

CITY OF WOODCREEK
[DRAFT] SOCIAL MEDIA/COMMUNICATIONS POLICY
June 20, 2023

1. Purpose.

The City of Woodcreek, Texas Official Social Media/Communications Policy (“Social Media Policy”) is to establish regulations for the development, operation and administration of the City’s Social Media Presence to ensure that such social media pages remain a non-public forum subject to the City administration’s exclusive use and control. The purposes and goals of the City’s Social Media Presence are as follows:

- a. To provide a convenient and information-rich resource regarding the City for residents, visitors, businesses, non-profit organizations, governmental entities, schools, and other public resources.
- b. To provide information and resources that contribute to the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of, and visitors to, the City of Woodcreek.
- c. To contribute to the improvement of City serves, foster economic and residential development, and enhance the sense of community within the City.
- d. To establish and strengthen long-term partnerships between the City, the County, along with individuals and entities in both the public and private sectors where such partnerships further the goals of advancing and strengthening the public health, safety, and welfare.
- e. To provide information about the City and local services in a manner that is as manageable, efficient, and organized as possible.
- f. To provide an opportunity and means to create a personalized face for the City to display to its residents, businesses, neighboring entities and individuals who may have heard about the City of Woodcreek or are curious about the same but have yet to visit or meet anyone who calls the City home.
- g. To encourage and help generate civic pride and foster a sense of community among the City’s residents.
- h. To provide a readily available and accessibly means for the City to effectively communicate news, emergency updates, upcoming events, information, and recognition to the public at large.
- i. To complement and increase awareness of information available through the City’s website.

2. Policy

The City Manager and his or her designee, as may be appropriate, shall operate and maintain the City Social Media Presence and engage in the use of preferred Social Media Platforms as may be provided in this Policy and any amendments or supplements thereto.

3. Emergency Services Requests

Requests for emergency services, such as those seeking assistance from police, firefighting, EMS/ambulance services, or animal control services should NOT be directed to the City's Social Media Presence. Person(s) needing immediate assistance should contact 9-1-1 or request such emergency services by some other recognized and reliable method.

4. Non-Public Forum Status

The City's Social Media Presence, including any accounts established by City staff pursuant to the same, are to be considered "non-public forums." While the City encourages the public to use these mechanisms to access information and resources, the City expressly reserves the right to impose certain reasonable and narrowly-tailored restrictions on the use of the City's Social Media accounts. The City's Social Media Presence shall NOT be used to facilitate general debate, public discourse, or the free exchange of ideas; all of these priorities are intended to use other available forums as may already exist or be created in the future. Use of the City's Social Media Presence is restricted to only those uses authorized by the City Manager with input from the City Council.

5. Authority of City Manager

- a. The City Manager or his or her designee shall have the sole authority and responsibility for the implementation of this Policy. The City Manager may also make interpretations on issues that are not clearly articulated or not included in this Policy, so long as the City Manager's discretion is exercised in a manner consistent with the stated purposes of this Policy.
- b. Only the City Manager, or the City Manager's authorized designee, shall be authorized to perform any of the following functions:
 - i. create, establish, register, or otherwise initiate any Social Media Account on behalf of the City of Woodcreek or which appears to be established by the City, or to use any Social Media account in such fashion;
 - ii. modify the content of any City Social Media Account;
 - iii. to set, remove, or otherwise modify any User-controlled settings associated with a City-associated Social Media Account;
 - iv. publish any information to the City's authorized Social Media Account(s) on the City's behalf, or in any fashion which may be attributable to the City;
 - v. create, delete, or modify a social media/internet link to the Social Media Account of any other person or entity;

- vi. use any function of a Social Media Platform which states or implies an opinion or position held by the City, as may be formally adopted or established by the City Council; or
 - vii. modify the City Website or any City Social Media Account.
- c. This Policy will be posted on the City Website for review by the public at any time. If technologically feasible, any Social Media Account established by the City will include a copy of this Policy or a link to this Policy as published on the City's Website.
- d. Questions or comments regarding any subjects or issues addressed in this Policy may be directed to:

City of Woodcreek
 Attn: City Manager
 41 Champions Circle
 Woodcreek, Texas 78676

6. Privacy

- a. The City is sensitive to the privacy interests of the users who may access any City Social Media Account and believes that the protection of those interests is of great importance. The City's goal in collecting personal information online is to provide the users with the most personalized and effective service possible. By understanding the user's needs and preferences, the City may provide users with improved service. The City strives to protect online personal information in the same manner that the City protects residents and business' information obtained through other permissible means. The following information explains the City's policy regarding any personal information supplied when using or accessing the City's Social Media content.
- b. Social Media Account Privacy Policies: when a visitor accesses or views the City's Social Media Account page(s), those sites may use or otherwise employ automated tools to log information about each such unique visitor. The City reserves the right to process this information in the manner or methods made available by the Social Media platforms to determine site performance issues, such as popular pages, most frequently downloaded forms, and other site performance characteristics. This information does not publicly identify such users individually.
- c. Social Media Privacy Policies (*cont.*): By their nature, Social Media Accounts are accessible by a vast number of persons and entities over which the City has no control. The City may use or otherwise employ automated tools to log information about visitors to the City's Social Media Accounts and associated websites. The City may process this information in the aggregate to determine Social Media Platform issues, such as popular posts or messages, links established with other Social Media Accounts and are re-transmitted by other parties, and other similar usage information. However, the City cannot guarantee that the information available to the City or a third party through a particular platform will not identify a user personally. To determine whether or not personally-identifiable information will be accessible to the City or a third party when interfacing with a City Social Media Account, a user is encouraged to refer to the privacy policies and terms of use applicable to each Social Media Platform. The City will not track or record

information about individuals and their visits to City Social Media Accounts, except to the extent required by law or automated by the platform itself.

- d. Sensitive Information/Communications: Visitors to the City's website or Social Media Accounts are hereby notified that any information provided to the City by any means of the user may not be maintained confidentially by the City. Information received by the City by any person through a Social Media Account may later be shared with third parties, particularly when such information is subject to disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act or other statute. Any person wishing to communicate confidentially with the City or any City official, officer, or employee should first contact the City to determine the appropriate channel (if any) for such communication prior to revealing any sensitive information or material that the user does not wish shared with third parties. City employees are prohibited from using any City Social Media Account to transmit or otherwise allow access to any information which the City employee has any special right or ability to access or any information which is privileged by law or statute.
- e. Disclaimer: While every effort will be made to keep information provided over the internet accurate and up-to-date, the City of Woodcreek does not certify the authenticity or accuracy of any such information. Users are encouraged to contact the City directly for the most current and up-to-date information. No warranties, express or implied, are provided for the content, records and/or mapping data as may be provided therein.
- f. The City of Woodcreek, its elected officials, officers, employees, agents, and consultants assume no legal responsibility for the information or accuracy contained on any website, account or platform as described herein, including any action taken in reliance on any information contained herein. The City and its officials, employees and agents shall have no liability for any damages, losses, costs, expenses, or fees – including but not limited to attorney's fees – arising from the use or misuse of the information provided herein.
- g. By accessing the City's Social Media Accounts and using any information therein, the User is stating that the above Disclaimer has been read and that he/she has full understanding and is in agreement with the contents.

7. Final Decision

The decision to post or not to post content and/or links on the City's Social Media Accounts rests solely with the City Manager and his or her designee. The decision of the City Manager and his or her designee is final and binding. Under no circumstances will individuals or entities be entitled to compensation or damages in the event the City Manager and his or her designee directs the City to include or exclude the content or link.