

**Communications Committee &
Information Technology Sub-Committee Meeting
Minutes
October 7, 2011
9:00 a.m.**

Members <u>Present:</u> Regional Councillor Jim Jones Councillor Alex Chiu Councillor Logan Kanapathi Councillor Howard Shore <u>Regrets:</u> Mayor Frank Scarpitti (ex-officio) Regional Councillor Gordon Landon	Staff Dennis Flaherty, Director of Communications & Community Relations Nasir Kenea, Chief Information Officer Joel Lustig, Treasurer Diane Sewell, Communications Coordinator Andy Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator
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The Communications Committee & Information Technology Sub-Committee convened at 9:08 a.m. with Councillor Howard Shore presiding as Chair.

The Chair recommended that this Committee set an example by having no paper agendas at future meetings. Members were requested to review their agendas on their laptop computers going forwarded.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was noted that a staff meeting was held after the September 28, 2011 Communications Committee & Information Technology Sub-Committee meeting to review the action items.

Moved by Councillor Logan Kanapathi
Seconded by Councillor Alex Chiu

That the Minutes from the September 28, 2011 Communications Committee & Information Technology Sub-Committee be approved as presented.

CARRIED.

2. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY MARKHAM

Mr. Dennis Flaherty, Director of Communications & Community Relations, provided a presentation on the “Use of Social Media by Markham”. The presentation included a review of the draft policy; an overview of how conversations occur through social media; key statistics regarding the growth and use of social media; a review of best practices; an overview of what other municipalities are doing with respect to social media; information on why a policy is required; and an overview of Markham’s current social media practices.

Discussion

There was a discussion regarding how the Town should use social media to engage the public on matters pertaining to sustainability. The public could be directed to sustainability networking sites and be encouraged to participate. These networking sites attract expertise from all around the world. In the past these types of networks were referred to as forums and were commonly used by corporations.

It was reported that all large municipalities are using social media as a method of engaging the public – both to provide information and solicit input on a wide variety of issues and policy. Consequently, it is important that municipalities have clear policies and guidelines in place regarding the type of content posted and how the content will be monitored. It was agreed that social media should be used as one of many tools to engage the public.

There was a discussion regarding an application that is being used to provide real time Town of Markham website updates to stakeholders who have prescribed to this service. The Committee asked if the number of prescribers could be tracked going forward. This feature is similar to the “Likes” feature on Facebook, which allows users to get automatic updates in real time from Facebook pages they prescribe to.

Mr. Flaherty advised he will gather more information on the City of Calgary’s blog and news page.

It was questioned how Department Heads will ensure compliance of the proposed Corporate Social Media Policy. It was clarified that Department Heads will be responsible for approving information prior to posting it on social media sites and for ensuring staff are in compliance by resolving any issues once brought to their attention. Department Heads should consider that messages are being sent to a large number of persons when sent through social media and that a message that is intended to be funny could be offensive to someone else. The Department Head must also ensure that the assigned moderator is doing regular audits of their business social media sites to ensure inappropriate postings are removed in a timely fashion (e.g. a commercial advertisement, disparaging remarks) and that Department Heads shall have full ‘Administrator’ access privileges to social media sites managed by their business.

It was confirmed that the Markham’s Economic Development Department has established a “Linkedin” social media account.

There was a discussion on the benefits of engaging stakeholders through social media. It was noted that social media can be used to reach a broader audience by eliminating barriers to participation. Online surveys can also be conducted through some social media sites.

There was a discussion regarding whether social media has the potential to reduce the scale of the Town’s mail outs. Possibly in the future residents would have an opportunity to opt out from receiving mail correspondence. It was noted that Markham’s adoption of social media will be a phased approach, however, it was noted that the medium is changing rapidly. How social media

evolves will depend on how both the Town and stakeholders adapt to the use of social media. It was suggested that social media could potentially reduce the Town's advertising cost.

In accordance with the proposed Corporate Social Media Policy, a Social Media Sub-Committee will be established to identify preferred social media tools and to ensure social media sites are branded properly. The Committee will be comprised of business units that actively use social media, employees that use social media and frontline employees.

It was noted that it is important to regularly revisit the Corporate Social Media Policy to ensure it is current. Staff will need to ensure they are in compliance with other policies when complying with the policy (e.g. Media Relations Policy). The Committee agreed the policy will also be applicable to Advisory Boards and Committees.

3. CORPORATE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The following amendments/additions to the proposed "Corporate Social Media Policy" were recommended by the Communications Committee & Information Technology Committee (additions are bolded and omissions are stroke through):

1. Under Purpose Statement the first sentence was amended as follows: Markham ~~supports~~ **encourages** the use of online Social Media Tools where the tool is part of a disciplined and thoughtful strategic communications strategy designed to reach and influence its strategic audience.
2. Under Applicability and Scope Statement, the policy will also be applicable to Markham's Boards and Committees and will be recommended for endorsement to Agencies, Boards and Committees operating at arms length.
3. Under the definition of brand, a reference reinforcing that the "Town of Markham's brand has value and is what the Town of Markham stands for" be included.
4. Under Roles and Responsibilities, point five, was amended as follows: Compliance and Communications to Staff – **Director of Communications & Community Relations and Department Heads**

Moved by Councillor Logan Kanapathi

Seconded by Councillor Alex Chiu

That Markham Boards, Business Improvement Areas and Committees be required to adhere to the Town's Corporate Social Media Policy; and,

That Markham District Energy and Markham Enterprise Corporation be requested to adhere to the Town's Social Media Policy in absence of their own such policy on same.

CARRIED.

Moved by Councillor Alex Chiu

Seconded by Councillor Logan Kanapathi

That the Communications Committee and Information Technology Sub-Committee approve the proposed Corporate Social Media Policy as amended; and,

That Council endorse the proposed Social Media Policy.

CARRIED.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

Cell Tower

There was a discussion regarding the possibility of building a cell tower in Markham that would service the corporation's mobile telecommunication needs. A report on this matter will be brought forward to the Development Services Committee for Council approval next week. It was noted that this Committee should be apart of the conversation regarding Markham's vision for cell towers going forward (e.g. the type of cell towers that will built).

5. NEXT MEETING DATE

It was agreed that the Committee will meet bi-monthly or at the Call of the Chair. The Committee Clerk was requested to ask Members of Council and applicable staff if they have agenda items to be added one week prior to a meeting.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The Communication Committee & Information Technology Sub-Committee adjourned at 10:38 a.m.