

Social Media Policy

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, but are not limited to, 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 of University Park social media site.

General Policy

- a.** The establishment and rules of use by any Town department or agency of a Town social media site is subject to approval by the Mayor and Council.

- b.** Town social media sites must make clear that they are maintained by the Town and that they follow this Social Media Policy.

- c.** 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.

- d.** The Mayor or designees will monitor content on Town social media sites to ensure that use of the sites adhere to this Social Media Policy. Town employees and officials should have no expectation of privacy while using the Town’s social media sites and the internet generally.

- e.** The Town reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that the Town reasonably determines to be in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable law. Any content that the Town removes from the Town’s social media sites based on this policy should be retained for a reasonable period of time, including the time, date and identity of the poster, when available.

f. These guidelines must be displayed to users of the Town's social media sites or made available by hyperlink contained on those sites.

g. The Town will approach the use of social media tools as consistently as possible, enterprise wide.

h. All Town social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.

i. Content posted, delivered to or sent from Town social media sites are public records subject to the Maryland Public Information 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. Wherever possible, Town social media sites shall clearly indicate that content posted or submitted to the Town for posting is subject to public disclosure.

j. The Town shall retain and maintain social media content in a manner and format that preserve the integrity of the original record and is readily retrievable for compliance with public information act requests and judicial e-discovery rules.

k. The Town may remove from its social media sites without notice comments on topics or issues not within the jurisdictional purview of the Town, not responsive to posts made by the Town or in violation of this social media policy.

l. Employees and officials representing the Town government through Town social media sites must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the Town, in a manner respectful to Town citizens and the general public and in accordance with all Town policies.

m. Town employees may not post any confidential or proprietary Town information without the prior express written permission of the Mayor or designees.

n. Town employees who hold themselves out as Town employees in Town social media posts or in personal social media posts must take responsibility for conducting their social media activities in a professional manner that does not cast discredit on the Town. If an employee identifies himself or herself as an employee of the Town on any personal social media postings not undertaken in furtherance of Town business, the employee must contain a disclaimer that the posts are solely the opinion of the employee and are not intended to reflect the views or philosophy of the Town, its officials, or other employees.

o. The Town will only accept third-party pages for posting on the Town's social media sites from organizations and entities that are not political in nature and are intended to provide non-commercial community information to the Town's citizens. Examples of such organizations and entities include other government entities, libraries, volunteer fire departments, businesses, public activities, newspapers and other media, and emergency management services. The posting of these third-party pages is not an endorsement of the content on those pages by the Town.

p. The Town may revise this Social Media Policy at any time.

Comment Policy

a. As a public entity the Town must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.

b. The intended purpose behind establishing Town of University Park social media sites is to disseminate information from the Town, about the Town, to its citizens and members of the public and to receive information, in civil discourse, through a limited public forum from the Town's citizens and the general public.

c. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content may not be permitted on Town of University Park social media sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction, without notice, by the Mayor or the Mayor's designees:

1. Comments not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comments;
2. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language;
3. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, or national origin or any other trait or characteristic protected by federal, State or local law;
4. Defamatory or personal attacks against any individual or entity;
5. Threats to any individual or entity;
6. Comments in support of, or in opposition to, political campaigns or ballot measures;
7. Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale;
8. Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;
9. Encouragement of individuals or organizations to engage in illegal activity;
10. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
11. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party.

d. When a Town employee responds to a comment, in the individual's capacity as a Town employee, the employee's name and title should be used, and the employee shall not share personal information about himself or herself, or other Town employees.