



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF WASAGA BEACH
POLICY MANUAL

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| SECTION NAME: General Administration | POLICY NUMBER: 2-16 |
| POLICY: Corporate Communication Policy | REVIEW DATE: February 2019 |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: February 2016 | REVISIONS: |
| ADOPTED BY BY-LAW: By-Law No. 2016-27 | ADMINISTERED BY: Communications/Special Projects Coordinator and Town Clerk |

PURPOSE

The Corporation of The Town of Wasaga Beach (“Corporation”) recognizes the importance of providing public service and promotes the dissemination and receiving of communications related to municipal government. Guidelines for processing communications provide staff with the tools necessary to achieve levels of efficiency, having regard to available resources.

SCOPE

Communications Defined

“Communication” shall mean any verbal discussion, electronic communication, facsimile, hard copy communication, addressed to a Member of Council, any staff member of the Corporation, or the Corporation generally, whether specifically addressed to Council, an individual person(s) or department(s), or intended to be specifically addressed.

Processing of Communications

1. All communications received by the Corporation shall be reviewed, and where applicable, processed in accordance with this Policy in a timely manner, having regard to all of the circumstances of the communication, including but not limited to, the subject matter of the communication, staff/Council availability, priorities, emergencies and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

2. Council and staff shall have regard to the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act when considering any communications. In circumstances where providing a response requires research to provide access to the Corporations' records, or involves personal or other confidential information, individuals may be required to file an application under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and pay the requisite fee to process the request any subsequent fees for copying of documents prior to the supply thereof.
3. All requests may be subject to additional fees for search time in completing the request and/or photocopying fees. Search time shall be calculated at a rate of \$7.50 per 15 minutes of search time. The photocopying fee shall be the applicable rate as provided for in the Corporation's Composite Fee By-law. A deposit in respect of the search and photocopying fees may be requested prior to any search and/or photocopying being undertaken.
4. All fees which are applicable shall be paid in full prior to the release of any documents.
5. Communications deemed to be discriminatory, espousing hatred or harassment, violence or racism, or containing aggressive, abusive or derogatory comments directed at a member of Council or staff will not be responded to.
6. In the event that the communication is a request for access to information under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act which is deemed to be frivolous or vexatious a refusal in the respect of the request will be provided with notice and reasons pursuant to the said Act.
7. Communications that provide insufficient information for staff to respond will be referred back to the author for clarification and will not be processed until such or sufficient clarification is provided.
8. Communications for information which the Corporation has already provided to the requester directly or to any third party having made a request on behalf of the requester may be deemed to be frivolous and/or vexatious and may be treated accordingly.
9. Communications shall be referred by the Communications/Special Projects Coordinator and/or Town Clerk to the appropriate department on the basis of subject matter for response. In the event that another department has already responded to a prior request regarding the same matter, no referral shall be made and the communication shall be returned to the sender.
10. Communications which are not specifically addressed to an individual staff member or department shall be processed through the office of the Town Clerk which may cause a delay in processing.
11. Communications addressed to Council, will be referred to the Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Council or designate for processing. The Town Clerk, in consultation with

the Mayor and/or C.A.O., shall determine communications to be included on an agenda of Council or a Committee, including a suggested recommendation for action.

12. Communications which contain personal information and/or are deemed discriminatory, espousing hatred or harassment, violence or racism, or containing aggressive, abusive or derogatory comments directed at a member of Council, staff or any other party will not be referred to Council and will be returned to the sender and/or reported to relevant authorities and/or legal counsel for further action if deemed appropriate.
13. General communications received from or issued by the Corporation to various media outlets through media releases shall be processed through the Communications/Special Projects Coordinator in consultation with the Mayor and/or C.A.O. and applicable Department Head.

Communications outside the jurisdiction/responsibility of the Town of Wasaga Beach

14. Staff and/or Council will not provide responses to requests for information or the interpretation of issues outside of the jurisdiction/responsibility of the Corporation.
15. Staff and/or Council will not provide legal advice and/or legal opinions or information which may be considered to be legal advice and/or a legal opinion.
16. Interpretation of provincial legislation, with the exception of interpretation required to assist in municipal functions such as Building Code Information and Municipal Elections Act, will not be provided. Staff may refer such inquiries to other levels of government, agencies, or appropriate other locations, to assist the public in obtaining the required information.
17. Requests for information on the rationale of Council policies and/or by-laws beyond what is contained within the policy and/or by-law will not be provided, with the exception of background reports or the Corporations' records on the relevant topic.
18. The Corporation will not be responsible for and not bound by any privately expressed or personal views, opinions or commentary which may be provided by a member of Staff or Council.

Complaints

19. Complaints shall be processed in accordance with the Town's Corporate Complaints Policy giving consideration for the type and nature of the complaint.
20. In the event complaints cannot be resolved through the Town's complaint process and policy they may be submitted to the Provincial Ombudsman's office in accordance with the provisions of Bill 8.

Requests for Support from other municipalities or government organizations

21. Requests for Support from other municipalities or government organizations shall be forwarded, from the Office of the C.A.O. or Town Clerk, to the Department Head of the Department most closely associated with the topic matter for review. The Department Head shall review the request and recommend action. Requests for support shall only be processed when the subject matter is within the jurisdiction of the Corporation.
22. Requests for support from the County of Simcoe, or any of its member municipalities, shall be included on an agenda of Council or a Section Committee for consideration. The Department Head of the Department most closely associated with the topic matter shall review the request and recommend action.

Alternative Disclosure

23. Various methods of alternative disclosure are currently in place within the Corporation. Some of these methods include but are not limited to:
 - Electronic meeting management system, available on the Corporation's website, for access to meeting agendas, agenda content and record of meetings (minutes).
 - Access to by-laws via the Corporation's website or viewing at the Townhall.
 - Deputations/presentations, in accordance with the Procedural By-law.
 - Opportunity to ask questions or obtain clarification on agenda items at the end of Council/Committee meetings.

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

24. Individuals have the ability to request access to records in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and pay the requisite fee.
25. Nothing contained in this Policy is intended to conflict with nor derogate from the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Medium of Response

26. Save as provided in clause 28, the method of submission of communications/ correspondence shall not solely nor necessarily determine the medium of response (e.g. if an inquiry is received via facsimile, it may be determined by the Corporation to be more efficient/effective/practical, to respond via telephone).
27. Where there is a verbal response provided to a written communication, an indication of the verbal response, including the responder's name, time and date, will be recorded on the written communication or where appropriate a written record may be attached to the correspondence and noted thereon.

28. Where legislation prescribes response in a specific format a response shall be provided in the prescribed format.

Delegation & Dispute

The Communications/Special Projects Coordinator and Town Clerk of the Corporation are delegated the responsibilities related to the processing of communications. Any dispute from the public regarding the medium of response, or any other provision of this policy, shall be referred to the Communications/Special Projects Coordinator or Town Clerk, who in consultation with the C.A.O. shall make a determination regarding the issue.

POLICY ADMINISTRATION AND REVIEW

This policy shall be administered by the Town Clerk and Communications/Special Projects Coordinator.

This policy will be reviewed every three (3) years or as required based on revisions to corporate practises or Provincial legislation.