CITY OF SEQUIM

152 W. Cedar Street, Sequim, WA 98382
PH (360) 683-4139 FAX (360) 681-3448

CITY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

A. PURPOSE OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

The City of Sequim's social media sites serve as online information sources focused on City issues, projects, news, and events and on sharing the City's mission, vision, and values with the public.

This policy establishes guidelines for the general public's interactive use of City social media sites.[1]

The City reserves the right to change, modify, or amend all or part of this policy at any time. The City Manager has the authority to administratively amend or modify this policy as deemed necessary or appropriate, without notice.

B. NO OPEN PUBLIC FORUM; IMPROPER USES

The following understandings are fundamental to the City's Social Media Policies:

- No **City social media site** is intended to be an ***open*** public forum.
- **City social media sites** are ***limited*** public forums and the City has an overriding interest and expectation in protecting the information **posted** and the **content** that is attributed to the City of Sequim.
- No **City social media site** is an allowed mechanism for the public or any entity to report crimes, hazards, or other repairs, submit records requests, make formal complaints or claims against the City of Sequim, or serve legal notice or process.
- The City of Sequim assumes no liability for any inaccuracies a **City social media site** may contain and does not guarantee that its sites will be error-free, permanent, or uninterrupted.
- **Comments** and opinions expressed by members of the public on **City social media sites** are the **comments** and opinions of those individuals alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the City of Sequim or its employees or officials.

C. DEFINITIONS

1. "**Social media**" means **content** created through and on internet platforms by individuals, businesses, or agencies, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies. Examples of social media platforms include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, RSS, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Pinterest.

2. "**City social media sites**" are **social media** sites established and maintained by the City of Sequim, where the City has control over the **content** posted on the site except for advertisements or hyperlinks placed by the platform's owners, vendors, or partners. **The City of Sequim's official websites are not considered social media sites.**

[1] See City of Sequim Social Media Policy for Internal Users for policies specific to City staff and officials.

3. "**Limited public forum**": A **limited public forum** is a public space, property, or site (including a **social media site**) set aside by a governmental body for **expressive activities** that may be restricted as to subject matter or class of speaker. An "**open public forum**" is a public space, property, or site that is open for **expressive activities** of any kind.

4. "**Expressive activities**" are speech and other conduct protected by the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment rights to speech, assembly, petition for redress of grievances, and the exercise of religion.

5. "**City staff**" or "**City employee**" means all employees of the City of Sequim, including temporary and seasonal, and those volunteers, contractors, and vendors who use City communications or equipment.

6. "**City officials**" are the elected or appointed members of any council or committee of the City of Sequim.

7. "**Post**" or "**posting**" mean information, articles, pictures, videos, or any other form of communication placed on a **City social media site** by designated **City staff**.

8. "**Content**" means the text, images, or audiovisual material contained in a **post** or **comment**.

9. **"Disallowed content"** describes **content** that may be removed by the City for violating the law or the City's Social Media Policies, as may be amended.

10. "**Terms of use**" and "**comment policy**" are the rules established by the social media platform owner and/or the City of Sequim regarding who may **post** to the site, what **content** may be **posted**, and what **content** might be subject to removal.

11. "**Comment**" means any **content** or link to **content** that is placed in response to a City **post** subsequent to its **posting**, usually by someone other than the original poster. This includes "likes", thumbs-up or -down, and other single-click interactions. "**Commenters**" are the persons making the **comment**.

12. **"Moderate"** and "**monitor**" refer to actions taken to ensure that **posts** and **comments** do not contain **disallowed content**. Designated **City staff** may **monitor** and **moderate comments** at their discretion to the extent allowed by law.

13. **"General public user"** refers to a person using a **City social media site** who is not a **City employee** or **City official**.

D. ADMINISTRATION AND MODERATION BY CITY

1. **City social media sites** are **limited public forums** administered by designated **City staff**, and the City of Sequim reserves the right to lawfully remove any **content** at any time and to disallow or discontinue interactivity on any **City social media site** or on a particular **post**.

2. The City is not responsible for and cannot prevent placement of links or advertisements on **City social media sites** by the platform's owners, vendors, or partners. The appearance of such ads and links on **City social media sites** does not imply the City's endorsement or approval of any product, person, or service. The City of Sequim does not receive any revenue from any of these advertisement links.

3. The City is not responsible for the **moderation** activities of the social media platform itself.

4. The City cannot prevent the author of a **comment** on a **City social media site** from removing or altering the **comment**.

5. The City of Sequim reserves the right to terminate any **City social media site** without notice.

6. Links to the City's Social Media Policies will be displayed on the City's websites, www.sequimwa.gov and www.visitsunnysequim.com.

7. **City social media sites** cannot be used to serve legal notice upon the City.

8. City social media sites cannot be used to notify the City of a hazard, crime, claim, or complaint.

9. City social media sites cannot be used to submit a public records request.

10. Any content placed on a **City social media site** is subject to public disclosure.

E. COMMENT POLICY FOR GENERAL PUBLIC USERS

This section contains rules for the general public regarding **commenting** on **City social media sites**. These rules may be amended or supplemented to keep pace with changes in technology, the law, and a platform's **terms of use.**

1. All **comments** made to **City social media posts** are subject to **moderation**. *The City of Sequim reserves the right to remove the following **disallowed content** and any other **content** deemed to violate this policy or any applicable law*:

    a. **Comments** not topically related to the article being commented upon, including random or unintelligible **comments**;
    b. **Comments** in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
    c. Profane language or **content**;
    d. **Content** that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, sex, marital status, national origin, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, medical condition,, veteran or military status, or any other protected class status;
    e. Sexual **content** or links to sexual **content**;
    f. Spam or solicitations or promotions of commercial services, entities, or products;
    g. **Content** that discusses, encourages or constitutes illegal activity, including threats and harassment;
    h. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
    i. **Content** that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party, such as infringement of copyright or trademark dilution;
    j. Repetitive or duplicate **comments**;
    k. Anonymous **comments**; or
    l. **Comments** from children under 13 (to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act - COPPA).

3. The City of Sequim reserves the right to restrict the general public's ability to **comment** on a particular **post** or genre of **post**, and to cut off **comments** after a certain length of time, in the sole discretion of the City.

4. The City of Sequim has discretion on the extent and manner of its **moderation** activities. As a general rule, no **City social media site** will be **monitored** or **moderated** on legal holidays or outside of the City's normal business hours of 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

F. COPYRIGHT AND COMMERCIAL USE; NON-OFFICIAL USE OF CITY IDENTIFICATION

The City retains the exclusive legal copyright to all **content** created by the Communications Director or designee or any **City staff** or **City official** and **posted** to a **City social media site**, and has the sole right to produce or reproduce the **content.**

Any person reproducing or redistributing a third party copyright on a **City social media site** must adhere to the terms and conditions of the third party copyright holder. The City will take care to respect artists and other **content** creators and obtain explicit permission for use or only post **content** that is available under a creative commons license. If a copyright holder notifies the City of Sequim that the City did not use an appropriate credit line, the Communications Director will request detailed information about the circumstances so that the information can be added or the material in question removed.

The use by any commercial entity of the City's logos, photos, or any portion of a **post** appearing on a **City social media site** is prohibited without the City's express prior written permission. Use of the City logo is prohibited for any nongovernmental purpose.

Use by businesses or individuals of City logos or other official City-identifying information in a manner that appears to impersonate or speak for the City or a particular department, or which could confuse the public about the origin of the information, is prohibited.

G. SERIOUS THREATS OR ILLEGAL ACTIVITY

Any **content** placed on a **City social media site** that contains a serious threat or consists of or promotes illegal activity will be reported to law enforcement.

I. PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITE RECORDS

Comments appearing on **City social media sites** are subject to the Washington State Public Records Act, RCW Chapter 42.56 *et seq*. and may be disclosed to the public upon request.

J. IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY

The City will develop procedures to implement its Social Media Policies. These policies and procedures may change as social media technology, laws, and best practices evolve.

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SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

FOR CITY STAFF AND OFFICIALS

A. PURPOSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR CITY STAFF AND OFFICIALS

The City of Sequim's social media sites serve as online information sources focused on City issues, projects, news, and events and on sharing the City's mission, vision, and values with the public.

This policy establishes guidelines for use by City staff and officials of City-owned social media sites as a means of conveying information to the public.[1]

The City reserves the right to change, modify, or amend all or part of this policy at any time. The City Manager has the authority to administratively amend or modify this policy as deemed necessary or appropriate, without notice.

B. NO OPEN PUBLIC FORUM; IMPROPER USES

The following understandings are fundamental to this Social Media Policy:

- No **City social media site** is intended to be an ***open*** public forum.
- **City social media sites** are ***limited*** public forums and the City has an overriding interest and expectation in protecting the information **posted** and the **content** that is attributed to the City of Sequim.
- No **City social media site** is an allowed mechanism for the public or any entity to report crimes, hazards, or other repairs, submit records requests, make formal complaints or claims against the City of Sequim, or serve legal notice or process.
- The City of Sequim assumes no liability for any inaccuracies a **City social media site** may contain and does not guarantee that its sites will be error-free, permanent, or uninterrupted.
- **Comments** and opinions expressed by members of the public on **City social media sites** are the **comments** and opinions of those individuals alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the City of Sequim or its employees or officials.

C. DEFINITIONS

1. "**Social media**" means **content** created through and on internet platforms by individuals, businesses or agencies, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies. Examples of social media platforms include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, RSS, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Pinterest.

[1] See City of Sequim Social Media Policy for External Users for policies specific to users who are not City employees or officials.

2. "**City social media sites**" are **social media** sites established and maintained by the City of Sequim, where the City has control over the **content** posted on the site except for advertisements or hyperlinks placed by the platform's owners, vendors, or partners. **The City of Sequim's official websites are not considered social media sites.**

3. "**Limited public forum**": A **limited public forum** is a public space, property, or site (including a **social media site**) set aside by a governmental body for **expressive activities** that may be restricted as to subject matter or class of speaker. An "**open public forum**" is a public space, property, or site that is open for **expressive activities** of any kind.

4. "**Expressive activities**" are speech and other conduct protected by the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment rights to speech, assembly, petition for redress of grievances, and the exercise of religion.

5. "**City staff**" or "**City employee**" means all employees of the City of Sequim, including temporary and seasonal, and those volunteers, contractors, and vendors who use City communications or equipment.

6. "**City officials**" are the elected or appointed members of any council or committee of the City of Sequim.

7. "**Post**" or "**posting**" mean information, articles, pictures, videos, or any other form of communication placed on a **City social media site** by designated **City staff**.

8. "**Content**" means the text, images, or audiovisual material contained in a **post** or **comment**.

9. **"Disallowed content"** describes **content** that may be removed by the City for violating the law or this Social Media Policy, as may be amended.

10. "**Terms of use**" and "**comment policy**" are the rules established by the social media platform owner and/or the City of Sequim regarding who may **post** to the site, what **content** may be **posted**, and what **content** might be subject to removal.

11. "**Comment**" means any **content** or link to **content** that is placed in response to a City **post** subsequent to its **posting**, usually by someone other than the original poster. This includes "likes", thumbs-up or -down, and other single-click interactions. "**Commenters**" are the persons making the **comment**.

12. "**Moderate**" and "**monitor**" refer to actions taken to ensure that **posts** and **comments** do not contain **disallowed content**. Designated **City staff** may **monitor** and **moderate comments** at their discretion to the extent allowed by law.

D. ADMINISTRATION AND MODERATION BY CITY

1. **City social media sites** are **limited public forums** administered by designated **City staff**, and the City of Sequim reserves the right to lawfully remove any **content** at any time and to disallow or discontinue interactivity on any **City social media site** or on a particular **post**.

2. The Communications Director is the primary **City staff-**person responsible for **City social media sites**. The Communications Director may designate other **City staff** to assist in **posting** to and **monitoring** or **moderating** the sites. No **post** may be placed on a **City social media site** unless it has first been reviewed and authorized by the Communications Director or designee.

3. Only the Communications Director or designee can contract with or set up any **City social media** account, and in so doing must use official City contact information and logos.

4. The City is not responsible for and cannot prevent placement of links or advertisements on **City social media sites** by the platform's owners, vendors, or partners. The appearance of such ads and links on **City social media sites** does not imply the City's endorsement or approval of any product, person, or service. The City of Sequim does not receive any revenue from any of these advertisement links.

5. The City is not responsible for the **moderation** activities of the social media platform itself.

6. The City cannot prevent the author of a **comment** on a **City social media site** from removing or altering the **comment**.

7. The City of Sequim reserves the right to terminate any **City social media site** without notice.

8. The City of Sequim must have full ownership rights and permission to use all **content** posted on **City social media sites**.

9. Links to the City's Social Media Policies will be displayed on the City's websites, www.sequimwa.gov and www.visitsunnysequim.com.

10. Any content placed on a **City social media site** is subject to public disclosure.

E. POSTING AND COMMENT POLICY FOR CITY STAFF AND OFFICIALS

This section contains rules for City employees and officials regarding **posting** and **commenting** on **City social media sites**. These rules may be amended or supplemented to keep pace with changes in technology, the law, and a platform's **terms of use**. Some of these rules may also affect a City employee's or official's personal social media accounts.

1. All **posts** on **City social media sites** will be made by designated **City staff**, with appropriate authorization, and the City is responsible for the **posts' content**. The City may post **content** obtained from a third party as well as the City's own created **content**.

2. All **comments** made to **City social media posts** are subject to **moderation**. *The City of Sequim reserves the right to remove the following **disallowed content** and any other **content** deemed to violate this policy or any applicable law*:

    a. **Comments** not topically related to the article being commented upon, including random or unintelligible **comments**;
    b. **Comments** in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
    c. Profane language or **content**;
    d. **Content** that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, sex, marital status, national origin, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, medical condition, veteran or military status, or any other protected class status;
    e. Sexual **content** or links to sexual **content**;
    f. Spam or solicitations or promotions of commercial services, entities, or products;
    g. **Content** that discusses, encourages, or constitutes illegal activity, including threats and harassment;
    h. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
    i. **Content** that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party, such as infringement of copyright or trademark dilution;
    j. Repetitive or duplicate **comments**;
    k. Anonymous **comments**; or
    l. **Comments** from children under 13 (to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act - COPPA).

3. The City of Sequim reserves the right to restrict the ability of any person, including City staff or officials, from **commenting** on a particular **post** or genre of **post**, and to cut off **comments** after a certain length of time, in the sole discretion of the City.

4. The City of Sequim has discretion on the extent and manner of its **moderation** activities. As a general rule, no **City social media site** will be **monitored** or **moderated** on legal holidays or outside of the City's normal business hours of 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

5. **City staff** representing the City on **City social media sites** must conduct themselves at all times as professional representatives of the City and in accordance with all City policies.

6. Any **City staff posting** on any **City social media site** or **commenting** on a **City social media site** must review, be familiar with, and comply with the City's Social Media Policies, any social media procedures adopted by the City, and the platform's **terms of use**.

7. **Posting** should occur during normal business hours only. After-hours or weekend **posts** must have prior approval of the Communications Director or designee. Designees from the Police Department may **post** at any time so long as the **content** complies with City policy.

8. **City staff posting content** on a **City social media site** or **commenting** on a **City social media site** may not express their personal views or concerns through such **content**; the **posts** must reflect the views of the City.

9. **Posts** on **City social media sites** must contain information that is freely available to the public and not be confidential or otherwise privileged as defined by any City policy or state or federal law.

10. **Posts** on **City social media sites** must not contain any personal information, except for the names of **City staff** whose job duties include being available for contact by the public.

11. **City staff** or **City officials** seeking to make **comments** on **posts** should be familiar with and comply with the City's Social Media Policies, the social media and electronic communications policies in the City's Personnel Manual, any procedures developed by the City for social media use, the Open Public Meetings Act, the Public Records Act, and the particular platform's **terms of use**.

12. **City officials** are expected to comply with the following rules regarding **City social media sites** to avoid violating or appearing to violate the Open Public Meetings Act or ethics rules for elected persons:

    a. **City officials** may "like" posts on a **City social media site**, but may *not* **comment**;

    b. **City officials** may only "share" items from their personal social media accounts on a **City social media site** with prior approval of the Communications Director;

    c. **City officials** may not respond to, blog about, or engage in serial meetings, or otherwise discuss, deliberate, or express opinions on any issue within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body to which they are elected or appointed. (This provision applies whether the site is a **City social media site** or the official's personal social media account);

    d. **City officials** may not create or contribute to any conversation on *any* social media platform involving their fellow **City officials** that could be construed as a serial meeting or a violation of the letter or spirit of the Open Public Meetings Act.

    e. **City officials** may not use a **City social media site** to further a political campaign, including their own, or to promote or oppose any legislation or initiative.

    f. **City officials** may *only* respond in the setting of an open public meeting to a **post** or **comment** that appeared on a **City social media site**.

F. COPYRIGHT AND COMMERCIAL USE; NON-OFFICIAL USE OF CITY IDENTIFICATION

All laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted or trademarked material owned by others, including the City of Sequim's own copyrights, marks and brands, will be followed on **City social media sites**.

The City retains the exclusive legal copyright to all **content** created by the Communications Director or designee or any **City staff** or **City official** and **posted** to a **City social media site**, and has the sole right to produce or reproduce the **content**.

Any person reproducing or redistributing a third party copyright on a **City social media site** must adhere to the terms and conditions of the third party copyright holder. The City will take care to respect artists and other **content** creators and obtain explicit permission for use or only post **content** that is available under a creative commons license. If a copyright holder notifies the City of Sequim that the City did not use an appropriate credit line, the Communications Director will request detailed information about the circumstances so that the information can be added or the material in question removed.

The use by any commercial entity of the City's logos, photos, or any portion of a **post** appearing on a **City social media site** is prohibited without the City's express prior written permission. Use of the City logo is prohibited for any nongovernmental purpose.

Use by businesses or individuals of City logos or other official City-identifying information in a manner that appears to impersonate or speak for the City or a particular department, or which could confuse the public about the origin of the information, is prohibited.

G. SERIOUS THREATS OR ILLEGAL ACTIVITY

The Communications Director, designee or any **City staff** will report to law enforcement any **content** placed on a **City social media site** that contains a serious threat or consists of or promotes illegal activity. The report to law enforcement should occur as soon as practicable after the Communications Director, designee, or **City staff**-person becomes aware of the **disallowed content**, and the Communications Director or designee must then follow all adopted procedures related to the reporting that are developed by the City to preserve the evidentiary value of the **comment**.

H. DISCLOSURE AND MANAGEMENT OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITE RECORDS

Posts and **comments** appearing on **City social media sites** are subject to the Washington State Public Records Act, RCW Chapter 42.56 *et seq*. and may be disclosed to the public upon request as long as they are an existing identifiable record prepared, owned, used or retained by the City of Sequim. **Posts** and **comments** that have been disposed of pursuant to the Washington Secretary of State's Retention Schedules are no longer prepared, owned, used, or retained by the City of Sequim.

Posts and **comments** on **City social media sites** are subject to the Washington Secretary of State's Retention Schedules, and must be retained or disposed of pursuant to those schedules.

I. RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

City staff designated to **monitor** or **moderate comments** on a **City social media site post** should limit the interaction to answering substantive questions and correcting misinformation. Non-designated **City staff** or **City officials** should not engage each other or other **commenters** who respond to a **post**. Any **City staff**-person or **City official** who encounters what may be **disallowed content** in a **comment** should report it to the Communications Director or designee at the earliest opportunity. If the **content** contains serious threats or illegal activity, the non-designated **City staff** or **City officials** should contact law enforcement in addition to the Communications Director.

J. SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Social media sites are susceptible to spoofing attacks and hacking. If **City staff** believe a site has been compromised, the IT Department must be notified to take appropriate action.

K. IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY

The City will develop procedures to implement its Social Media Policies. These policies and procedures may change as social media technology, laws, and best practices evolve.