

TOWN OF LAUREL PARK
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Purpose:

This document provides policies and guidelines for social media use by employees of the Town of Laurel Park. This policy is in accordance with the North Carolina Office of Department of Cultural Resources, "Best Practices for Social Media Usage in North Carolina."

Social Media interactions shall serve three primary purposes:

- Disseminate emergency information quickly
- Promote town-sponsored events, activities, and services
- Refer audiences to content available online at laurelpark.org

Social media will be used as a secondary platform of communication, the Town of Laurel Park website will remain the Town's primary and predominant internet presence.

1. Statement of Policy:

All social media tools proposed for official Town use must first be approved by the Town Manager. The Office of the Town Manager will maintain and manage a list of social media tools that are approved for official use by town departments and staff.

The current list includes

- Facebook
- Twitter

The Town Manager will maintain and manage a list of all Town social media accounts, including domain URL, login, and password information.

All official Town of Laurel Park accounts on social media sites or services are considered an extension of the Town's information networks and are governed by the Electronic Communications Policy contained in the Town of Laurel Park Personnel Policy.

Departments that use social media are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and town laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the First Amendment, privacy laws, and information

technology policies established by the Town of Laurel Park.

Employees using social media to communicate on behalf of the Town of Laurel Park should be mindful that any statements made are on behalf of the Town government as a whole; therefore, employees should use the utmost discretion before posting or commenting. All social media communication will be monitored, and improper use of social media may result in disciplinary action.

Employees should be aware of the Terms of Service (TOS) of the form of media. Each form of social media has its own unique TOS that regulates how users interact. Any employee using a form of social media on behalf of a Town agency should consult the most current TOS in order to avoid violations. If the TOS contradicts the Town of Laurel Park Social Media Use Policy, contact the Town Manager and a decision will be made about whether such use of social media is appropriate.

Permission to use releases is required for all persons depicted in images and video displayed on Town of Laurel Park social media sites per the requirements of the Public Records Statutes.

Town employees and departments utilizing social media must not knowingly communicate inaccurate or false information. All reasonable efforts should be made by the town employee or town department to provide only verifiable facts—not unverifiable opinions.

The Town of Laurel Park reserves the right to modify this policy at any time.

2. Content

Whenever appropriate/possible, content posted to the Town of Laurel Park social media outlets will also be available on the Town's website.

Users and visitors to social media sites shall be notified of the intended purpose of the site – to serve as a mechanism for communication between the town departments and members of the public and is not intended for service requests. Town of Laurel Park social media sites or comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed.

1. Comments/remarks not topically related to the particular item/posting being commented upon;
2. Profane language or content;
3. Content that promotes fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, marital status, religion, gender, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation;

4. Comments that support or oppose political campaigns or ballot measures;
5. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
6. Harassment
7. Solicitations of commerce;
8. Comments from anonymous users;
9. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
10. Information that may tend to compromise public safety;
11. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
12. Questions from the media.

Town of Laurel Park social media moderators shall allow comments that are topically related to the particular content thus within the purpose of the limited public forum, with the exception of the prohibited content listed previously.

These guidelines must be displayed or made available by hyperlink to users on the "Info" or "About" sections of social media sites. This comment policy is subject to amendment or modification at any time. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained, including the time, date, and identity of the poster when available. The Town of Laurel Park reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law. The Town of Laurel Park retains the authority to remove any information from social media platforms.

All content and images posted to social media sites must be original work and/or property of the Town of Laurel Park or allowable by copyright law. A release must remain on file with the site administrator for any content that does not meet such requirements and is required to remain on file with the administrator of the social media site. Posts should be in conformance with the Town's Brand Style Guide and the Town's social media policy.

3. Personal Employee Use of Social Media

Access to any social media profiles or networks unrelated to official town business on Town equipment and/or time is strictly prohibited.

The Town of Laurel Park recognizes that its employees may use social media on a personal basis in their lives outside of their professional activities and that such use may include the right to exercise freedom of speech.

At the same time, the Town of Laurel Park encourages employees to use their professional judgment when posting to social media sites, especially if referring to work-related activities. Even though acting in an unofficial capacity, Town employees should remember they may be perceived by the public as representing

the Town of Laurel Park. When posting on official Town of Laurel Park sites in an unofficial about Town of Laurel Park activities, employees are advised to not express personal opinions which may/may not necessarily represent Town of Laurel Parks' official position. If you are participating as a private citizen, remember the standard of behavior expected of public servants.

Employees should never use their Town email account or passwords as login information in conjunction with any personal social media profiles or sites.

Using government insignia or logos may imply you are authorized to speak on behalf of The Town of Laurel Park. To ensure Town employee personal social media profiles are not perceived by the public as representing the department or Town of Laurel Park as a whole, departmental emblems, Town of Laurel Park logos, Town uniforms, and Town vehicles should not be depicted in any part of your personal social media profile. Job titles are prohibited on any social media profile or site except LinkedIn.

Violations of the use of Social Media will be addressed per the Town Employees Discipline Policy.

4. Public Records, Record Management and Preservation

Like email, communication via social media websites may be public record and subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law and the Record Retention Law. This means both the posts of the employee administrator and any feedback by other employees or non-employees, including citizens, are a part of the public record. The administrator of departmental social media profiles and sites is responsible for the proper archiving of all public records in accordance with the Town of Laurel Park record retention policy.

Any content removed based on the guidelines outlined in the Town of Laurel Park Social Media Use Policy Section 3 must be retained, including the time, date, and identity of the poster when available. The Town of Laurel Park reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law.

5. Standards for Specific Mediums of Social Media Platforms

These policies and guidelines will evolve as new technology and social media tools are developed. Violation of these policies and guidelines may result in the restriction or removal of department social media profiles from social media outlets and/or disciplinary action. The Town of Laurel Park retains the authority to remove any posts and comments on town social media sites.

A. Facebook

The social networking site, Facebook will be utilized to promote awareness of the Town of Laurel Park policies, procedures, events, programs, projects, activities, and services for Town residents. This standard is designed for Town departments to drive traffic to the Town's website: www.laurelpark.org as well as department web sites and to be used in conjunction with the Town's Social Media Use Policy. As the Facebook platform changes, these standards will be amended accordingly.

General Account Information

The Town of Laurel Park will maintain one general Town account per social media platform. The number of administrators for each page will be kept at a minimum. Administrators will be responsible for collaborating with the Town Manager on all content, comments, and archiving the public record.

Content

The Facebook page will have a custom URL to be determined and implemented by the Office of the Town Manager

The Town Facebook page will have the Town seal as the profile picture unless approved by the Office of the Town Manager

All cover images must comply with all Town standards and be relevant and representative of Town departments, department services, or programs.

A link to the Town website and department URL will be included in the "About" section.

Immediately following the department description on the 'About' page, the following text will be included.

This site is intended to serve as a mechanism for communication between the public and the Town of Laurel Park on the listed topics and is not intended for service requests. Any posts/comments submitted to this page and the list of fans are public records, subject to disclosure pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act. Public records request must be directed to the Town Manager at 828-693-4840. This site is no monitored by emergency services. Call 911 for emergencies.

Comments posted to this page will be monitored. Under the Town of Laurel Park Social Media Use Policy, we welcome the participation of our citizens on

Facebook and ask that you recognize these guidelines:

The Town reserves the right to delete comments that contain vulgar, abusive, harassing, or threatening language; are personal attacks of any kind; are offensive to common sensibilities; are hate-based, prejudiced, or hurtful remarks made toward any minority, ethnic, racial or religious group; are spam; include any sales/promotion of goods or services or links to other sites; are clearly off-topic advocate unlawful activity; promote particular services, products or political organizations; infringe on copyrights or trademarks.

Please note that the comments expressed by the public on social networking sites do not reflect the opinions or positions of the Town of Laurel Park.

The Town Facebook page will not 'like' any other pages except other authorized Town partners; county, state agencies, or federal government agencies and/or programs/initiatives sponsored by the Town.

Any deleted or removed comments or wall postings must be documented prior to removal in accordance with the Town's records retention policy.

The town of Laurel Park reserves the right to revoke the ability for 'wall' postings at any time, including emergencies.

Department administrators will collaborate with the Town Manager on what will be posted. The schedule feature should be used in order to ensure that the page is appropriately used daily, to avoid duplicate postings, and maintain consistent Town branding.

Employees must not post anything that violates the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 2003 (HIPPA). This includes demographic information, any reference to physical or mental health, or elements thereof, provision of or payment for healthcare, or identifiable health information of any kind, even in cases when the individual(s) is not identified by name.

B. Twitter

The microblogging tool, Twitter, allows account holders to tweet up to 140 characters of information to followers. By procuring and maintaining Twitter accounts, Town departments will communicate information directly to their Twitter followers, alerting them to news and directing them to [Laurel Parknc.gov](http://LaurelParknc.gov) for more information. These standards should be used in conjunction with the Town of Laurel Park's Social Media Use Policy. As the Twitter platform changes, these standards will be amended accordingly.

General Account Information

The Town will maintain one Twitter account. Department administrators will collaborate with the Office of the Town Manager on all content, comments, and archiving the public record. If administrators change, the Town Manager will be notified immediately.

Content

The Town's Twitter bio will read: Town name, tweets, comments, and list of followers are subject to public disclosure. This site is not intended for service requests and is not monitored by emergency services. Call 911 for emergencies.

The information posted on Twitter shall conform to the policies and procedures of the Town Laurel Park's Social Media Use Policy.

Twitter content shall be relevant, timely, and of an informative nature.

All tweets will link back to the laurelpark.org website.

The Twitter account background will include the Town of Laurel Park logo.

Administrators will not respond or reply to any Twitter content unrelated to serving the three primary purposes outlined in the Town of Laurel Park Social Media Use Policy Section. Twitter will not 'like' any other pages except other authorized Town partners; county, state agencies, or federal government agencies and/or programs/initiatives sponsored by the Town.

EFFECTIVE: 04/15/21

LAST REVISED: 04/15/21

APPROVAL:



MAYOR



TOWN MANAGER