



Meeting Date: January 24, 2024

Submitted By: Heather Kepran, Manager of Strategic Communications

Reviewed by: Tiffany Farrell, Director of Corporate Services

Report No: CPS-04-2024

Subject: Middlesex Centre Website and Social Media Overview, 2023

Recommendation:

THAT Report CPS-04-2024, re: Middlesex Centre Website and Social Media Overview, 2023 be received for information.

Purpose:

To provide Council with an overview of the use of the municipal website and engagement through municipal social media channels in 2023.

Background:

Virtual / online communications through the municipal website, social media channels, and e-newsletter are key elements of our communications with residents, businesses, and various stakeholders.

The attached infographic presents a quick overview of the municipality's online presence in 2023. Please note that in 2023, Google changed their analytics system, so some values are not calculated in the same way they were in the past.

- In 2023, the municipal website saw 125,025 visitors, who viewed over 585,000 pages on the site.
- The top viewed pages on the website, aside from the homepage, were:
 - Komoka Wellness Centre
 - Recreational Skating
 - Book a Facility
 - Building Permits
 - Waste & Recycling

- The council meeting, employment/careers, billing/payment, contact us (staff directory), news, and recreation programs pages were also popular.
- Engagement through social media – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube – continued to expand, with the number of followers on each platform increasing over the year. This year, the municipality also added Instagram to our social media platforms. Middlesex Centre shares information on municipal programs and services regularly, as well as relevant content from other agencies, levels of government, etc. Some of the most popular posts across all the platforms were related to fire and emergency services, municipal and community successes (PJ Marshall Award, fundraising efforts, local businesses / people), and service notifications such as road closures.
- The municipality’s YouTube channel continued to see growth both in posted content (new videos) and in terms of subscribers. All council meetings were live streamed in 2023. Depending on the topics being discussed, it is not unusual for council meetings to have 60 to 100 views.
- Subscribers to the monthly e-newsletter grew throughout 2023, with 2,008 subscribers at the end of the year. Staff encourage new subscribers by offering residents the opportunity to sign-up for the e-newsletter when changing billing, moving, attending an online meeting, etc., as well as advertising the e-newsletter on social media each month.

It should be noted that while a key component of our communications with the community, our online presence exists alongside with more traditional outreach, including media releases, a monthly “Middlesex Centre Municipal Minute” page in the Middlesex Banner newspaper, a monthly Middlesex Centre page in both the Ilderton Villager and the Komoka-Kilworth-Delaware Villager, inserts into tax and utility bills, and signage, to name a few.

Analysis:

The municipal website, social media channels, and e-newsletter continue to be effective tools for sharing information about municipal news, services, and facilities.

The website:

- provides a 24/7 “central hub” of information on municipal news, notices, services and facilities;
- allows residents and businesses to access services including billing changes, dog tags, fire inspection, and by-law enforcement; to report concerns about roads, parks and facilities; and to provide general feedback by-way of online forms that link directly to staff;

- serves as a launching pad for residents, businesses and various stakeholders looking to access third party sites such as Cloudpermit (building permits) and Escribe (council meeting management); and
- acts as a repository for forms, reports, and documents of interest to residents and businesses.

Social Media:

- provides a means for the municipality to instantly share news and updates with residents, businesses, and various stakeholders; and
- supports increased access to open and transparent government decision-making, such as live streaming of council meetings and online public engagement sessions; and
- provides insights into the sentiment of the community on topical issues.

E-Newsletter:

- provides a monthly digest-style updates to those that do not necessarily engage on social media.

Financial Implications:

None. Costs associated with the website and social media outreach are included in the annual budget process.

Strategic Plan:

This matter aligns with following strategic priorities:

- Responsive Municipal Government

Use of the website and social media respond directly to Objective 5.1 – Enhance Customer Service by expanding our digital services. Further, use of the website and social media respond to Objective 5.3 – Foster a culture of innovation, continuous improvement, and cost-effective services by sharing information and gathering input.

Attachments:

Infographic, Middlesex Centre Online 2023