



Communications Policy

Revised December 2021

POLICY

This Communications Policy (the “Policy”) sets out the guidelines governing communication with the internal and external stakeholders of the Windom Community Council (“WCC”, the “Organization”).

DESCRIPTION

This Policy is part of WCC’s nonprofit Board By-Laws and Organization’s operations policies. It outlines the guidelines governing internal and external communications in WCC.

DEFINITIONS

For purpose of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

- a) “Authorized Persons” are (i) Executive Director, Board President/Chief Executive Officer; (ii) Board Secretary/Chief Communications Officer, (iii) other individuals specifically approved by the WCC Board Secretary for specific kinds of communications on behalf of the Organization. Authorized persons are also those whose communication with Staff members and external stakeholders fall within their approved job description.
- b) “Basic Organization Information” is any information about WCC, including its not-for-profit business, services, finances, strategic & fundraising plans, operations, Members and other not-for-profit business relationships, personnel, and financial and operating results.
- c) “Confidential Organization Information” is any Organization Information that has not been made publicly available by WCC, as well as information of third parties that the WCC is obligated to keep confidential.
- d) “External Communication” is the dissemination of information to external stakeholders.
- e) “External Stakeholders” refer to Regulators, Government, and other Authorities; WCC Shareholders; Members; Donors; Partners, other Contacts; Media; Service Providers; the general public, etc.
- f) “Internal Communication” is the dissemination of information to internal stakeholders.
- g) “Internal Stakeholders” refer to WCC Staff, Management and Board of Directors.
- h) “Press Media” are WCC’s media partners that focus on delivering news to the general public or a target public. These include print media (newspapers, news magazines), broadcast news (radio and television), and the Internet (online newspapers, news blogs, etc.).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to define and provide guidelines on the extent, quality, and output of communication with WCC external stakeholders and on the adherence to and quality of internal communications in line with WCC-approved Standards.

POLICY STATEMENT

WCC is committed to the dissemination of timely, accurate and quality information to its internal and external stakeholders. All internal and external communications should be aimed towards the achievement of WCC's vision and mission and should be in line with its approved Strategy. All communication should be in line with WCC-approved standards. Only Authorized Persons are permitted to undertake WCC's internal and external communications.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

WCC recognizes that active communication with different stakeholders and the general public is an integral part of its Bylaws and Organizational Plans (Strategic and Work). In order to reach its overall goals for communication, the following guiding principles should always be adhered to:

- a) Only Authorized Persons shall be permitted to have formal engagements with external stakeholders via media engagements and press releases.
- b) All information must be conveyed through the appropriate and approved communication channels to WCC's stakeholders in a timely manner. All requests for information by stakeholders shall be responded to by the relevant Authorized Person(s) without unnecessary delays. A turnaround time of three (3) working days shall apply to all requests; where the information sought may require more time to deliver, an acknowledgement of the request must be made within the stipulated time period.
- c) Authorized Person(s) shall proactively develop contacts with its target stakeholder groups and ensure timely, open, and constant communication.
- d) All communication must be clear, concise, and intentional.
- e) Regular feedback is encouraged from all WCC stakeholders and will be applied towards ensuring better service delivery.
- f) All WCC communication must be consistent in style and message to build stakeholder trust.
- g) Only Authorized Persons shall serve in an Administrative Role on the Organization's, email, website and Social Media platforms.

Guidelines for Internal Communication

WCC's internal communication is targeted at all its internal stakeholders, towards the achievement of its overall objectives. Furthermore, internal communication is aimed at strengthening the organizational culture and feeling of commitment among the internal stakeholders, thereby increasing active participation and team spirit.

Internal communication shall be handled by the Authorized Persons responsible for such correspondence, including Board of Director members on Board or Standing Committee business, staff members on WCC operations and programs/projects.

Communication between and amongst Staff and Board members must be professional at all times. Staff members are to be addressed by either their first names or by their initials in all written communication, except letters which must bear the full name of the Staff member. The use of titles, nicknames or any other names is strictly prohibited in written communication.

Guidelines for External Communication

The support and participation of WCC's external stakeholders are crucial to its long-term success and is therefore always desired. All communication to external stakeholders should be anchored on this premise and aimed at making the stakeholders feel involved and not alienated. External communication should also promote overall knowledge and awareness of WCC, its products, services etc., among the different external stakeholder categories.

All external communication must be approved first by the Executive Director and when needed by the Board Secretary/Chief Communications Officer. The Executive Director and Board Secretary shall approve all communication with government representatives and WCC's regulators, as well as confidential or sensitive information. Exceptions may exist in situations where such communication is part of the Executive Director's or Board's Committee's functions with its existing/potential members. Communication with external stakeholders will be informed back to the Executive Director immediately and Board Secretary copied when necessary.

All presentations/materials for external use must be reviewed by the Board Secretary prior to exposing these documents to the stakeholders to ensure brand compliance and accuracy of information related to the Organization. This includes presentations to external stakeholders at meetings, seminars, conferences, etc. and materials to be uploaded to the website.

WCC's relationship with the Press Media, particularly community beat reporters, is at the heart of its success. The media, which serves as the medium through which WCC reaches its external stakeholders, is accorded high priority in WCC. As such, communication with media is to be handled with the highest levels of sensitivity and professionalism and must always be handled by the Organization's Authorized Persons and interface with the media. Only Authorized Persons shall be permitted to grant interviews of any sort (print, TV, online) and be quoted with respect to WCC's external communications.

Guidelines for Social Media Communication

The use of the Organization's social media is for informational purposes only. The Organization assumes no responsibility or liability for content posted by the general public. Posted comments by non-staff and non-Board Members do not reflect the views of the Organization. The Organization is not responsible for the security of social media platforms and/or any applications outside the Organization's licensed website and other social media domains. Communications sent via the internet or through social media sites shall in no way be deemed to constitute legal notice to the Organization and/or any of its staff or Board of Directors where notice to the Organization is required by any law, rule, regulation, or contract. See table below for the Organization's official sources of information.

Moderating of Third-Party Social Media Posts & Content

The purpose of utilizing the Organization’s social media is to provide timely information to its stakeholders which include residents, businesses and visitors and is subject to monitoring. The Organization reviews posted content on a daily basis on Facebook, Twitter and Nexdoor.

The Organization maintains both Public or Open (“Windom Community”) and Private or Closed Group (“Windom Neighborhood”) Facebook Pages that are administered by its Executive Director and Board Secretary. For Board legal and liability safeguard, the Organization’s Closed Group Facebook Page “Windom Neighborhood” shall be publicly moderated exclusively by four members of the Organization’s Board of Directors, (Board Secretary and three additional Directors currently serving as Committee Chairpersons), and/or the Executive Director.

Moderating entails ensuring that Third-Party non-staff and non-Board Member posts and comments are not in violation of the Organization’s Bylaws, Operating Policies and Procedures including this Communications Policy. The Organization’s Facebook Closed Group moderating team will maintain and make public the Organization’s Social Media Community Posting Guidelines approved by the Board of Directors at any of its Monthly Board Meetings.

The Organization encourages users to make prudent use of the Organization’s social media and website platforms by posting information that benefits all Windom residents. Once information is posted, the Organization reserves the right to remove user-generated posts that violate the Organization’s Bylaws, Operating Policies and Procedures, including its’ Communications Policy.

Social Media posts and comment removal criteria includes, but is not limited to, content which:

- Is off-subject or out of context
- Contains obscene, lewd, offensive, profane, or sexually explicit content
- Contains confidential or sensitive personal information
- Contains threatening, harassing, hateful or discriminatory language
- Incites violence or illegal activities
- Contains information that reasonably could compromise individual or public safety
- Consists solely of commercial advertising
- Promotes or endorses political campaigns or candidates
- Infringes upon intellectual property, copyright, or trademark rights of others
- Includes spam or links to other sites that pose a cyber security threat to WCC
- Violates Federal, State or Local laws
- Reviews of any type of local businesses and/or companies
- Individual or business sales, fundraising or soliciting funds without Board approval
- Is requested for removal by subject of the post

Social Media Communication Channels Table 1

	SOURCE TYPE & PLATFORM	ELECTRONIC, WEB, SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION CHANNEL(S)
1.	Electronic Mail; Google Email (Gmail), Wix.com Email	windomcommunity@gmail.com windomcommunity@windommpls.org
2.	HTTP Website/Wix.com	www.windommpls.org
3.	Social Media Facebook Public	Windom Community: https://www.facebook.com/windommpls
4.	Social Media Facebook Private (Closed Group)	Windom Neighborhood: https://www.facebook.com/groups/Windom
5.	Social Media Twitter	Windom Community: https://twitter.com/WindomCommunity
6.	Social Media Nextdoor	Windom: https://nextdoor.com/profile/

Public Records Law and Social Media Communications

The Organization's social media sites are subject to applicable public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format related to the Organization's business, including communication posted by staff or Board members of the Organization and communication received from citizens, is a public record. The Organization's office is responsible for responding to public records requests, including social media content. Member of the public who use the Organization's social media and website platforms participate at their own risk, taking personal responsibility for comments, username and any information provided. Content of social media sites is an effective and accepted form of communication but should not be construed as private. The posting of comments on social media sites creates a transitory record. These types of records are not official records, however like electronic mail (correspondence), posts to social media sites may be regarded as the Organization's legal records and may be subject to retention requirements of the Local Government Records Committee. The Organization complies with City of Minneapolis Records Management laws regarding retention of social media content.

Disclosure of Confidential Information

WCC is committed to providing timely, accurate, and complete disclosure of its basic Organization information in an appropriate manner. Disclosure of confidential information is however strictly prohibited as detailed in the WCC Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement which is signed by all Board and Staff members upon assumption of duty. Violation of this Agreement may attract legal redress.

Public Statements of Personal Opinion

WCC Staff and Board members should refrain from making public statements of personal opinion regarding WCC, the Windom neighborhood or local community as a whole. Such public statements may include quotes given to media, contribution to blogs, published articles, etc. Any such public statements must be approved by the Executive Director and the Board Secretary or President before publication.

Violation of the Communications Policy

If the Authorized Persons or the Board of Directors of the Organization determine that a communications policy violation has occurred, the Board will take appropriate corrective action in proportion to the offense.

Corrective action may include, depending on the circumstances, reprimanding the Board member or staff with a warning, suspending the Board Member from Committee service or Contracted Work (if a staff) or terminating the Director of Board Service or the staff of his/her/their Contract or Employment Status (if an employee).

Stakeholder Communication Channels Table 2

	STAKEHOLDER	COMMUNICATION CHANNEL(S)
1.	Members/General Public	Seminars, bilateral contacts, website, letters, email correspondence, newsletter, media publications/interviews, corporate presentations, speeches, other publications, brochures, leaflets, and advertisement
2.	Donors/General Public	Publications, road shows website, media publications/interviews, press releases, investor presentations, other publications, brochures, leaflets, and advertisement
3.	Regulators, Government and Authorities	Community meetings, website, newsletter, media, market reports, publications, Annual Report), brochures, leaflets, and presentations
4.	Media	Press releases, interviews, speeches, workshops/seminars, website.
5.	Staff	Intranet, emails, debriefings and information sessions, staff meetings, website, letters
6.	Board of Directors	Email, letters, Board and Committee meetings
7.	Shareholders	Email, letters, General Meetings