City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS DATE: OCTOBER 24, 2024

FROM: HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: COMBATTING SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENTS THAT PROMOTE PREJUDICE.

INTOLERANCE, OR DISCRIMATION

ISSUE:

Discussion by the Human Relations Commission about ways by which the City can combat comments on City ran social media accounts that promote prejudice, intolerance, or discrimination.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Human Relations Commission discuss and recommend ways by which the city can combat comments on City ran social media accounts that promote prejudice, intolerance, or discrimination.

BACKGROUND:

In recent months, the City has received a number of negative and hateful comments on their social media accounts, which include Facebook and Instagram. Two posts that received particularly concerning comments were posts recognizing LGBTQ Pride Month and Disability Pride Month. The comments are often hateful or violent in nature and promote prejudice, intolerance, or discrimination. The comments are disheartening to many and undermine the City's commitment to inclusivity and respect for all community members.

DISCUSSION:

As outlined in the City's Administrative Manual, Policy Number 03.012.00: Guidelines for Social Media Usage, comments containing certain forms of content are prohibited, including those that promote discrimination, contain profane language, or relate to illegal activities. The Administrative Manual section reads:

"Any communications on/through the City's social media channels is public record and is disclosable under the California Public Records Act. The following guidelines shall be posted on each social platform, or link to a location where they can be found. City Social Media Site posts, articles, and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not

be allowed:

- i. Comments not topically related to the particular social medium article being commented upon;
- ii. Profane language or content;
- iii. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, military or veteran status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- iv. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- v. Solicitations of commerce;
- vi. Use of City resources, including Social Media sites and website, for campaign purposes;
- vii. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- viii. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
- J. These guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained, including the time, date, and identity of the poster when available. Social Media posts on official City Social Media Sites are considered public records and have written Social Media policies, Cal. Gov't. Code § 6252(e).
 - i. The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed a violation of this social media policy or any applicable law.
 - ii. Any communications on/through the City's social media is public record and is disclosable under the California Public Records Act."

City staff is restricted in deleting comments or blocking users by the guidelines set forth in the policy listed above, which limits immediate response options. The Commission is invited to discuss and provide input on approaches that could be implemented to combat negative comments on social media and work towards fostering a more supportive and inclusive online environment for the community.

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