

BROOKHAVEN

Social media limits proposed

Plan would outline what employees can say, and when

BY DEON J. HAMPTON
deon.hampton@newsday.com

Brookhaven Town's proposed social media policy would prohibit employees from posting town business on their personal accounts.

Employees would also be barred from posting on their Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other accounts during work hours except during lunch or other breaks, under a draft policy to be discussed by the town board at its Thursday meeting.

"We just don't want you to mix the town and personal ac-

tivity," Brookhaven Town Attorney Annette Eaderesto said in an interview. "Anything work-related can't be used on their personal account."

One exception would allow employees to repost public information or news releases issued by town officials through its Facebook or Twitter accounts.

Representatives of the town employees' union did not respond to requests for comment.

The Brookhaven Town Board tabled a vote on its social media resolution at its July 12 meeting after a civic leader raised concerns about the timing.

A copy of the social media policy wasn't posted on the town's website 24 hours in advance, as required by the New York State Open Meeting Law, said Jim Gleason, a member of

the East Moriches Property Owners Association.

"It could be a perfect policy but I have no idea because I haven't seen it," he said of the social media restrictions.

Brookhaven Councilwoman Valerie Cartright, who requested that the agenda item be tabled, said it wouldn't have been fair to vote on the policy because residents hadn't had a chance to look at it.

"It didn't have anything to do with merit," she said. "The policy wasn't viewable."

Brookhaven officials said their drafted policy combined elements of policies instituted by other municipalities.

Municipal social media policies for employees vary across Long Island, from restrictions on workday use to having no regulations.

The East Hampton Town Board recently adopted formal policies regulating employee social media use and protecting whistleblowers. The regulation prohibits employees from posting online during work hours unless it relates to town business or is authorized by a department head.

Babylon Town in 2017 formalized policies barring employees from disclosing town matters on social media. The municipality prohibits employees from disclosing government-related business on social media platforms during work or personal hours unless explicitly authorized.

The policy includes disciplinary action against employees who violate the rules, "including termination from work duties."

Southampton Town has no employee social media policy. Neither does North Hempstead, but the town's employee manual states that "all town information should be treated as confidential and cannot be shared with anyone except authorized recipients."

Huntington does not "restrict what employees can say from their personal social media accounts," spokeswoman Lauren Lembo said in an email.

Brookhaven officials said the idea to develop a policy came from town officials attending the annual New York State Association of Towns meeting in January in Manhattan.

"It was a big topic and a lecture," Eaderesto said of developing social media use policies. "Every town should have one of these."

OYSTER BAY

Renovations unveiled at Beekman Beach

BY TED PHILLIPS
ted.phillips@newsday.com

Enjoying the view from Oyster Bay's Beekman Beach just got a little more comfortable, thanks to a \$49,500 privately funded makeover unveiled Sunday.

The Oyster Bay Lions Club sold personalized bricks and benches to raise the funds to renovate an overlook at the beach with new stonework, railing and a flagpole. The renovation rebuilt an older concrete overlook that had cracked and needed to be reinforced, said Ron Paradiso, chairman of the Lions Club committee that spearheaded the project.

"People who used this beach growing up can now come back and feel proud to be here again," Paradiso said Sunday.

The Oyster Bay Town Board approved the proposed project by the organization in 2017 and in May it approved the donation, valued at \$49,500, according to a town board resolution. Construction on the 20-by-55-foot overlook and walkway began in June and took about three weeks to complete, Paradiso said.

To pay for the renovations,



Improvements for Beekman Beach in Oyster Bay, including a walkway and metal benches, were spearheaded by the Lions Club.

the Lions Club sold about 150 bricks with the names of people, businesses and organizations carved into them, for which donors paid \$150 to \$250, depending on the size. Six metal benches were installed at the overlook, five of which

were paid for through \$3,500 sponsorships, Paradiso said.

The parking lot was in poor condition after serving for years as the staging ground for Nassau County's reconstruction of West Shore Road.

"At the end of the road of con-

struction is a new beginning," Town Supervisor Joseph Saladino said at the opening Sunday. "We got that [staging area] cleared out and wanted to make sure this facility had everything needed to encompass what is a fabulous recreational area."

Last week the town repaved the parking lot that serves the beach. The parking lot is open only to town residents and will have approximately 70 spaces when it is striped this week, John Bishop, town deputy highway commissioner, said.