



TOWN OF BLACK DIAMOND

POLICY MANUAL

POLICY: 12-63	DATE APPROVED: April 21, 2010
EFFECTIVE DATE: April 21, 2010	AUTHORITY: Resolution 2010-138
POLICY TITLE:	Public Communications Policy
POLICY PURPOSE:	The purpose of this policy is to ensure efficient, effective, timely and comprehensive communication to the residents of the Town of Black Diamond.
POLICY STATEMENT:	A variety of methods, means and media will be used to communicate and provide information to the residents of Black Diamond.

GENERAL:

1. The staff and Council for the Town of Black Diamond will provide the public with information about policies, programs, services and initiatives that are in the control of the Town and readily available through the Town Office and the Town’s website.
2. The Town of Black Diamond will facilitate or hire consultants to administer consultation and citizen engagement processes at the request of Council and/or Administration and in accordance with the Municipal Government Act.
3. When communication is in response to an emergency situation, communication methods will be in accordance with the Town of Black Diamond’s Municipal Emergency Plan.
4. The Town’s website will be reviewed and updated as frequently as possible taking into consideration operational needs, resource allocation and in consultation with the public to ensure that the most requested and pertinent information is available via the website for 24-hour access by the public.
5. Other means, methods and media in addition to the website that will be used to communicate with the public will include but not be limited to: Community Entrance Signs; inserts to Tax or Utility bills; articles, press releases or interview requests for information via the media; the Community Channel (Cable 2); open houses; and electronic communications as applicable and as technology evolves. The method of communication will be determined by the type of information to be disseminated and the intended audience.



6. While transparency and accountability is paramount, the Town of Black Diamond must respect the authority and responsibility of Council, whose members are entitled to learn about planned legislative or town initiatives before information about them is released to the public.

SPECIFIC PROCEDURES:

A. Council Meeting Agenda Packages

1. Administration will prepare the Council Meeting Agenda in accordance with the Municipal Government Act (MGA) and the Town of Black Diamond's Procedural Bylaw.
2. The Public Agenda Package will include all items contained within the Council Agenda Package excluding any staff reports to Council that are marked "confidential", either in whole or in part. Administration will also sever any attachments, either in whole or in part, including but not limited to correspondence, as it determines necessary, and/or as required by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection (FOIPP) Act, the MGA, or any other legislation as applicable.

Any written submission to Council, not outlined herein, may be considered to be a publicly releasable document, and as such may be attached, either in whole or in part, to both the Council Agenda Package and the Public Agenda Package.

3. The Public Agenda Package will be posted on the Town of Black Diamond's website during regular office hours on the Monday preceding the Council meeting. The Council Meeting Agenda will be posted on the front door of the Town Office on the Friday immediately preceding the Council meeting.
4. The Public Agenda Package will also be available to the Public for viewing at the Town Office during regular office hours on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday immediately preceding the Council meeting. Regular photocopying charges will apply for any person wishing to obtain a copy of the Public Agenda Package, or any portion thereof, from the Town Office during the hours of availability.
5. The Council Meeting Agenda only, excluding attachments, will be available to the Press and Public at the Council meeting.
6. Addendums to the Council Meeting Agenda, containing any documents that would normally have been provided for public viewing, will be marked clearly as an Addendum, and posted to the Town of Black Diamond website by the close of business on the Friday immediately following the Council meeting.



7. All timelines for posting Public Agenda Packages to the website are subject to the following:
 - i. Website accessibility at the time of posting: The Town of Black Diamond is not responsible for meeting the timelines set out by this policy if the website cannot be accessed due to technical difficulties. Staff will take corrective action as required to post the Public Agenda Packages on the website as soon as it can be accessed.
 - ii. Office closures: The Town of Black Diamond Office closing for any holiday or emergency situation may defer the posting of the Public Agenda Packages to the next available regular business day.
 - iii. The Town of Black Diamond will make every effort to adhere to these timelines, but reserves the right to defer the posting of the Public Agenda Packages for any reason, to a future date if deemed necessary by the Town Manager or delegate.

B. Council Minutes

1. Once Council has passed a resolution to accept the Council Minutes, the ratified Minutes will be posted to the Town of Black Diamond's website in a timely fashion as soon as resources permit.
2. Council Minutes are available for viewing, by appointment, in the Town Office during regular office hours. Regular photocopying charges will apply, for any copies requested. Large amounts of photocopying will be subject to a delay in service, and/or additional fees at the discretion of the Town Manager or delegate.

C. Town of Black Diamond Website

1. Council Minutes, Public Agenda Packages, common bylaws and/or policies, events, notices and any other pertinent information will be maintained on the Town of Black Diamond website on a regular basis. Requests for information, or changes to current information may result in changes to the website as needs arise.
2. The Town of Black Diamond will make every attempt to provide as much general information as possible to its residents via the website, with the understanding that what is important to one resident may not be important to others. When requests to have specific information be posted on the website are received by staff, each request will be reviewed and evaluated, and if appropriate, it will be posted and maintained. If it is not considered appropriate to post the requested information on the website, but is still releasable to the requester, the information will be provided to the individual requesting it, whenever possible, by any other available method.