

# **THE TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE**

## **Online Website Policy and Disclaimer**

### **Purpose Statement**

The Town of Southbridge's website exists to:

1. Make public information more readily available thereby encouraging greater public understanding of Town government and participation in the Town's governance.
2. Provide access to forms of electronic communication and e-commerce functions in order to enhance the traditional walk-in experience to our Town departments.
3. Inform residents and visitors about government services and local attractions.
4. Use emerging technology, as it matures, to enhance Town services.

### **Policy**

1. Confidentiality

Any information received through this website is subject to the Public Records Law, M.G.L. Chapter 66, §10, and, as such, the Town of Southbridge cannot ensure the absolute confidentiality of that information. Information received by the Town through the website may be made available to members of the public under the law as part of a public records request. However, no information received through this website will be disclosed except as required by law, regulation, or court order.

Absent such required disclosure, any information received through this website will only be provided to those Town employees or officials whose knowledge of that information is necessary in the course of fulfilling their official responsibilities and duties. They will only use the information to answer your questions, respond to any requests for assistance, and fulfill the Town's legal obligations. Additionally, no information received through this website will be sold or licensed.

2. General Disclaimer

The information and materials contained on this website have been compiled from a variety of sources, are subject to change without notice, may not be current and up-to-date, and should not be considered official public records. Do not rely on said information and materials without first verifying its accuracy with the appropriate Town department, commission, board, committee or agency. The Town of Southbridge makes no warranties or representations whatsoever with respect to contract, quality, accuracy or completeness of any information or materials contained on either this website or any external website linked to this website. Additionally, the Town of Southbridge disavows any legal liability for the content, quality, accuracy or completeness of said information and materials.

Communications to the Town of Southbridge via this website shall not be deemed to constitute legal or official notice to the Town of Southbridge, its departments, commissions, boards, committees, agencies, officers, employees, representatives or agents for any purposes whatsoever, including with respect to any existing, pending or future claim or cause of action against the Town of Southbridge or any of its departments, commissions, boards, committees, agencies, officers, employees, representatives or agents where such notice is required by federal, state or local law.

Any modification of the contents of this website without the express permission of the Town of Southbridge is strictly prohibited. Violations of this policy will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

### 3. Links

As discussed in the General Disclaimer, the Town of Southbridge is not responsible for, nor does it endorse, the information and materials contained on any external website linked to this website. Nor is it responsible for, and nor does it endorse, the individuals or organizations in charge of any such external websites. The Town of Southbridge reserves the right to deny any and all requests for the placement of links on its website. The following criteria will be used to decide whether to grant requests for Town website links.

The Town of Southbridge website may provide links to websites for:

- Local, state and federal government institutions;
- Local educational institutions;
- Organizations with some relationship to the Town (e.g. organizations contracting with the Town, organizations sponsoring Town activities or programs, and organizations participating in Town activities or programs);
- Organizations providing significant information about art, cultural or sporting activities in the Town's area;
- Businesses located within the Town of Southbridge;
- Organizations providing significant information about employment opportunities in the Town's area;
- Organizations providing significant information about tourist attractions in the Town's area; and
- Historical significance in Town
- Non-profit organizations providing social services to the Town's residents without regard to race, gender or religion.
- Purely informational sites which do not advocate any particular political party, initiative, message or candidate.

The Town of Southbridge website will not provide links to websites for:

- Political candidates;
- Individual or personal homepages;
- For-profit organizations, unless they fit any of the criteria stated above;
- Organizations or individuals advocating a position on a local, state or federal issue; and
- Organizations or individuals that may be considered discriminatory on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or ethnicity
- Soliciting contributions, votes or volunteers for any political purposes
- Promoting or conducting any advocacy which supports or opposes any candidate, party or ballot question
- Websites that use profanity, obscenities
- No blogs (blogs can be viewed by other sites)

The Town of Southbridge's Town Council reserves the right to remove, at any time and without notice, any link(s) deemed outdated, obscene, inappropriate or not useful.