

VILLAGE OF NEW LENOX – SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Summary and Purpose

The use of social media and interactive websites allows the Village of New Lenox to expand communications efforts with our citizens by engaging in conversations that provide and share information in real time related to topics posted by the Village on its social media and interactive websites. It is the intent of this policy that social media platforms and interactive websites used by the Village are “limited public forums” as defined by First Amendment case law. The purpose of this policy is to define and outline acceptable use of social media and interactive websites in Village government.

Examples

Examples of social media and interactive websites that the Village may use include, but are not limited to: Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Pinterest, Vimeo, YouTube, photo and video sharing sites, virtual worlds and other sites that allow interactive posting of information, images, video and comments.

Applicability

This policy shall apply to all Village departments as well as any affiliated government or non-government agency or official permitted by the Village to post on the Village’s social media and interactive websites. This policy applies to the use of social networking sites in the course of conducting official Village business and is not intended to address employees’ personal use of social media networking sites. Employees should also make themselves aware of Village policies pertaining to personal use of social media networking sites and the potential ways that use could impact their employment with the Village.

Policy

The Village's social media program involves establishing an online presence that offers citizens various ways to receive Village updates and information. The choice of platforms the Village uses, does not use, or whether it continues to maintain an interactive social media presence remains at the discretion of the Village. The Village’s Administrative Team is responsible for the creation, administration, updating and monitoring of official Village of New Lenox social media. No Village department shall create a separate social media account without the written approval of the Mayor after consultation with the Village Administrator.

Postings on Village social media sites may only be made through official Village accounts that are recognizable as being affiliated with the Village. Official postings on Village social media and interactive websites shall only be made by Village employees authorized to post as a representative spokesperson of the Village. Village employees not authorized to act as a representative spokesperson shall not represent themselves as such if posting as a private citizen. The Village’s official seal and other departmental symbols and logos are the exclusive property of the Village, are legally protected and may not be used by others without the Village’s written consent.

Authorized personnel shall not intentionally delete comments left on the Village’s social media accounts by Persons unless they are Prohibited Content as described herein, or do not qualify for First Amendment protection as determined in consultation with the Village Attorney. Persons who repeatedly violate this policy may be blocked from accessing the Village’s respective social media page and accounts. Persons who find themselves blocked by the Village may request, after one (1) year period, to view and interact with the Village’s social media pages and accounts, subject to approval by the Village and affirmations by the Person blocked to not violate the policy in the future.

Third party information from Village partners may be shared through social media and interactive websites so long as it conforms to the guidelines established under the Village’s communications plan.

The Village’s social media and interactive websites are subject to State of Illinois Public Records Laws; therefore, content shall be managed, stored, retrieved and deleted to comply with these laws.

Wherever possible, Village social media sites shall link back to www.NewLenox.net for additional information.

Prohibited Content

The following content is prohibited and subject to removal:

1. Comments unrelated to the particular Village post purportedly being commented upon;
2. Comments that promote, foster, or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
3. Comments containing vulgar, offensive, profane, or physically threatening language, personal attacks, or unsupported accusations;
4. Language that promotes or provokes violence;
5. Content that violates any cyber-crime or other criminal law;
6. Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
7. Comments from children under 13 (to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection ACT) - by posting on the Village's site, users acknowledge that they are at least 13 years old;
8. Photographs or videos unrelated to the particular post being commented upon;
9. Personal information of any person such as social security numbers, driver's license numbers, bank accounts, address or telephone numbers;
10. Private information as defined by State or Federal statute, regulations or written Village policies adopted in conformance with the law;
11. Spamming or repetitive content such as posting the same content more than two times in the same location;
12. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
13. Solicitations of commercial sales or commercial links;
14. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
15. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party including trade secrets (information regarding the development of systems, processes, products and technology), internal reports, policies, procedures and confidential communications;
16. Content promoting the use of Illegal or banned substances and narcotics;
17. Comments in support or opposition to political campaigns, ballot measures or referendums; and
18. Comments containing language commonly associated with online scams or impersonation attempts, such as requests to "DM me," "inbox me," or similar invitations to private messaging.

Disclaimer

The Village of New Lenox has not evaluated the facts or information contained in public comments and does not endorse any position, product, business or non-official statement that may be on any of its social media sites.