

TOWN OF GERMAN FLATTS WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES

Article I. Website Policy

§1. Purpose.

The Town of German Flatts's website exists to:

- A. Make public information more readily available, thereby encouraging greater public understanding of, and participation in, the Town's governance.
- B. Provide access to forms of electronic communication and e-commerce functions to enhance the traditional walk-in experience to our Town's departments.
- C. Inform residents and visitors about government services and local attractions.
- D. Use emerging technology to enhance Town services.
- E. Use social media to further enhance the Town of German Flatts's messaging and news delivery systems.

§2. Confidentiality.

Any information received through this website, including any mails sent via this website, are subject to the disclosure requirements of New York's Freedom of Information Law ("FOIL") and are therefore, necessarily, not confidential. No information received through this website will be sold or licensed by the Town.

§3. Town of German Flatts policies and procedures.

- A. There shall be a Town employee responsible for maintaining the Town's website, social media and messaging services ("Webmaster") appointed by the Town Board. The Webmaster may work with third parties to build/design/maintain the website. The Town Board shall determine the Webmaster's compensation, and shall set the Webmaster's budget. The Webmaster shall be supervised by the Town Supervisor or such other person designated by the Town Board.
- B. In each Town department there shall be a Town employee responsible for reviewing potential items for posting on the Town's website and forwarding such items to the Webmaster ("department designee"), appointed by such employee's department head.
- C. There shall be a committee responsible for refining website operations, and for advising the Webmaster regarding policy issues ("Town of German Flatts Website/New Media Team"), whose members shall be named by the Town Board. [NOTE: The German Flatts Website/New Media Team shall be responsible for making recommendations to the Town Board for: 1) upgrading the Town's website;

2) investigating new programs and software; 3) evaluating other forms of media; such as, Twitter and Facebook. The German Flatts Website/New Media Team will be assisted by volunteers and Town staff who have expertise in these areas, and will determine its own structure, procedures and schedule. The German Flatts Website/New Media Team will make written recommendations to the Town Board on whether updating is needed to the Town website, and the results of evaluations of other forms of media.]

- D. All information submitted for posting on the Town's website shall be routed through the department designee and then to the Webmaster.
- E. The Town of German Flatts Website/New Media Team is responsible for establishing maintenance procedures and style guidelines for the Town's website, including social media services, in consultation with the Webmaster, who will comply with the Team's directions.
- F. The Town Board is the ultimate authority regarding policy governing the Town's website. These policies include, among other things, defining the look and feel of the website, and deciding who may post information on the site.
- G. Complaints about any aspect of the Town website should be brought first to the attention of the Town of German Flatts Website/New Media Team.
- H. The Town Board may amend this policy at any time. The Town Webmaster, with the consent of the Town Supervisor, and through the adopted Town procurement process and within budgetary appropriation, has the right to hire additional help on a contract basis to assist in the creation and updating of the Town of German Flatts website.
- I. No Town of German Flatts department, employee, board or committee member, or elected official, may create or maintain a website purporting to represent the Town of German Flatts in its official capacity. Elected officials may operate their own website separate from the official town website, which will not represent the Town in its official capacity.

§4. General disclaimer.

- A. The information and materials contained on the Town of German Flatts website have been compiled from a variety of sources, and are subject to change without notice, may not be current and up-to-date, and should not be considered official public records. Do not rely on said information and materials without first verifying its accuracy with the appropriate Town department, commission, government board, committee or agency. The Town of German Flatts makes no warranties or representations whatsoever with respect to content, quality, accuracy or completeness of any information or materials contained on either this website or any external website linked to this website. Additionally, the Town of German Flatts disavows any legal liability for the content, quality, completeness of said information and materials. Use of the information is solely the responsibility of the user.

- B. Communications to the Town of German Flatts via this website shall not be deemed to constitute legal or official notice to the Town of German Flatts, its departments, commissions, government boards, committees, agencies, officers, employees, representatives or agents for any purposes whatsoever, including with respect to any existing, pending or future claim or cause of action against the Town of German Flatts or any of its departments, commissions, boards, committees, agencies, officers, employees, representatives or agents where such notice is required by federal, state or local law.
- C. Any modification of the contents of the Town of German Flatts website without the express permission of the Town of German Flatts is strictly prohibited. Violations of this policy will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.
- D. Some of the links contained on this site lead to resources outside of the Town of German Flatts's website, including social media sites. The existence of these links should not be construed as an endorsement by the Town of German Flatts of these sites or their content. The Town of German Flatts will in no way be held responsible for the content of such link, or advertisements that appear on these sites.

§5. Links.

- A. As discussed in the general disclaimer, the Town of German Flatts is not responsible for, and does not endorse, the information and materials contained on any external website linked to this website. The Town is not responsible for, nor does it endorse, the individuals or organizations in charge of or portrayed on any such external websites. The Town of German Flatts reserves the right to deny any and all requests for the placement of links on its website. The following criteria will be used to decide whether to grant requests for Town website links.
- B. The Town of German Flatts website may provide, but is not required to provide, links to websites for.
 - (1) Local, state and federal government institutions.
 - (2) Local educational institutions.
 - (3) Organizations with some relationship to the Town (e.g., organizations contracting with the Town, organizations sponsoring Town activities or programs, and organizations participating in Town activities or programs).
 - (4) Organizations providing significant information about art, cultural and sporting activities in the Town.
 - (5) Organizations providing significant information about employment opportunities in the Town.
 - (6) Nonprofit organizations providing social services to the Town's residents without regard to race, gender or religion.
- C. The Town of German Flatts will not link to websites for:
 - (1) Political candidates.

- (2) Individual or personal homepages.
 - (3) For-profit organizations, unless they fit any of the criteria stated above.
 - (4) Organizations or individuals advocating a position on a local, state or federal issue, including any election or referendum.
 - (5) Organizations or individuals which the Town of German Flatts Web/New Media Team find to discriminate, or give the appearance of discriminating, on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or ethnicity.
- D. The Town of German Flatts reserves the right to remove, at any time and without notice, any links deemed outdated, obscene, inappropriate, or not otherwise in compliance with this website policy.

§6. Timeframes; agendas; standards.

- A. The Town of German Flatts Webmaster will be required to post all nonemergency Town materials submitted in no less than two business days from receipt, provided such document is in a form "readable" by the Webmaster. Acceptable formats include Microsoft Word, pdf, jpg, and html.
- B. Agendas. Town Board agendas will be submitted to the Town Webmaster for posting in a timeframe in accordance with current New York State law.
- C. Meeting minutes. All meeting minutes of the Town Board need to be submitted for posting in a timeframe in accordance with current New York State law.
- D. Web design standards. All content must conform to the design standards provided by the Town of German Flatts Webmaster.

Article II. Social Media Policy

§ Goal; endorsement; removal of content.

- A. The Town of German Flatts will have only one official social media site for each social media service or application that it will maintain.
- B. The overall goal of the Town of German Flatts's social media channels is to serve as an online information outsource focused on Town issues, projects, news and events, and is not intended as public fora. The social media sites are administered by two persons appointed by the Town Board (henceforth "administrators"). In the event the Town Board falls to appoint administrators, the default administrators will be the Town of German Flatts Webmaster and the Town Clerk or his or her designee.
- C. The Town of German Flatts does not endorse any website, link, public comment or advertisement on its social media sites placed by the public or vendors and/or partners. The Town of German Flatts reserves the right to remove any content from its social media sites at any time.

§8. Content policy.

The Town of German Flatts social media channels will serve to outsource news of the Town of German Flatts only. No comments and/or questions or additional information on content shall be posted by third parties, and administrative settings shall, to the fullest extent possible, be set to preclude public posting of content or comments.

§9. Policy purpose.

This Social Media Policy ("policy") provides guidelines for the establishment and use by the Town of German Flatts ("Town") social media sites as a means of conveying information to members of the public. The intended purpose of the Town of German Flatts social media sites is to disseminate information from the Town about the Town's mission, meetings, activities, and current issues to members of the public via various Internet channels. The Town of German Flatts has an overriding interest in protecting the information posted on its social media sites and the content attributed to the Town, including its elected and nonelected officials and personnel.

§10. Definitions.

As used in this article, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

SOCIAL MEDIA SITES: Content created by individuals using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the Internet. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter RSS, YouTube, LinkedIn, Delicious, and Flickr.

TOWN SOCIAL MEDIA SITES: Social media sites which the Town Board of the Town of German Flatts establishes, for which the Town of German Flatts administrators assist in maintenance of the site, and over which the Town has control of all postings, except for advertisements or hyperlinks by the social media site's owners, vendors, or partners.

§11. General policy.

- A. The Town's official website at <http://www.GermanFlatts.org> (or any domain owned by the Town) will remain the Town's primary means of internet communication.
- B. The establishment of Town of German Flatts social media sites is subject to approval by the Town of German Flatts Town Board with or upon the advice of the Town of German Flatts Website Committee. Upon approval, Town social media sites shall bear the name and/or official logo of the Town of German Flatts.
- C. All content on Town of German Flatts social media sites shall be reviewed and approved by the respective department head placing the content and administered by the administrators. The administrators may act singly. If there is a dispute between the administrators, it shall be determined by the Website new Media Committee.
- D. Town of German Flatts social media sites shall clearly state that the Town of German Flatts complies with its Social Media Policy.

- E. Town of German Flatts social media sites shall link back to the Town of German Flatts's official website for forms, documents, online services and other information relevant to the business of the Town of German Flatts.
- F. The Town of German Flatts shall use social media sites as consistently as possible and in conjunction with other established Town of German Flatts communication tools.
- G. The Town of German Flatts reserves the right to terminate any Town of German Flatts social media site at any time without notice.
- H. Town of German Flatts social media sites shall comply with use rules and regulations required by the site provider, including privacy policies.
- I. The Town of German Flatts's Social Media Policy shall be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink.
- J. Any content maintained on a Town of German Flatts social media site that is related to Town of German Flatts business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be considered a public record and subject to public disclosure.
- K. All persons representing the Town of German Flatts on Town of German Flatts social media sites shall conduct themselves at all times as professional representatives of the Town of German Flatts and in a manner consistent with all Town of German Flatts policies.
- L. All Town of German Flatts social media sites shall use authorized Town of German Flatts contact information for account setup, monitoring and access.
- M. Town of German Flatts social media sites may contain content including, but not limited to, advertisements or hyperlinks over which the Town of German Flatts has no control. The Town of German Flatts does not endorse any hyperlink or advertisement placed on Town of German Flatts social media sites by the social media site's owners, vendors, or partners.
- N. The Town of German Flatts reserves the right to change, modify, or amend all or part of this policy at any time.

§12. Content guidelines:

- A. The content of Town of German Flatts social media sites shall only pertain to Town of German Flatts-sponsored or Town of German Flatts-endorsed programs, services, and events. Content includes, but is not limited to, information, photographs, videos, and hyperlinks.
- B. The Town of German Flatts owns any content posted by the Town of German Flatts,

including photographs and videos.

- C. The department designee will be authorized to post content for approval to the administrators.
- D. Any employee authorized to submit items to the administrators for posting on any of the Town of German Flatts's social media sites shall review, be familiar with, and comply with the social media site's use policies and terms and conditions.
- E. Any employee authorized to submit items to the administrators for posting on any of the Town of German Flatts's social media sites shall not express his or her own personal views or concerns through such postings. Instead, postings on any of the Town of German Flatts's social media sites shall only set forth facts (e.g., history of subject matter to provide access: providing relevant factual data).
- F. Postings must contain information that is freely available to the public and not be confidential as defined by any Town of German Flatts policy or state or federal law.
- G. Postings may not contain any personal information, except for the names of employees whose job duties include being available for contact by the public.
- H. The Town of German Flatts reserves the right to implement or remove any functionality of its social media site, when deemed appropriate by the administrators. This includes, but is not limited to, information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communication that is posted on a Town of German Flatts social media site.
- I. Except as expressly provided in this policy, accessing any social media site shall comply with all applicable Town of German Flatts policies pertaining to communications and the use of the internet by employees, including e-mail content.

I have read and fully agree to comply with the Town of German Flatts Social Media Policy.

Signature: _____

Date: _____