

# TOWN OF ACTON

## Social Media Policy

### 1. Introduction:

- 1.1. As part of the official internet presence for the Town of Acton (the “Town”), the Town's social media sites will be used by the Town, its agencies and officials for communicating information with the goal of informing the public of the work, news and updates from Town departments. The Town’s social media sites are subject to the same rules as other government publications. The Town is not obligated to comment or reply to any response, comments or messages, but it will moderate comments and contributions to the site by the public in order to comply with all applicable laws and with this Policy.

### 2. Purpose:

- 2.1. The purpose of this Policy is to establish procedures governing the use of Town social media accounts to ensure proper, safe and effective use of social media to disseminate information for the Town.

### 3. General:

- 3.1. The Town has created or may create social media accounts as a customer service tool for the dissemination of factual information to the public. Such social media sites and all postings thereon are subject to the approval of the Department Head and Town Manager or his/her designee.
- 3.2. Only social media accounts that are listed at [www.actonma.gov/socialmedia](http://www.actonma.gov/socialmedia) shall be considered official accounts. The Town Manager shall be responsible for determining what can be considered as an official account of the Town. Official accounts must indicate as much in the profile and should include a link back to [www.actonma.gov](http://www.actonma.gov) and to this policy.
- 3.3. The Town’s social media site will be used by the Town and its departments for communicating information with the purpose of informing the public of the work, news, events and updates of the various Town departments.
- 3.4. The Town’s social media accounts are not open forums, and will be limited to the subject matter posted by the various Town departments.
- 3.5. Town departments may post material from non-profit organizations or charitable events when such material is relevant to the general public, not merely to a particular group. Posting does not constitute endorsement or approval of the material. Events posted are subject to any requisite permits, licenses, and/or other municipal approvals; posting does not signify or replace permitting or license compliance.
- 3.6. The Town is not obligated to respond to any comments or private messages.
- 3.7. Content posted to the Town’s official social media is subject to Massachusetts Public Records Law, including, but not limited to a page’s list of subscribers/followers, posted communication and communication submitted for posting.
- 3.8. Members of the public that correspond using the Town’s social media sites should be made aware that such communications may be made public without further notice or consent.
- 3.9. The Town and its departments are not obligated to “follow” or “friend” any organization or individual. The Town and its departments may follow other public entities such as another municipal, state, quasi-state or federal agency for the coordination and dissemination of interest to the general public.
- 3.10. The Town’s official social media sites shall not be used to promote private commercial interests, illegal activities, or personal events and activities.

- 3.11. No comments will be accepted through the Town's social media accounts for any public hearing or meeting; either adjudicatory public hearings or any other notified public hearing. Residents must attend public hearings and meetings or directly communicate with the deliberative body.
- 3.12. Comments and messaging cannot be used as any formal notification or request for any public meeting or services, although it may refer to such notices already posted on [actonma.gov](http://actonma.gov).
- 3.13. The Town is responsible solely for the content uploaded to the official Town accounts, and not for any related or "suggested" videos, linked photos linked from other users, nor for any advertising or other content contained on the relevant platform.

#### **4. Monitoring:**

- 4.1. The Town reserves the right to remove from public view any post, comment, photo or remark that does not conform with this Policy or contains the following content:
  - 4.1.1. Content that violates the host site's terms of use or policy;
  - 4.1.2. Comments not topically related to the particular social media article or thread;
  - 4.1.3. Content that is abusive, defamatory, disparages an individual or contains personal attacks, insults or threatening language, unless otherwise protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution or the Massachusetts Constitution;
  - 4.1.4. Comments in support of or in opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
  - 4.1.5. Profane language or content;
  - 4.1.6. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of any protected class under state or federal law;
  - 4.1.7. Sexual content;
  - 4.1.8. Solicitations of commerce, commercial promotions or spam content;
  - 4.1.9. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
  - 4.1.10. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
  - 4.1.11. Personal and private information;
  - 4.1.12. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party; or
  - 4.1.13. Comments or hyperlinks unrelated to posted information.

#### **5. Use By Employees:**

- 5.1. Employees may use the Town's social media sites to communicate the following:
  - 5.1.1. Announcements about departmental or community items of interest;
  - 5.1.2. Emergency notifications;
  - 5.1.3. Highlighting of Town events and activities;
  - 5.1.4. Provision of historical and/or current information relative to the Department or Town;
  - 5.1.5. Highlight employees who have done good work for the community;
  - 5.1.6. To direct the public to content on [www.actonma.gov](http://www.actonma.gov).
- 5.2. Employees whom have been approved by the Town Manager to communicate through the Town's social media sites shall also adhere to the following:
  - 5.2.1. Employees shall conduct themselves at all times as a professional representative of the Town and in accordance with all Town policies;
  - 5.2.2. Any employee authorized to post information shall review, be familiar with, and comply with this Policy;
  - 5.2.3. Any employee authorized to post information shall not express his/her own personal views or concerns through such postings. Postings shall only reflect information from the Town;

- 5.2.4. Town social media sites shall use authorized Town contact information for account set-up, monitoring and access. The use of personal e-mail accounts or phone numbers by any Town employee is not allowed for the purpose of setting-up, monitoring or accessing a Town social media site;
  - 5.2.5. Employees may remove posts from public view in order to adhere to the monitoring guidelines as indicated in this Policy. If such removal is necessary, employees are required to document the original post, the date of deletion and the reason the post was deleted from the platform; and
  - 5.2.6. It is the employees' responsibility to retain and maintain all deletion logs affiliated with their department's accounts.
- 5.3. This Policy is separate from and in addition to the requirements of all Town employees in the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy, contained in the Employee Handbook.

**6. Policy Changes:**

- 6.1. The Board of Selectmen reserves the right to change, modify or amend all or part of this policy at any given time.

ADOPTED : January 28, 2019

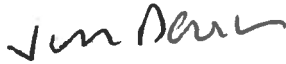
AMENDED: September 23, 2019

TOWN OF ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS,  
By its Board of Selectmen,



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Joan Gardner, Chair



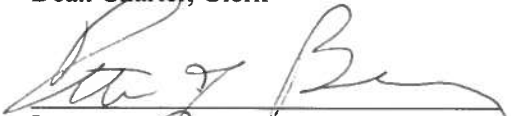
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Jon Benson, Vice Chair



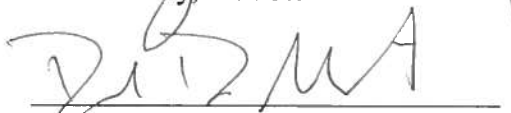
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Dean Charter, Clerk



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Peter J. Berry, Member



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David Martin, Member