

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

DATE: JANUARY 26, 2011

TO: MAYOR AND HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: GREG RAMIREZ, CITY MANAGER

BY: NATHAN HAMBURGER, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 11-1609; ADOPTING A SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

This item is being brought to the City Council for consideration in an effort to continue to increase communication with the public and disseminate information in a manner consistent with how they receive and respond to information. The proposed Social Media Policy establishes guidelines for the establishment and use of social media outlets, also known as “Web 2.0,” by City staff in order to communicate with the public. The use of social media also affords the City another opportunity to promote the City’s website and remind members of the community to utilize the website for general information purposes and updates on happenings throughout the community.

Social media outlets have become more popular in all general age groups and have become commonplace resources which the general public utilizes to obtain much of their information. Although the City of Agoura Hills utilizes the internet and email notifications through “C-Mail”, there is a segment of the population that has changed to a more instant information source. Outlets such as Twitter can be accessed from various smart phones on a constant basis and provide a means to get important information distributed to a large segment of the public almost instantly. Notifications such as road closures or construction updates can be sent out from Public Works staff in a manner that will reach a large group of people, even if they are not in front of a computer at home or work. The Community Services Department can provide details and information about community events and programs through these outlets as well and reach members of our community who may not read the quarterly newsletters or recreation brochures.

Due to the fact that the City of Agoura Hills has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on behalf of the City on City social media sites, it is necessary to establish parameters for use and monitoring. These outlets also allow community members to express their thoughts and opinions on issues of interest to them when they do not wish to attend, nor speak at, a public meeting. Although constructive criticism and varying opinions can be healthy and part of a strong public process, some responses can be harmful or hurtful, which requires monitoring, filtering, and removal when they violate the proposed policy. Thus, staff is proposing to move forward with certain social media outlets at this time and to not utilize others, such as a City Facebook page, at this point in time. With limited staff time available, it is necessary to select outlets that provide the biggest and best outreach to the community. The

proposed policy encompasses a large number of the existing social media outlets that exist today, but also allows flexibility to address other outlets that may be developed in the future, should they be deemed appropriate and necessary to further communicate with the local citizenry.

The proposed policy would be added to the City's Personnel Rules and Regulations, as well as be posted on the City's website.

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed the proposed Social Media Policy and has guided staff in its preparation.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the City Council approve Resolution No. 11-1609; Adopting a Social Media Policy.

Attachments: Resolution No. 11-1609
Social Media Policy

RESOLUTION NO. 11-1609

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AGOURA HILLS, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING A SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AGOURA HILLS HEREBY FINDS, RESOLVES, AND ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. To accomplish the goals of the City, continuous efforts are made to communicate with the citizenry in a manner that is easy to obtain, relevant, and timely.

SECTION 2. The Social Media Policy establishes procedures and protocol for the use of social media outlets to disseminate information and provides clear rules as to how information should be formatted and managed.

SECTION 3. The City Manager is authorized to designate a Public Information Officer, who will manage and oversee all content on the social media sites related to the City of Agoura Hills and insure that the messages and branding are consistent with the Social Media Policy.

SECTION 4. Public input is identified as an important part of transparent and open government process. Although public input is encouraged and allowed, it must adhere to the content rules, in so much as it does not allow for comments that are detrimental to and discourage public input from other.

SECTION 5. The Social Media Policy is hereby adopted into the Personnel Rules and Regulations Section 13 and shall be posted on the City's website for public view.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED this 26th day of January, 2011, by the following vote to wit:

AYES: (0)
NOES: (0)
ABSENT: (0)
ABSTAIN: (0)

Harry Schwarz, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kimberly M. Rodrigues, City Clerk

City of Agoura Hills Social Media Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to address the quickly growing and changing landscape of the Internet, which also covers the use of Social Media or “Web 2.0.” These changes have affected the means in which residents communicate and obtain information online. Departments within the City of Agoura Hills may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The City encourages the use of social media outlets to further the goals of the City and the objectives of its departments, where appropriate.

General Information

The City of Agoura Hills has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on behalf of the City on social media sites. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media.

All City of Agoura Hills social media sites posted will be done so only with the approval of the City Manager, or his or her designee.

The City of Agoura Hills website (www.ci.agoura-hills.ca.us) will remain the City’s primary and predominant internet presence.

The best and most appropriate City of Agoura Hills use of social media tools falls generally into two categories: 1) Methods for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (*e.g.*, emergency information); and 2) Marketing/promotional outlets which increase the City’s ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.

Policy

1. Any official City of Agoura Hills participation on social media sites or services is considered an extension of the City’s Public Information Program and is governed by the City of Agoura Hills’ Telecommunications Policy, which is contained in the City of Agoura Hills Personnel Rules and Regulations.
2. The City Manager, or his or her designee, will review department requests to contribute to social media sites and has the sole authority to establish and/or terminate City social media accounts and pages.
3. The City Manager shall designate a Public Information Officer, who will manage and oversee all content on each social media site to ensure adherence to the Social Media Policy, including appropriate use, message, and branding that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the City of Agoura Hills.

4. Those designated to use social media are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and county laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act, First Amendment, privacy laws, acceptable use of City owned or controlled digital equipment, Internet access, and information security policies established by the City of Agoura Hills.
5. Wherever possible, content posted to City of Agoura Hills social media sites will also be available on the City's main website. Content posted on City of Agoura Hills social media sites should contain links directing users back to the City's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the City.
6. Those designated and authorized to utilize social media sites do so under the premise that they are representing the City of Agoura Hills via social media outlets and must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the City of Agoura Hills. This includes any usage outside of the workplace.
7. Information posted to the City of Agoura Hills social media sites becomes public information and there should be no expectation of privacy in regards to the information posted on these social media outlets.
8. Violation of these standards may result in the removal of City pages from the social media outlets and may cause disciplinary action to be taken as determined by the City Manager, and/or his/her designee, in compliance with the City's Personnel Rules and Regulations.
9. All City of Agoura Hills social media sites shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by the City and shall prominently display City contact information. Branding the City's social media pages as "the official site of the City of Agoura Hills" is required. All City-maintained social media pages shall include the official City seal and the following language: "This is the official (Twitter YouTube, Facebook, etc.) page for the City of Agoura Hills, Department Name, California."
10. Where possible, City social media sites shall clearly indicate that content posted or submitted for posting on the site is subject to public disclosure. The following language should be clearly visible on the wall page: "The City of Agoura Hills's page is to provide general public information only. Should you require a response from the City of Agoura Hills or wish to request City services, you must go to [insert name of City website, if appropriate or call the City at [(818) xxx-xxxx]. This site is intended to serve as a vehicle for communication between the public and the City of Agoura Hills. Any comments submitted to this page are public records subject to disclosure under California and federal law."

11. All information posted to social media sites on the City's behalf must:
 - a. Present the City in a positive light and a professional manner;
 - b. Contain information that is freely available to the public and not be confidential as defined by any City policy or state or federal law;
 - c. Not contain any personal information except the names of employees whose job duties include being available for contact by the public;
 - d. Comply with any current or future local, state, and federal laws.

12. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on City of Agoura Hills social media sites and are subject to removal or restriction by the Public Information Officer, or his or her designee:
 - a. Comments unrelated to the original topic or article;
 - b. Comments in support of, or in opposition to any political campaigns or ballot measures;
 - c. Profane, obscene or pornographic language or content or links to such language or content;
 - d. Solicitations of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale;
 - e. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 - f. Any information that is illegal or that might compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
 - g. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of another party;
 - h. Defamatory or personal attacks;
 - i. Threats to any person or organization;
 - j. Conduct that violates any federal, state or local law;
 - k. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, veteran status, parentage, marital status, medical condition, sexual identity, sexual orientation, as well as any other category protected by federal, state, or local laws.

13. Comments on topics or issues not within the jurisdictional purview of the City of Agoura Hills are subject to removal.

14. If comments are positive or negative and in the context to the topic at hand, then the content should be allowed to remain, regardless of whether it is favorable or unfavorable to the City of Agoura Hills.

15. A comments posted by a member of the public on any City of Agoura Hills social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the City of Agoura Hills, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the City of Agoura Hills.
16. The City of Agoura Hills reserves the right to deny access to City of Agoura Hills social media sites for any individual who violates the City of Agoura Hills's Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.
17. The City Manager, or his or her designee, shall maintain a list of all City of Agoura Hills social media sites, including login and password information, to allow for the immediate alteration or removal of content that is inappropriate or inconsistent with City policy.
18. Employees administering a social media site on behalf of the City of Agoura Hills are expected to understand the current terms of service for that site.
19. The City of Agoura Hills reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed to be in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law.
20. The website must provide a mechanism for the employee to remove posts that violate City policy
21. The City Manager, or his or her designee, retains the sole authority to post and remove information from the social media outlets.