

RESOLUTION NO. 2012-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VENICE, SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A SOCIAL MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATION POLICY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE

WHEREAS, city council has studied the issue of social media and public relations coordination; and

WHEREAS, a social media and public relations coordination policy of the Venice city government will provide the general public and the media complete, consistent, accurate, relevant and timely information about city programs, services, projects, events and topical issues.

WHEREAS, city council desires to adopt a social media and public relations coordination policy to support community engagement and make important contributions to customer service and outreach.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VENICE, FLORIDA, as follows:

SECTION 1. The following Social Media and Public Relations Coordination Policy is hereby adopted;

Social Media and Public Relations Coordination Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish formal guidelines to ensure professional, consistent and compliant interactions with the general public and representatives of the media, and to assign responsibility and accountability for oversight and coordination of these interactions within the city manager's office and specifically with the marketing and communications officer (MCO) or designee.

Authority

The city manager's office will exercise all authority in the subject area through the MCO. The MCO has responsibility for agency-wide communications management, media relations, community outreach and public information programs and functions.

Information Policy

It is the policy of the Venice city government to provide the general public and the media complete, consistent, accurate, relevant and timely information about city programs, services, projects, events and topical issues. The City of Venice's strategic communications plans include the use of social media applications to support community engagement and make important contributions to customer service and outreach.

Scope and Application

This policy applies to all City of Venice employees, elected and appointed officials (including advisory board members).

Limitation

This policy does not apply to the city's e-mail system or other computer systems within the city.

Definitions

- **Social Media Services (SMS)** includes but is not limited to electronic communication tools such as social networks, blogs, video sharing, podcasts, wikis, message boards, and online forums. Technologies include: picture and video sharing, wall postings, email and instant messaging. Examples of Social Media applications include: Facebook and MySpace (social networking); YouTube (social networking and video sharing); Flickr (photo sharing); and Twitter (social networking and micro blogging).
- **Social Networking** is the practice of communicating electronically through Social Media including blogs, video, images, tagging, and lists of people, forums and messaging.
- **Social Media Account** means any registration, login credential, tool, forum, website or network that is created or maintained by authorized City of Venice employees to support any form of Social Media (also referred to as "SMS sites" or "social media sites").
- **Authorized Employee** is any City of Venice employee who has been authorized by the city manager or the city manager's designee to create, edit or maintain a social media account and the posts it contains in the conduct of City of Venice business.
- **Post** means any email, message, picture, graphic, image, notification, feed, stream, transmission, podcast, video, instant message, text message, blog, micro blog, status update, wall post, comment, and other forms of electronic communication that has been uploaded, posted to, displayed on, or transmitted by, any City of Venice social media account or network.

Purpose of Communications Policies

The purpose of the following policies is to ensure that SMS sites, owned and paid for by city taxpayers, are to provide factual information and not opinion. The city's website, other SMS sites and other means of communication may not be used to promote any political agenda, but only to provide the public with factual information.

Media Contacts and Inquiries

When contacted by representatives of the media, the city manager, MCO, or department directors may discuss issues related to their areas of expertise. In doing so, employees should be aware that they are representing the City of Venice and that they are responsible for their comments and actions. Information provided to the media should be factual and not speculative. No employee will be required to speak with the media. Employees who are uncomfortable speaking with the media should refer the reporter to the MCO.

After responding to a media request, the employee should notify the MCO of the interview and give a brief description of the discussion.

All official news releases and City information shall be provided to the media/public from the city manager, MCO, or designee.

News Releases/Newsletters/Other Correspondence

All news releases from the City of Venice shall be forwarded to the MCO (or designee) for review and dissemination to the news media. It will be the responsibility of the MCO to determine the best outlet(s) for posting all news releases, including, but not limited to, mainstream news agencies, the city website, approved social media sites, and other appropriate locations. News releases should be verified for accuracy with the appropriate city staff before they are sent to the MCO.

Department newsletters produced for external audiences shall be submitted to the MCO for review before publication.

Official city position papers, whether in the form of letters to the editor, guest editorials or otherwise, shall be issued only by the City Manager, the MCO (or designee). This does not include opinion pieces by individual elected officials written to represent the position of that individual. City staff may not write opinion pieces for elected officials.

Press Conferences

Departments and offices will not conduct press conferences without prior approval by the city manager and with assistance of the MCO, who will help plan the event.

Social Media Services

The City of Venice information systems director and the MCO shall ensure that the city's use of SMS sites complies with Florida's public records and government in the sunshine laws. Requests will be considered for uses that further the goals and objectives of the city, promote public safety, or provide public information. Use of all social media sites will be coordinated and administered through the MCO (or designee). All postings through social media sites must conform to all city media and public relations practices.

The following rules will apply to the use of the SMS. Employees breaking these rules may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination:

1. When using social media sites, the MCO will identify the source of the publication as City of Venice government.
2. Communications will be polite and respectful at all times.
3. All information shared or posted will reflect the policy, position and point of view of the City of Venice as an agency and organization, and not that of any individuals associated with city government.
4. Only the MCO or designee(s) will be granted access to the properly authorized SMS sites, including the city's website and all postings on these sites will be at the discretion of the MCO or designee(s) and the city manager.

5. Use of SMS must comply with the state of Florida's public records and sunshine laws. All city SMS sites will be a "one way" communication to the public. SMS sites that are managed by the city will include a disclaimer* that informs the reader that City staff will not be responding to comments. There should be no expectation that the city is receiving comments or taking part in interactive conversations through this media.
6. No city staff (other than the MCO) or council members shall post replies or comments on any City SMS. Posts by elected or appointed officials could inadvertently result in a debate or discussion in violation of Florida's Government in the Sunshine law and are therefore prohibited.
7. No political statements may be made on the city's website, social media sites or other communication vehicles paid for by taxpayers.

***Disclaimer**

"The purpose of the City of Venice Facebook SMS site is to facilitate the distribution of information from the City of Venice Government to the public. City staff shall not respond to posts made by the public to the City of Venice Facebook SMS site and all such posts shall be taken down or removed by an account administrator as soon as possible."

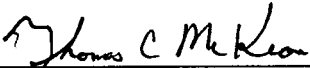
Compliance with Public Records Laws

The City of Venice Information Systems Director shall utilize an archival service such as "Backupify" or a similar service to ensure that the City's use of SMS sites complies with Florida's public records law.

SECTION 2. A copy of the Social Media and Public Relations Coordination Policy shall be maintained for public use, inspection and examination in the offices of the city clerk and the administrative services department and will be provided to all users.

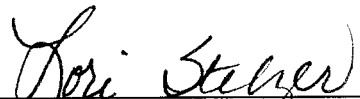
SECTION 3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its approval and adoption as required by law.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE VENICE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 28th DAY OF FEBRUARY 2012.



Thomas C. McKeon, Vice Mayor

ATTEST

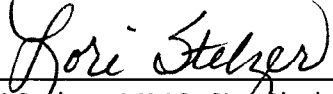


Lori Stelzer, MMC, City Clerk

I, Lori Stelzer, MMC, City Clerk of the City of Venice, Florida, a municipal corporation in Sarasota County, Florida, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full and complete, true and correct copy of a Resolution duly adopted by the City Council of said city at a meeting thereof duly convened and held on the 28th day of February 2012, a quorum being present.

WITNESS my hand and the official seal of said City this 29th day of February 2012.

(SEAL)



Lori Stelzer, MMC, City Clerk