



Policy Title Communication	Date: February 16, 2023	Resolution No. BCC-23-020
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Policy Title: Communication

Purpose

The purpose of this communication policy is to ensure efficient, effective, timely and comprehensive communications to stakeholders of the Summer Village of Birchcliff.

Desired Outcomes

- Provide citizens with timely, accurate, clear, objective, and complete information about policies, programs, services, and initiatives.
- Employ a variety of ways and means to communicate and provide information to accommodate diverse needs.
- Citizens will know where to find information on their local government.
- Citizens will be able to attend and participate in public meetings.
- Citizens will have opportunities to best impact local decision making.
- Municipal information, both online and in print, will have a clearly recognized identity.
- Municipal elected and appointed officials will utilize opportunities to disseminate information of interest to citizens and other parties.

I. CITIZENS FINDING INFORMATION

A. MUNICIPAL WEBSITE

A Primary source of official information for citizens of Birchcliff is www.sylvansummervillages.ca. The website is utilized to access information written by our administration and it is a resource for searchable reference material on the Municipality.

1. The website will maintain up-to-date user-friendly information to assist citizens in their business with the municipality. The site will be informative to facilitate communication between the public, Councillors,

and staff. A calendar of municipal meetings and events open to the public will be kept up to date on the municipal website.

2. The municipal website is the primary source of official municipal information. It shall be neutral in focus, shall archive minutes of official meetings, and shall be updated on a regular basis.
3. The website is not a forum for commenting on municipal issues and services. The website shall contain links to easily enable e-mails to municipal officials.
4. Online municipal services shall be expanded where appropriate.

B. Press Releases

The Summer Village of Birchcliff shall issue press releases regarding municipal issues and activities.

Press Releases will be issued by the Chief Administrative Officer in consultation with the Mayor.

C. Advertising

The municipality shall place advertisements in any medium deemed appropriate to inform residents about their rights, responsibilities, municipal policies, programs, services, initiatives, upcoming meeting, dangers or risks to public safety.

The Summer Village does not purchase ads for general promotion of the municipality.

D. Other Opportunities for Citizens to Find Information

1. The Municipal CAO shall provide Council updates each month on municipal activities that may be of interest to the public.
2. At least two times per year the Mayor in consultation with council will publish a newsletter that will provide an update on the activities, meetings, and upcoming projects.
3. The Municipal Council will seek opportunities to speak to local groups on municipal issues on a regular basis as approved by Council.

II. CITIZENS COMMUNICATING WITH COUNCIL

1. Council contact information shall be provided on the municipal website.
2. Citizens communicating verbally with any member of Council is considered to be general in nature and will not receive a formal response unless specifically requested in writing.
3. Citizens communicating with any single member of Council in writing, including email communication, is considered to be general in nature and will not receive a formal municipal response unless specifically requested in writing, or unless the member of Council puts the matter before Council on a Council meeting agenda. Written communication received by a Councillor requiring consideration or decision by Council, shall be forwarded to the CAO by the Councillor for inclusion in the next agenda package.
4. Citizens requesting action from the municipality or wishing to ensure their communication is addressed formally by all of Council must send their communication to the CAO's office addressed to all of Council. This includes written communication received by either regular mail or email. If an email is sent to Council, Council's response must be to direct the email to the CAO for possible action and/or inclusion in the next agenda package.
5. Any communication intended for Council will be forwarded to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) in writing and must:
 - a. be legible, coherent, respectful, and
 - b. be able to identify the writer and the writer's contact information.
6. Any communication in writing addressed to all members of Council will be added to a Council agenda so that Council can formally deal with the matter. Formal written responses will be sent to all communications listed on Council agenda.
7. If the CAO determines the communication is within the governance authority of Council, the Chief Administrative Officer will:
 - a. if it relates to an item already on the agenda, deliver a copy of the communication or summary of it to the Councillors prior to or at the meeting at which the agenda is being considered; or
 - b. acquire all information necessary for the matter to be included on a future Council agenda for consideration by Council.

8. If the standards set out in II (5) are not met and the CAO determines the communication is not within the governance authority of Council, the CAO will:
 - a. Refer the communication to administration for a report and/or direct response to the writer and provide a copy of the original correspondence and referral to the Councillors; and
 - b. Take any other appropriate action on the communication.

All electronic communication sent by a member of Council will include all members of Council and the CAO and reflect the vision and goals of Council.

III. CITIZENS ATTENDING MEETINGS

A. Meeting Space

1. The current Council chamber located at the Administration office, will accommodate the public in attendance. When attendance exceeding the capacity of Council chambers is anticipated, meetings will be moved to another location to accommodate the public.

B. Participation at Meetings

1. All Municipal Council meetings and meetings of advisory committees and boards shall provide an opportunity for members of the public to speak through a listed delegation as outlined in the municipal procedural bylaw.

C. Annual Information Meeting

1. An Information Meeting may, at the discretion of Council, be held annually where members of the public can attend and discuss any matters they wish with their members of Council.
2. Should Council wish to hold an Annual Information Meeting, it will have an informal format allowing Council to meet face-to-face with local residents. An agenda for these meetings will be provided and a presentation may be made, but no formal minutes will be taken, and no public commitment will be made by members of Council.
3. Notice of the Annual Information Meeting will be published in newsletters and extra mailings as well as the municipal website.
4. Matters brought forward to members of Council that require further study or action may be referred to staff by the members of Council.

IV. CITIZENS HAVING OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPACT LOCAL DECISION MAKING

1. Except for emergency special meetings, 72 hours' notice of any municipal meeting shall be provided. The notice shall include a copy of the agenda items for the meeting posted on the municipal website.
2. The Municipality will provide an opportunity to contact Council members and staff directly via the municipal website.
3. Special public meetings will be held from time to time on matters that have a significant impact on a majority of ratepayers.
4. The Municipal Council shall invite public input on citizen priorities prior to the completion of Strategic Plans.

V. MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS – Media Enquiries

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

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

While it is recognized that Councillors are able to speak to the media in their capacity as individual Councillors, Council members will be honest and respectful of each other in their communications and will communicate accurately with the media regarding municipal business.

VI. MUNICIPAL INFORMATION WILL HAVE A CLEARLY RECOGNIZED IDENTITY

Municipal Logo

The municipal logo shall be utilized on municipal vehicles, on letterheads, on municipal publications, on the website and on signage when appropriate.