a previous approval process.

The Mayor/Acting Mayor provides input on content prior to final approval of messaging in communications tactics when:

- Content relates to a policy decision being considered by Council but not yet approved;
- Messaging that relates directly to Council;
- Communication that includes a quote by the Mayor/Acting Mayor; and
- When messages are not operational in nature and do not have a direct correlation with a position of the Village.