



**Subject: RCP Communication**

**Report Number: RCP 23-02**

Department: Recreation, Culture and Parks Department

Submitted by: Andrea Greenway, Recreation Programs & Services Manager

Meeting Type: Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Date: Thursday, September 7, 2023

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT report titled RCP 23-02 Communication be received as information; and
- B. THAT The Recreation and Sports Advisory Committee recommend Option 2 to Council for consideration.

## **BACKGROUND**

At the July 6 Recreation & Sports Advisory Committee meeting the following resolution was passed:

Resolution #2

Moved by: Deb Gilvesy

Seconded by: Taylor Campbell

THAT the Recreation & Sports Advisory committee requests back a staff report on ways to increase communication to the public from the Recreation, Culture and Parks department when it comes to programming, events and facilities.

And opportunities to further collaborate with user groups to improve partnerships and communication when it comes to successes of local organizations/teams and the promotion of events being held in Tillsonburg.

**Carried**

Options for increased communication are provided in this report.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Town of Tillsonburg has one Facebook page that provides information on all corporate initiatives with the exception of Annandale NHS. The Recreation department

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has an Instagram page, however the target audience of Facebook is who we are typically trying to reach (ie: parents who sign their children up for programs). The committee has expressed concerns with the Recreation department having the ability to provide information to the public in a timely manner.

The Manager of Recreation Programs & Services completed a review of how neighboring municipalities manage social media. Below are the comparators:

<b>Municipality/Organization</b>	<b>Department Responsibility</b>	<b>Municipal Recreation Page</b>	<b>Municipal Corporate Page</b>	<b>Notes</b>
City of Woodstock	Corporate Communications	no	yes	Recreation information is posted on the corporate social media page by the recreation team. There is a posting calendar provided by the communications team. Recreation staff have access to post if communications staff are unavailable. Approach is to “schedule and automate” what is known in advance and work around those (or adjust if needed) for the “responsive or urgent” needs.

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Norfolk County	Corporate Communications	yes	yes	Recreation information is posted on the recreation social media page by the corporate communications team. The recreation team provides content.
Town of Aylmer	Parks and Recreation	yes	yes	Recreation staff post on the recreation social media pages.
City of St. Thomas	Corporate Communications	no	yes	All posts are on the corporate page and posted by the communications team. Recreation staff provide content
Strathroy-Caradoc	Corporate Communications	No	yes	All posts are on the corporate page and posted by the communications team. Recently hired an additional staff member to focus on social media and this is working very well

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City of London	Corporate Communications	yes	yes	Recreation information is posted on the recreation social media page by the corporate communications team. The recreation team provides content.
Town of Ingersoll	Community Services	yes	yes	Recreation staff post on the recreation social media pages. Staff post during working hours only, no expectation to post after hours
Municipality of Thames Centre	Corporate Communications	no	yes	Recreation staff provide posts including graphics, posts are forwarded to the communications team and posted when they are able

In reviewing how neighboring municipalities organize their social media, it was evenly split between having a separate recreation page for disseminating information and having a corporate page that encompasses all departments.

A review was also completed on social media policies for 9 municipalities. The municipalities included (note: not all of the comparators above have social media policies):

- Township of Zorra

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- City of London
- County of Wellington
- Middlesex Centre
- North Perth
- Thames Centre
- Haldimand County
- Norfolk County
- Strathroy-Caradoc

Each municipality has a different staffing structure, but in all policies there are clearly defined staff roles, including management oversight of social media, social media moderators and staff who monitor social media. The management of social media is the responsibility of the communications or administration department while the moderators are appointed by managers and supervisors to produce content and post information on behalf of the municipality. All staff are responsible for following the corporate social media policy.

Based on the review, the committee is presented with the following options to increase communication for the Recreation, Culture and Parks Department:

**Option 1:**

Maintain 1 corporate social media page managed by corporate communications and appoint social media moderators in each department that are responsible for creating content and posting to social media. This is currently happening informally on a trial basis for the RCP department.

**Option 2:**

Create a separate social media page for the Recreation, Culture & Parks department. This page would be managed by the RCP management team with staff appointed as moderators. The page would encompass the sharing of all Recreation, Culture and Parks information to the public. As separate Facebook page for Annandale NHS already exists, this page would be amalgamated to create one Recreation, Culture & Parks page that disseminates all department information to the public.

The Recreation, Culture and Parks department has a significant amount of information to share with the community. There are a number of projects to celebrate and opportunities to engage the community. The department relies heavily on revenue generation in order to meet budget projections and there is a need to market and promote recreation programs in a timely manner. In the Community Recreation Survey that took place in June, 2022, when asked how residents learn about recreation

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opportunities in Tillsonburg, social media was the top response with just over 50% of residents receiving their information in this manner. This provides an excellent opportunity for RCP to increase communications through social media. Based on these factors, RCP staff recommend option 2 above.

It is also recommended that the Town develop social media guidelines for departments to follow in order to ensure corporate standards are met. Staff will need to be assigned and trained on the social media guidelines for quality assurance.

## CONSULTATION

RCP Director, Managers and staff, neighboring municipalities noted above, Director of Corporate Services

## FINANCIAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

N/A

## CORPORATE GOALS

How does this report support the corporate goals identified in the Community Strategic Plan?

- Lifestyle and amenities
- Customer service, communication and engagement
- Business attraction, retention and expansion
- Community growth
- Connectivity and transportation
- Not Applicable

Does this report relate to a specific strategic direction or project identified in the Community Strategic Plan? Please indicate section number and/or any priority projects identified in the plan.

**Goal** – The Town of Tillsonburg will strive for excellence and accountability in government, providing effective and efficient services, information, and opportunities to shape municipal initiatives.

**Strategic Direction** – Increase opportunities and promotion for public engagement in municipal initiatives.

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**Priority Project – N/A**

**ATTACHMENTS**

N/A