

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH STORMONT

BY-LAW NO. 2020-089

BEING a by-law to adopt a Communications Policy.

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WHEREAS the *Municipal Act, 2001*, c. 25 s. 5 (1) provides that the powers of a municipal corporation are to be exercised by its council;

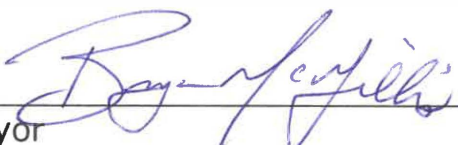
AND WHEREAS the *Municipal Act, 2001*, c. 25 s. 5 (3) provides that the powers of every council are to be exercised by by-law;


AND WHEREAS Council deems it advisable to adopt a Communications Policy for the Township of South Stormont.

NOW THEREFORE Council of the Township of South Stormont enacts as follows:

1. That the Communications Policy attached hereto as Schedule "A" and forming part of this by-law be adopted effective, November 25, 2020.
2. That any other by-law inconsistent with this by-law is hereby repealed.

READ AND PASSED in open Council signed and sealed this 25th day of November, 2020.

  
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Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk



## TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH STORMONT

Title: Communications Policy

Department: All Departments

Date: November 25, 2020

### 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Communications Policy is to provide guidelines for external corporate communications to ensure that timely, accurate, instructive and explanatory messages and information are communicated to the public.

This policy will assist in making all external communications by the Township of South Stormont consistent, transparent, effective and encourage community participation and engagement.

### 2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Township of South Stormont recognizes the importance of transparency in governance and keeping the public informed of Township business. This policy establishes appropriate methods of disseminating Township messages and information to the public that is easily accessible, consistent, and informative.

### 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all electronic and printed external corporate communications from the Township of South Stormont.

This policy applies to members of Council and all Township employees.

### 4. SPOKESPERSONS

The Mayor is the official spokesperson on behalf of Council, and the CAO is the official spokesperson for all operational matters.

### 5. VISUAL IDENTITY

A clear and consistent visual identity assists the public in recognizing and accessing the policies, programs, services and initiatives of the Township. To present a strong, unified identity, departments will adhere to the guidelines as outlined in the current "Use of Corporate Crest, Township Logo and/or Images" Policy.

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## **6. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

The Township of South Stormont utilizes a number of electronic tools to share Township information. The Township's official website, [www.southstormont.ca](http://www.southstormont.ca) is the primary source for official information, supplemented by other online methods such as social media platforms, electronic newsletters, and other online tools.

The Township will adhere to all required legislation in regards to electronic communications, including Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL).

The Township's current Social Media Policy should be referenced for specific details of appropriate use of social media tools for Township use.

See Appendix A for procedures for electronic communications.

## **7. MEDIA RELEASES**

The media play an important role in providing information to the public on matters of civic interest.

Stories and announcements for general interest and media distribution will be sent to local media in the form of a formal media release.

Should the Township choose to send a formal media release, they will be emailed to local print and local online media. A copy of the release will also be circulated to all members of Council.

The Township of South Stormont does not take responsibility for ensuring the media list is comprehensive but will add suitable parties upon request. In certain situations, the staff, at their discretion, may also send media releases to stakeholders. The media release list does not reflect or impact any advertising decisions from the Township.

The issuance of a press release does not guarantee publication.

## **8. PRINT COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS**

Traditional forms of Communication are important, and The Township of South Stormont publishes a number of print materials to communicate with ratepayers on a semi-annual, annual or as needed basis. This includes, but is not limited to:

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- South Stormont Community Guide
- Tax Inserts
- Event Posters
- Business Cards
- Brochures and Marketing Collateral
- Newspaper Notices
- Mail-Outs

When available, print media will also be posted on the website.

## **9. CORPORATE ADVERTISING**

The Township uses corporate advertising for the purposes of informing the public of Township business and notices of interest to the general public, as well as a tool for advertising to more identified audiences, such as sales and purchases, tender and employment opportunities, etc.

The Township may place advertisements in any appropriate medium to inform residents about their rights, responsibilities, municipal policies, programs, services, initiatives, upcoming meetings, dangers or risks to public safety.

Advertising for tenders, proposals, and other procurement opportunities will be placed in appropriate media outlets in accordance to the current Township Procurement Policy.

Recruitment advertisements are the responsibility of the CAO and/or Department Head in accordance with any applicable Human Resources Policies or Collective Agreement(s).

Public Notices will be prepared and posted in appropriate media outlets through the Economic Development/Communications Coordinator in coordination with the Director of the department wishing to post the notice. The Township's "Public Notice Policy" and any additional externally prescribed notification guidelines will be adhered to, as applicable.

See Appendix B for Corporate Advertising procedures.

## **10. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

The Township's "Public Engagement Guidelines" will be used to help staff evaluate instances where communications with the public is

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required and to determine the appropriate engagement and feedback that is required.

## **11. EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**

Communications during emergency situations that have triggered the use of the Township's Emergency Response Plan will adhere to the "Emergency Public Information Plan" outlined in the Emergency Response Plan.

## **12. ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **12.1 ACCESSIBLE FORMATS AND COMMUNICATION SUPPORTS**

Communications that the Township produces, directly or indirectly through contractual relationships, are available in accessible formats upon request unless to do so would cause undue hardship.

When an accessible format or communication support is requested, the Township will consult with the requesting person to determine which format or support is required and provide the material in a reasonable amount of time and at no additional cost.

This section does not apply to products, product labels, unconvertible information or communications.

If information or communications are determined to be unconvertible, the Township will provide the person making the request with the reason why the material is unconvertible and a summary of the unconvertible material in an accessible format

### **12.2 NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS**

Notice of the availability of documents in alternative formats and with communication supports will be posted on the Township's website and by other methods as is reasonable in the circumstance.

### **12.3 ACCESSIBLE WEBSITES AND WEB CONTENT**

The Township will make its website, and web content, conform to the Worldwide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1AA requirements on or before the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) compliance deadlines.

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## **12.4 EMERGENCY PROCEDURE, PLANS, PUBLIC SAFETY INFORMATION**

If the Township prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and makes that information available to the public, the Township will provide the information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports as soon as possible, upon request.

## **12.5 FEEDBACK**

The Township has a process in place for receiving and responding to feedback and will ensure that those processes are accessible for persons with disabilities by providing, or arranging for, the provision of accessible formats and communication supports upon request.

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## **Appendix A: Electronic Communications Procedures**

### **MUNICIPAL WEBSITE**

The South Stormont website, herein known as “the website”, is utilized to access information written by administration and is a resource for searchable reference material on the Township. This includes, but is not limited to: Council Information, Staff Contacts, Calendar of Events, Tourist Information, Departmental Information and more.

A variety of other tools, including but not limited to social media and newsletters, are used to direct viewers to the South Stormont website, which is considered to be the “home” for Township information online.

- The website will maintain up-to-date information to assist citizens in their business with the Township. The site will be informative to facilitate communication between Council, Staff and the Public. A calendar of Township meetings and events open to the public will be kept up to date on the Municipal website.
- The website is the primary source of official Council information. It is neutral in focus and provides archived agendas and minutes of official meetings.
- The website is not a forum for commenting on municipal issues and services. It is a tool to share information with audiences.
- The website will maintain an updated “News and Notices” section.

### Community Calendar of Events

Content will be included on the Community Calendar of Events; however, for an event or activity to be included on the Community Calendar of Events, it must:

- Take place in the Township of South Stormont or be recognized as a Municipally supported event;
  - Be open to the general public; this does not preclude events/activities that have applicable entrance fees or events/activities that are organized for a specific demographic or interest group;
  - Be coordinated or sponsored by not-for-profit or charitable organizations;
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The Township of South Stormont does not take responsibility for ensuring the Calendar of Events is comprehensive but will add suitable events upon request.

### Third Party Links

The website may contain links to other websites (e.g. government web pages, community non-profit links). These may be placed and/or removed at the discretion of the Township.

This type of link is provided for the convenience of the visitor. Inclusion of the link does not imply endorsement by the Corporation and the Township.

### Documents

Any document that is posted on the website will be posted in PDF or fillable PDF format (except in special circumstances). This is to ensure that the original document cannot be altered or edited and appears in a professional format.

### News and Notices

The Township of South Stormont shall post updates on the "News and Notices" section found on the homepage of the website regarding municipal announcements, services, policies, and/or other information deemed acceptable by administration. News updates are not typically emailed to the media.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Refer to Township's current Social Media Policy for Social Media Procedures

## **ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS**

Electronic Newsletters may include items of general interest including Council information, recreation news, new programs and policies, local events, information from local clubs (as defined in the "Community Calendar of Events") and more.

The South Stormont electronic newsletter will be emailed once a month to those individuals who wish to subscribe. Citizens can subscribe on the website, by clicking on the subscribe button on the newsletter itself, or by emailing the Economic Development /Communications Coordinator.

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All email addresses provided will remain confidential.

The Economic Development/Communications Coordinator shall maintain editorial responsibility and issuance of the electronic newsletter.

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## **Appendix B: Corporate Advertising Procedures**

### **Corporate Advertising for Informing the Public**

The Township may place advertisements in any appropriate medium to inform residents about their rights, responsibilities, municipal policies, programs, services, initiatives, upcoming meetings, dangers or risks to public safety.

Corporate Advertising in media outlets will flow through the Economic Development and Communications Coordinator from the Director of the department wishing to advertise.

For the purposes of this policy, the term Advertising refers to the paid placement using media outlets to inform, persuade and remind target audiences about Township notices, services, programs, and products designed to elicit a positive response. Examples of media outlets where advertisements are placed include:

- Newspaper
- Broadcast (television and radio)
- Digital/online (e.g. websites, social media)
- Consumer and Business Magazines
- Out of home and transit (e.g. billboards, transit shelter, bench advertising)

### **Corporate Advertising for Tenders, Recruitment and Notices**

Advertising for tenders, proposals, and other procurement opportunities will be placed in appropriate media outlets in accordance to the current Township Procurement Policy.

Recruitment advertisements are the responsibility of the CAO and/or Department Head in accordance with any applicable Human Resources Policies or Collective Agreement(s).

Public Notices will be prepared and posted in appropriate media outlets through the Economic Development/Communications Coordinator using information provided by the Director of the department wishing to post the notice. The Township's "Public Notice Policy" and any additional externally prescribed notification guidelines will be adhered to, as applicable.

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## **General External Print Marketing and Advertising Criteria**

The Township shall place advertisements in any appropriate medium, however the following eligibility criteria should be met in order to be considered:

- Be published on a regular, pre-determined basis for a period of at least one year
  - Be published in a format consistent with general industry practices such as:
    - The publication must contain a minimum of eight pages, and they must be numbered; and,
    - The name of the publication and the issue date must appear on each page.
  - Ensure that editorial content be of a nature and intent not to:
    - Incite racial hatred;
    - Incite discrimination of any kind; and,
    - Incite the subversion of Canada's democratic system of government
  - Sufficient circulation to effectively reach the target audience. These may include publications with a specialized circulation and/or format specific to recruitment, economic development or tender advertisements.
  - Professional, credible and provide return on investment
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