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The City of Amesbury IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND AND SIXTEEN

SPONSORED BY: Councilor STEVEN J. STANGANELLI BILL 2016-

An Ordinance to update government websites and social media with contact information of city departments, officials or boards to promote ease of use and more effective communication

Summary: To update the City's websites so that citizen and business users will have an easier way to find contact information.

Be it Ordained by the City Council of the City of Amesbury assembled and by the authority of the same, as follows:

That internet websites and social media shall be updated and maintained to prominently display contact information including phone, email and social media addresses or hyperlinks as applicable on any main landing pages, department pages and 'Contact Us' sections of City-maintained websites or internet resources;

That a link to the available 'Contacts Directory' be prominently featured on the main page of the City's website;

and

That information shall be updated as needed and hyperlinks tested at least annually.

Supporting Information

At present the City maintains a primary website at www.amesburyma.gov along with sections and links to the various departments and boards. But there is no consistency between desktop and mobile-optimized versions of the websites.

Effective communication begins with ease of navigation for users. Generally accepted best practices in business are to minimize the number of clicks for website users. At present, it may take a user several clicks to find the appropriate link to a department from the desktop version of the website. This in turn can lead to frustration on the part of citizens or even businesses looking to do business in the City.

For instance, visitors to the main desktop version website's landing page will not find any phone or email contact information readily accessible. While there is a 'Contact Us' button in the margin, it brings visitors to an email form only. The mobile-optimized version is better with a 'Contact Us' section that leads to a list of names or departments with email hyperlinks.

In another example, while the footer of the main page notes City Hall hours and the address, there is no phone number for the Clerk's office which typically acts as a clearinghouse of sorts for questions.

A better option is to incorporate a more prominent 'Contact Us' button and links from it as well as from the footer of the page to the Contact Directory already featured on the mobile-optimized site.

<http://www.amesburyma.gov/contacts-directory>