



Lake County Forest Preserves

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DATE: August 3, 2026

TO: Sara Knizhnik, Chair
Operations Committee

Gina Roberts, Chair
Finance Committee

FROM: Rebekah Snyder
Director of Community Engagement & Partnerships

Agenda Item # 11.6

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend Approval of an Ordinance Adopting a Social Media Policy.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION SUPPORTED: Communication, Education, and Outreach

FINANCIAL DATA: There is no financial impact.

BACKGROUND: The District uses multiple social media platforms to provide information, promote programs and events, and engage in direct dialogue with the public. The proposed social media policy will guide staff use and management of District-managed social media accounts, outline content-neutral limitations on public commentary and engagement with District-managed pages, and help ensure compliance with applicable law.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Executive Director, Chief Operations Officer, Finance Director, Director of Administration, Deputy Director of Human Resources and Risk, Manager of Board Operations and Corporate Counsel.

COUNTY OF LAKE)

AUGUST 12, 2026

MADAM PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

Your OPERATIONS COMMITTEE and FINANCE COMMITTEE present herewith “An Ordinance Adopting a Social Media Policy” and request its adoption.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE:

☒ Voice Vote Majority Ayes; Nays: 0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

☒ Voice Vote Majority Ayes; Nays: 0

**LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING A SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

WHEREAS, the Lake County Forest Preserve District (the “District”) is a body corporate and politic organized and existing under the Downstate Forest Preserve District Act, 70 ILCS 805/1 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of the District (the “Board”) desires to establish clear, structured guidelines regarding the creation, use, and management of social media accounts on behalf of the District, including certain content-neutral limitations on public comments on and engagement with District-managed social media pages and accounts; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds and determines that it is in the best interests of the District to establish a Social Media Policy in the form attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit A (“Social Media Policy”);

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of the Lake County Forest Preserve District:

Section 1. Recitals. The recitals set forth above are incorporated herein and made a part of this Ordinance.

Section 2. Approval of Social Media Policy. The Board of Commissioners hereby approves and adopts the Social Media Policy. The District’s Executive Director and Director of Community Engagement and Partnerships (or their designees) are hereby authorized to implement and enforce the Social Media Policy and publish it on the District’s official website.

Section 3. Authority to Approve Procedures. The Executive Director of the District or their designee is hereby authorized to establish, approve, and revise from time-to-time administrative procedures to implement the Social Media Policy.

Section 4. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect immediately upon its passage and approval as provided by law.

PASSED this ____ day of _____, 2026

AYES:

NAYS:

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2026

Jessica Vealitzek, President
Lake County Forest Preserve District

ATTEST:

Julie Gragnani, Secretary
Lake County Forest Preserve District

Exhibit No. _____

Lake County Forest Preserve District Social Media Policy

I. POLICY STATEMENT:

Social media is a rapidly evolving means of communication and engagement. These platforms allow the Lake County Forest Preserve District (the “District”) to communicate directly with the communities it serves, exchanging news and information in real-time. Through social media, people and groups can create, organize, edit, discuss and share content. It is vital that the District connects with people in the same ways our communities communicate. By engaging on the same social media platforms as Lake County constituents, the District can gather feedback, promote its programs and services, engage in conversations and help shape the public perception of District activities, policies and priorities.

II. PURPOSE:

For the District to continue to provide accurate, timely information to residents, visitors, partners and other stakeholders, it is imperative that social media be integrated into the District’s overarching communications strategy. The District’s website, LCFPD.org, will remain the District’s primary means of digital communication. District-sponsored social media accounts will complement and enhance the District’s online presence.

This policy establishes guidelines for the creation, oversight, maintenance and documentation of social media accounts used by the District. It will be updated periodically to reflect current conditions and best practices.

III. AFFECTED AREAS:

The standards outlined in this policy apply to use and management of social media accounts that are operated by or on behalf of the District. These standards also apply to user-generated content submitted by the public to District-sponsored social media accounts.

IV. DEFINITIONS:

Authorized Agent: Refers to the Director and any other District employee or contractor authorized by the Director to post social media content on the District’s behalf.

Content: Refers to any posts, comments, tags, reactions, writings, material, documents, photographs, graphics, videos, links or other information that is created, posted, distributed or transmitted on social media.

Director: Refers to the District’s Director of Community Engagement & Partnerships.

Social Media: Refers to digital platforms, accounts, and tools used by or on behalf of the District to engage with residents and other stakeholders, share timely information, gather public feedback and share District-generated content. (*Ex. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, YouTube, etc.*). “Social media” does not refer to the District’s website, LCFPD.org, and pages within that domain.

User-Generated Content (UGC): Content created or shared on social media by anyone other than a District Authorized Agent, including third parties who post content on or otherwise engage or interact with the District’s social media.

V. PROCEDURE/PROCESS:

1. **Approved Platforms:** Over time, the list of platforms appropriate for official District engagement may change due to shifts in audience, accessibility and features, and/or a platform's popularity and usage. The Director or their designee may approve a new or additional platform for official District business or may prohibit or discontinue use of an existing platform for official District business.
2. **Approved Authorized Agents:** The Director or their designee will determine which District staff positions or contractors are deemed to be the District's Authorized Agents with the authority to post content and monitor and manage District social media accounts. No one other than Director-designated Authorized Agents may post on the District's social media sites unless approved by the Director or their designee.
3. **Approved Social Media Accounts:** The creation and discontinuation of District social media accounts must be approved by the Director or their designee. The Communications & Design Division will retain password and login information for all District-sponsored social media accounts, and will do so in a confidential manner compliant with the District's policies.

Discontinuation of a social media account must be in compliance with applicable county, state, and federal record retention laws and related policies.

4. **Monitoring Social Media Accounts:** Authorized Agents who administer District social media accounts will periodically monitor accounts to respond to comments and determine whether any User-Generated Content placed on the platforms violates this policy.

Authorized Agents are responsible for the oversight and management of the District's social media accounts to ensure accurate and timely information and compliance with this policy. However, continuous 24/7 monitoring is not feasible. Authorized Agents will review and respond to activity during regular business hours and as necessary to address urgent issues. Nothing in this policy obligates the District or its Authorized Agents to respond to any User-Generated Content.

5. **Non-Public Forum / Limited Public Forum:** The District's social media accounts are non-public forums, which are used exclusively by or on behalf of the District to post and share the District's own content as determined by the District and its Authorized Agents in accordance with this policy. However, if and to the extent the District elects to enable or configure any of its social media pages or platforms to allow for posting of User-Generated Content, then such pages or platforms shall be limited public forums for the purpose of discussing limited topics in accordance with this policy, as further set forth in the Content Standards below.

VI. CONTENT STANDARDS

As a government entity, the District is committed to upholding the First Amendment rights of individuals. The District will moderate content in accordance with this policy and First Amendment standards.

District employees participating in comment threads or discussions on District-sponsored social media accounts must do so in accordance with this policy and Personnel Policy and Procedure 8.12- Online Social Media Policy. Employees shall not be authorized spokespersons for the District, or be deemed to speak on behalf of the District, on social media unless they are designated and acting as Authorized Agents.

1. **Standards for Authorized Agents and District Employees:**

These standards are designed for Authorized Agents working to disseminate content via District-sponsored social media platforms. Authorized Agents shall post and manage content on District social media in accordance with this policy, including the content standards set forth below. These standards may need to be updated as social media platforms change features and policies.

- Authorized Agents are prohibited from posting information or comments on District-sponsored accounts that are false, disparaging or libelous, confidential, proprietary or could be damaging to the District's reputation.
- While using District social media accounts, Authorized Agents must comply with all District policies.
- To help prevent errors, official communications must be reviewed by the Director or their designee before being posted to social media accounts. If a factual error is made, it should be corrected and publicly acknowledged as soon as possible.
- Authorized Agents are to refer to the District's Brand Standards and Guidelines to ensure a consistent image and branding on social media accounts. Unauthorized use of District trademarks or logos is prohibited.

The District welcomes community engagement with its social media consistent with this policy. User-Generated Content posted on District social media accounts or pages may be public records that are subject to retention and public disclosure as determined by the District consistent with applicable laws.

District social media will be screened and moderated in accordance with this policy.

2. **Limited Public Forum – Purposes**

As set forth in Section V.5, any District social media that allows for posting of User-Generated Content is a limited public forum only for purposes of discussing the following limited topics:

- District properties, programs, activities, services, and events.
- Topics with a broad community interest that are germane to the business or mission of the District.
- Information regarding emergency situations and emergency responses affecting the District.

3. **Prohibited Content**

The following content is prohibited on all District social media accounts and pages, and may be hidden or removed by the District and its Authorized Agents:

- Pornographic, sexual, obscene or explicit comments.
- Harassing, discriminatory, violent or threatening language.
- Private or personal information published without consent.
- Information that violates an applicable law, encourages or promotes illegal activity, or is defamatory or libelous.
- Commercial promotions, spam, malware or viruses.
- Content that is not topically related to the "Limited Public Forum - Permitted Topics" identified in this policy.
- Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest (including intellectual property rights) of any other party.
- Comments in support of or opposition to political candidates, campaigns, ballot measures or referenda.
- Comments attacking or denigrating any person or group on the basis of race; color; sex; age; religion; disability; national origin; ancestry; sexual orientation; gender identity; marital status; military status; order of protection status; pregnancy; unfavorable military discharge or membership in any group included in the District's Equal Employment Opportunity and Harassment Policies.

The District reserves the right to remove any content that violates this policy without prior notice. Content also may be removed due to its age, volume, or size as required for the efficient management of the account or page in question. However, User-Generated Content that conforms to this policy will not be removed by the District solely on the basis of the viewpoint expressed by the user. All actions taken will be documented and retained in accordance with the District's records retention policies.

Blocking Users: Authorized Agents will not block or hide individuals from interacting with District-sponsored social media accounts.

Disclaimer: User-Generated Content does not reflect the opinions or positions of the Lake County Forest Preserve District.

Privacy: Users should be aware that User-Generated Content on the District's social media is public and may be viewed by anyone. Users are discouraged from sharing their own personal or sensitive information. The District is not responsible for the privacy or security of information posted by users.

Records Retention: Content posted on the District's social media platforms, including User-Generated Content, comments and messages, may be subject to public records laws and retained by the District accordingly. The District will manage these records in compliance with applicable records retention schedules and policies.

Date Approved: _____