

**CITY OF SEASIDE  
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY  
Approved April 7, 2016**

This Social Media Policy is to be read and applied in conjunction with the City of Seaside's Social Media Standards and Procedures.

**I. Purpose**

The City will use social media tools and other emerging media platforms in specific ways to reach a broader audience and increase citizen engagement. The City encourages the use of diverse communication platforms to further the goals of the City and its departments, where appropriate, through dissemination of information about the City's mission, meetings, activities and current issues to members of the public.

The City has an overriding interest in deciding what is stated or set forth on behalf of the City on social media sites. The purpose of this policy is to set forth the City's policies and procedures regulating the City's presence on social media websites and guiding the activities of employees who are responsible for maintaining the City's presence on social media websites. This policy does not govern or regulate the use of personal social media sites by City employees or the privacy rights associated therewith.

The goals of City of Seaside social media sites are to increase the public's knowledge, trust, and use of City services; promote the value and importance of City services among and between governing officials, civic leaders, and the general public; and maintain open, professional and responsive communication with members of the public and the news media.

**II. Ownership**

All social media communications composed, sent, or received on City equipment are the property of the City. While the social media sites are administered by the City, the content on the sites is not entirely controlled by the City. The City will do its best to prevent usage of its social media sites by commercial interests and City does not endorse any links or advertisements on its social media sites placed by the site owners or their vendors or partners.

**III. General Policy**

- A. The City Manager shall develop and implement Social Media Use Standards and Procedures, which establish guidelines for the administration and use of City social media platforms and other communication outreach methods in conjunction with this Policy.
- B. The City will maintain Citywide accounts on various platforms that will be used to disseminate City news. The social media platforms used must be approved by the City Manager or designee.

- C. The City Manager's Office will have sole access for all updating, managing, and monitoring all social media postings on the City's approved social media platforms. The Department Director's will designate an employee who shall be responsible for creating, and sending information or messages to the City Manager's office for posting on the different media platforms.
- D. The City Manager at any time may at any time, authorize additional users to have access to post on City Social Media accounts.
- E. The most appropriate uses of social media tools are as informational channels to increase the City's ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.
- F. The City's website (<http://www.ci.seaside.ca.us>) will remain the City's primary and predominant internet presence. Wherever possible, content posted to the City's social media sites must first be made available on the City's website.
- G. When practicable, content posted to the City's social media sites must contain hyperlinks directing users back to the City's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of Seaside.
- H. Social media will not be the primary tool used for disseminating emergency information. The City's PEG Channel, Comcast Channel 26, will remain the primary source of that information. Emergency information may be released on social media sites, but not before release on Channel 26 or other emergency information systems.
- I. The City's social media sites must comply with all appropriate City of Seaside policies and procedures, including but not limited to:
  - 1. Internet, E-Mail and Electronic Media Use Policy (Reso. No. 2005-43).
  - 2. City Information Technology (IT) security policies and guidelines.
  - 3. City of Seaside Policy Against Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation.
  - 4. City of Seaside Social Media Use Standards and Procedures.
- J. The City's social media sites are subject to California's civil discovery statutes and the California Public Records Act. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to City business, including a list of subscribers and posted communication (with certain exceptions), is a public record. The City Clerk is responsible for responding to any public records requests for public records on social media in collaboration with the City Attorney's Office. Content related to City business must be maintained in an accessible format and so that it can be produced in response to a request.
- K. California law and relevant City records retention schedules apply to social media formats and social media content. Unless otherwise addressed in a specific social

media standards document, the City Clerk shall preserve records required to be maintained pursuant to an applicable records retention schedule for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible. Appropriate retention formats for specific social media tools are detailed in the City's Social Media Use Standards and Procedures.

- L. City social media sites shall be managed consistent with the Brown Act, the Political Reform Act, and the California Election Code. Members of the City Council and City advisory bodies shall not respond to any published postings, or use any social media site to respond to, blog, engage in serial meetings, or otherwise discuss, deliberate, or express opinions on any issue within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body or for any political purpose.
- M. Any City employee who violates this Policy shall be denied access to all agency social media sites, and may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- N. The City reserves the right to terminate City social media sites at any time without notice. The City Manager may direct the deletion of a social media account that is not being utilized, or is underutilized.
- O. The City Manager may change, modify, or otherwise amend all or part of this Policy at anytime.

#### **IV. Comment Policy**

- A. Discussion boards and the ability for fans to post directly on a City social media page/wall shall be disabled unless approved in writing by the City Manager or designee.
- B. Users and visitors to the City's social media sites must be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a means of communication between the City and the community at large. All comments posted to the City's social media sites will be monitored. The City's social media site articles, posts and comments containing any of the following forms of content will not be allowed and shall be immediately removed by the City Clerk, Information Services Coordinator, or other designated employee:
  - 1. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic language and/or content;
  - 2. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, sex, gender identity or expression, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, covered medical condition, sexual orientation, military or veteran's status, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law;
  - 3. Sexual content or links to sexual content;

4. Solicitations of commerce not related to agency business, including but not limited to, advertising of a business or product for sale and other pure commercial speech;
  5. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
  6. Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
  7. Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems or employees;
  8. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
  9. Content that does not pertain to City business;
  10. Defamatory or personal attacks;
  11. Threats of violence or any other harmful act directed to any person, or persons, group, or organization;
  12. Content not related to the subject being discussed, including random or unintelligible comments;
  13. Personal matters; and
  14. Conduct that is in violation of any federal, state, or local law.
- C. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained, including the time, date, and identity of the poster (when available) in accordance with the City's policy on the retention of such information.
- D. The City reserves the right to deny access to City social media sites for any individual who violates this Policy, at any time and without prior notice.
- E. Users and visitors to the City's social media sites must also be notified of the City's "Terms of Use":
1. A comment posted by a member of the public on any City of Seaside social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and the publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the City of Seaside, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the City of Seaside.
  2. The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the City of Seaside is not obligated to take such actions, and the City disclaims any and all responsibility and liability for any materials that the City deems inappropriate for posting, which cannot be removed in an expeditious and otherwise timely manner.
  3. By posting a comment, users agree to indemnify the City of Seaside, its officers and employees from and against all liabilities, judgments, damages, and costs (including attorney's fees) incurred by any of them which arise out of or are related to content posted by users. If a user does not agree to these terms, the individual should not use the City of Seaside's social media sites as a violation of these terms may lead to legal liability.

4. The City does not guarantee the authenticity, accuracy, appropriateness nor security of external links, websites or content linked thereto.
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- F. The above comment guidelines and disclaimers (Terms of Use) 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, in accordance with the City's policy on the retention of such information.