



Subject: Promotion of Third Party on City Website
and/or Social Media Channels

I. DEPARTMENT

- A. **Communications Division:** As the division responsible for management and oversight of the City's website and social media channels, the Communications Division shall implement and enforce this Administrative Regulation.
- B. **All City Departments:** This Administrative Regulation applies to all City employees (including but not limited to full and part-time staff, contractors, freelancers, volunteers, and other agents) that provide content to or update information on the City's website and/or social media channels.

II. PURPOSE

To regulate and control what information is posted on the City's website and/or social media channels by third-party groups and organizations.

III. OBJECTIVE

To provide a non-public forum where an authorized user can request the posting of information on the City's website and/or social media channels.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Authorized User: A third-party group or organization that meets the requirements of this Administrative Regulation, and that has submitted information for review and posting on the City's website and/or social media channels.

Community Group and/or Service Club: A nonprofit organization as defined herein, that is physically based within the municipal boundaries of the City, and that provides services directly to City residents.

Governmental Entity: Any local, state, or federal government body, political subdivision, or agency.

Nonprofit Organization: An organization registered as a nonprofit corporation with the State of Florida and having 501(c)3 tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service that provides services inside the City. The services provided by a nonprofit organization must more than incidentally benefit City residents. A nonprofit organization must provide the City with a document from the State of Florida verifying its nonprofit corporate status and from the IRS verifying its nonprofit tax status.

Place of Worship: An organized place of worship, including but not limited to a church, synagogue, mosque, or temple with a physical address within the City, enabled through zoning to operate as a place of worship, and where regular worship services are conducted.

Professional Association: An organization whose membership includes City staff, and whose purpose is to further a particular profession, the interests of individuals and organizations engaged in that profession, and the public interest for the benefit of City residents. Examples are the Florida League of Cities or North Port Area Chamber of Commerce.

Social Media Channel(s): Any City-owned or managed webpage established through a company such as Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, NextDoor, Neighbors, YouTube, LinkedIn, or similar entity.

Website: The official website for the City of North Port located at www.northportfl.gov, including but not limited to specific Department webpages, project webpages, website menu pages, etc.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. **City Responsibilities:** The City is responsible for creating, posting, monitoring, and removing information from its website and/or social media channels.
- B. **Authorized User Responsibilities:** Each authorized user must accept and agree to abide by the terms and conditions contained in this Administrative Regulation and must provide the City with any and all information requested for review before any of the authorized user's information will appear on the City's website and/or a social media channel(s).

VI. PROCEDURES

A. Authorized User Requirements:

The City will only accept submissions to be posted on the City's website and/or social media channels from authorized users. Applicants must demonstrate that they meet at least one of the following categories before they can be deemed an authorized user. Renting or utilizing a City-owned property or facility is not an authorized user requirement.

1. An active nonprofit organization;
2. A governmental entity;
3. A print, radio, or television media or news organization of general circulation or that broadcasts within the municipal boundaries of the City;
4. A professional association;
5. A place of worship;

6. An organization, community group, or service club receiving funds through the City's Special Event Assistance Program;
7. A community group or service club that received a proclamation from the City during the 12 months prior to applying to be an authorized user; or
8. A business, community group, or service club that during the 12 months prior to applying to be an authorized user has donated goods or services to the City or that has been hired by the City to provide services directly benefiting City residents.

B. Submission Requirements:

The City will only post the submission of an authorized user on the City's website and/or social media channels when the submission complies with the following requirements. Once an authorized user's submission is posted on the City's website and/or social media channels, the authorized user must wait at least six (6) months before providing a new submission to be posted.

1. A submission must be for a special, community-wide event that is not part of the authorized user's regular, day-to-day business operations, or a special event hosted by an organization, community group, or service club that is receiving assistance through the City's Special Event Assistance Program.
2. A nonprofit organization's submission must be directly related to an event of the nonprofit organization that relates to an issue directly impacting the City, Sarasota County, or its residents.
3. A professional association's submission must be directly related to an event of the professional association that directly benefits or promotes the City, Sarasota County, or its residents.
4. A place of worship's submission must be directly related to an event or service offered by the place of worship that directly benefits City residents or promotes a local program, and that clearly benefit the City as a whole.

5. A community group or service club submission must be directly related to a local program or service offered by the group or club that directly benefits City residents or the City as a whole.
6. A business, community group, or service club submission must be directly related to the goods or services donated by the entity to the City or to the goods or services provided by the entity under contract with the City that directly benefit City residents.

C. Request for Review:

An applicant must submit a Request for Review Form, which can be found on the City's website, or obtained from the Communications Division via e-mail at communications@northportFL.gov. Applications must clearly identify and demonstrate:

1. The applicant meets one or more of the authorized user categories required by this Administrative Regulation; and
2. The requested submission to be posted on the City's website and/or social media channels meets the submission requirements of this Administrative Regulation.

The Communications Division will review the request and determine if the applicant and its requested submission meet the requirements of this Administrative Regulation. Where an applicant is not deemed an authorized user, or an authorized user's submission for posting does not comply with the requirements of this Administrative Regulation, the Communications Division will notify the applicant/authorized user. An applicant or authorized user may reapply or submit additional information.

The Communications Division, in its sole discretion, will determine how, where, and when to post an authorized user's approved submission on the City's website and/or social media channels.

D. City Initiated Posting:

The Communications Division may, in its sole discretion, determine that a community group, service club, governmental entity, nonprofit organization, place of worship, professional association, service provider, or similar entity offers or provides a direct benefit or service to City residents and post the information on the City's website and/or social media channels.

E. Not an Endorsement of Authorized User:

An applicant being deemed an authorized user, and/or the City's posting or use of an authorized user's message or information on the City's website and/or social media channels, does not mean that the City endorses any aspect of the applicant or authorized user, or its organization, message, information, product, or service. The City's display of an authorized user's message or information

does not imply an affiliation with the authorized user other than as a vehicle to advertise. Any implied affiliation is accidental. Any request to post in which association with the authorized user may compromise the public's perception of the City's neutrality or its ability to act in the public interest will be rejected and/or removed. The views and opinions expressed by an authorized user do not necessarily state or reflect those of the City, its Commissioners, or employees, and must not be interpreted by the public as the City making a statement or taking an action that directly or indirectly advocates or endorses the authorized user, its organization, message, information, product, or service.

External links and posts appearing on the City's website and/or social media channels will redirect users away from information controlled by the City. Internet sites available through these links and posts, and the material provided through them, are not provided, endorsed, or under the control of the City. The City cannot and does not make any representation about the appropriateness or accuracy of the material or information available on any non-City controlled external internet site. The City provides these links only as a convenience, and access to these external sites is done at an individual's own risk.

F. Policy and Message Content:

1. Non-Public Forum. The City's website and/or social media channels are maintained as non-public forums. The City exercises sole discretion over the information displayed on these platforms and the eligibility to post information to the platforms. The City has full control over the acceptance or rejection of an authorized user and full editorial control over the placement, content, and appearance of an authorized user's message or information when it appears on the City's website and/or social media channels. The City's decision regarding the appropriateness of an authorized user's participation and its message or information is final. The City may revise, reject, or omit content as it sees fit on any message or information that appears on the City's website and/or social media channels. All postings must comply with the City's branding standards regarding its font, color, size, and message.
2. Vision, Mission, and Values. The City will not deny an applicant or authorized user on the basis of the applicant's or authorized user's viewpoint. However, the City does not seek and will not accept applicants or authorized users that manufacture products or take positions inconsistent with local, state, or federal law or with the City's vision, mission, values, or policies.
3. Disqualification. Any applicant or authorized user engaged in any of the following activities, or that has a mission supporting any of the following subject matters, or that in the City's sole discretion and judgment is deemed to be unsuitable for or contrary to community standards for the appropriateness of government speech, is prohibited from being an authorized user and posting their message or information on the City's website and/or social media channels:
 - i. Commentary, advocacy, promotion, or depiction of issues, candidates, or campaigns pertaining to political elections;

- ii. Promotion or depiction of profanity, obscenity, or sexually-oriented products, activities, or materials;
- iii. Promotion or depiction of bigotry, prejudice, discrimination, or hate;
- iv. Promotion or depiction of firearms, explosives, weapons, or the glorification of violent acts;
- v. Promotion, glorification, or depiction of illegal products, activities, or materials; or
- vi. Any other activity determined by the City Manager to be contrary to the best interests of the City.

G. Removal of Post

The City will remove, in its sole discretion, any message or information from the City's website and/or social media channels that is inaccurate or untrustworthy, that is no longer applicable, that is transitory, that violates this Administrative Regulation, or that has met its schedule for records retention.

H. Third Party Materials

Some material or information displayed on the City's website and/or social media channels is generated and owned by third parties that have consented to or contracted for the City's use or placement of the material or information. Any use of a third party's material is prohibited, except as otherwise agreed to by the City. Persons seeking to use or modify a third party's material must contact the owner of the material directly. Third party material can include but is not limited to text, icons, and graphic images used as standalone or internet links, as well as various items of general content.

I. General Disclaimer:

The material and information appearing on and obtained from the City's website and/or social media channels is distributed and transmitted "AS IS" without warranties of any kind, either express or implied, including without limitation, warranties of title or implied warranties of merchantability, or fitness for a particular purpose. Information contained on the City's website and/or social media channels, including information obtained from external links, is provided without any representation of any kind as to their accuracy or content, and should be verified by anyone relying on the information. The City is not responsible for any general, direct, special, indirect, incidental, or consequential damages that may arise from the use of, or the inability to

use, the City's website and/or social media channels and/or the materials or information contained on the City's website or social media channels, whether the materials or information contained thereon are provided by the City or a third party.

J. Links to the City's Website:

Advance permission to link to the City's website is not required. However, those linking to the City's website must understand that the content and internal web links may change at any time and without notice. Entities and individuals must not link to the City's website, nor capture pages within frames, and present the content as its own, or otherwise misrepresent the content, or misinform users about the origin or ownership of the content.

Approval

This Administrative Policy has been approved and is in effect as of January 4, 2024.



A. Jerome Fletcher II, ICMA-CM, MPA
City Manager

