

Media, Communications and Information Policy

Purpose:

The purpose of the Communications and Media Policy is to ensure regular, clear, transparent and timely communication to the public.

Definitions

Spokesperson – a person assigned to speak on behalf of the Town or Council. This person plays an important role in getting information about the Town out to the public in an accurate, timely and respectful manner.

Media Request – when a journalist asks for a comment, interview, statement on a specific topic for the purpose of informing the public.

Transparent Communication – sharing information that the public needs in a timely manner that provides full context and explanation.

General Statement:

1. Antigonish Town Council supports that regular, clear, transparent and timely communication between Town Council/Administration and the public it serves promotes positive relationships that are mutually beneficial.
2. It is noted that the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) are the official spokespersons of the Town of Antigonish. The Mayor and CAO may assign a designate of another council member or staff person to speak on behalf of the Town in areas of their specific expertise.
3. It is the intent of this policy to ensure that the most knowledgeable person or the individual who represents the highest level of responsibility of the subject in question, is the one designated to speak on the subject. Where no person is specifically designated, the Marketing and Communications Officer, under the discretion of the CAO or designate, may assign someone as a spokesperson.
4. When communicating with the public and media, either in person, over the phone, live on air, or through social media, the spokesperson must identify if they are speaking on behalf of the Town or expressing their own opinions.

Standards of Conduct

1. All media requests for the Town looking for comment, interview, statement, etc. must be directed through the Marketing, Communications and Events Office for review.

- i) Official media requests through social media will be directed to contact the Marketing, Communications and Events Officer through phone or email who will then assign a spokesperson.
- ii) Town spokespersons will response to all media or public inquires in a timely and factual manner. If follow-up is required it will be noted in the first response.
- iii) Town staff or Council approached for comment on any project or subject related to the Town of Antigonish or any past, present or future project partners must seek approval from the Marketing, Communications and Events Officer before issuing a comment on behalf of the Town.
- iv) Any unapproved Town Staff or Council issuing statements without approval are expressing their own opinions and not that of the Town of Antigonish.

2. The Marketing, Communications and Events Officer may recommend media training for Council or staff when deemed appropriate.

3. Inaccurate information published by any third parties or unauthorized sources may be challenged and corrected to ensure fair and accurate representation of the Town of Antigonish.

Confidentiality

1. Town staff will not intentionally withhold information that the Mayor and Council should be aware of.

2. Town staff may have access to or be aware of information that is strictly confidential. Staff are advised to respect the confidentiality of that information. If any questions arise regarding confidentiality they must be directed to the CAO or designate.

- i) Town staff will never release any personal information of residents.

Finding Information

1. The Town of Antigonish's municipal website is the primary source of official information for the residents of the Town of Antigonish. The website is utilized to access information and it is a resource for references materials on the Town, Council and ongoing/past projects.

- i) The Town's website will:

- Maintain up to date information
- Facilitate communication between residents, Town staff and council
- Will archive minutes of official meetings for one full calendar year
- Is the primary source of municipal information

2. The Town's social media will be used as a secondary source of information for the residents of the Town of Antigonish.

i) The Town will engage with residents through social media by adhering to the Human Resource Manual's section on Social Media Administration and Usage.

Written Information Request

1. The material that the Town will make available to the media and the public on the website include:

- Regular and Special Council Minutes
- Committee Meeting Minutes
- Building Inspector Reports
- Reports and Correspondence

i) The Town will archive minutes of official meetings for one full calendar year on the website.

Residents and media may request minutes that are over a year old. Requests may be directed to the Town's Deputy Clerk.

ii) The material listed above may only be given to the media if it is permitted to do so under the Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act's Freedom of Information Act and Protection of Privacy Rules and Regulations.

iii) Any specific requests for written information shall be processed in the usual manor through Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Rules and Regulations.

Repeal

The following Town of Antigonish policies are hereby repealed:

- Media and Communications Policy
- Media and Written Information Policy

CAO's Annotation for Official Policy Book

Date of Notice to Council Members Intent to Consider (Minimum 7 Days): February 18, 2020

Date of Passage of Current Policy: February 28, 2020

I certify that this Policy was adopted by Council as indicated above.



Chief Administrative Officer



Date