

Electoral Area Advocacy & Awareness: Communications and Media for EA Directors

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Session Purpose

- ▶ Share experiences and practices across BC
- ▶ Clarify how policies function in real-world advocacy
- ▶ Explore best practices balancing consistency & advocacy
- ▶ Strengthen shared understanding and strategy between Directors & staff

Provincial Scan - Provisional Dataset

- ▶ Policies reviewed from multiple Regional Districts
- ▶ Communications & Media Policies
- ▶ Social Media Policies
- ▶ Public Engagement / Advocacy Strategies
- ▶ Codes of Conduct

- ▶ Note: Multiple documents from same RD treated as one governance model

Why This Matters for EA Directors

- ▶ EA Directors are frontline representatives
- ▶ Media expectations are immediate and local
- ▶ Rural and EA realities differ from municipalities
- ▶ Emergencies demand trusted, rapid voices
- ▶ EA Directors are tasked with being the voice and advocate of residents in their electoral areas

Policy Types Serve Different Functions

- ▶ Communications & Media Policies:
 - ▶ Spokesperson authority
 - ▶ Media relations
 - ▶ Approval/notification
- ▶ Social Media Policies:
 - ▶ Conduct & tone
 - ▶ Platform governance
 - ▶ Corporate vs personal voice
- ▶ Public Engagement Policies:
 - ▶ Dialogue & participation
 - ▶ Transparency & trust

Cross-Policy Comparison Matrix

- ▶ Communications & Media:
 - ▶ Chair-centric most common
 - ▶ EA authority explicit in few regions
- ▶ Social Media:
 - ▶ Centralized corporate accounts
 - ▶ Directors mostly personal voice /accounts
- ▶ Engagement:
 - ▶ Supports advocacy but rarely governs media engagement

Corporate Communications Chart

GOALS	CHARACTERISTICS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Control the message• Protect the organization	<p>Focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correct process• Accuracy• Neutrality• Potential liability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slow to respond• Neutral tone can lose the human element• Corporate RD has many competing communication s priorities• Policy interpretation vs practice
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EA Director Authority - Governance Models

- ▶ Highly Centralized / Approval-Based
- ▶ Chair-Centric with Delegation
- ▶ Balanced / Shared Authority
- ▶ Distributed / EA-Empowered ★
- ▶ Trust-Based / Practice Driven ★

Visual Comparison - Where Policies Land

- ▶ Centralized → Chair-Centric → Balanced → Distributed → Trust-Based
- ▶ EA Director autonomy increases moving right
- ▶ Organizational control increases moving left

Provisional Observations (Across Dataset)

- ▶ Chair as primary spokesperson = dominant pattern
- ▶ EA Directors as primary spokespersons = rare
- ▶ Social media more restrictive than media policy
- ▶ Engagement policies supportive but indirect
- ▶ Practice sometimes more permissive than policy

Real-World Advocacy Implications

Policies influence:

- ▶ Speed of response
- ▶ Ability to speak locally
- ▶ Media relationships
- ▶ Public trust
- ▶ Crisis communications
- ▶ Effective advocacy for residents with timely media access

Best Practices Emerging

- ▶ Clear EA spokesperson recognition where appropriate
- ▶ Notification vs rigid approval
- ▶ Director media training/support
- ▶ Emergency flexibility
- ▶ Clear personal and ED Area vs corporate voice

Directors & Staff - Shared Space

- ▶ Staff protect organizational consistency
- ▶ Directors represent community perspectives
- ▶ Policies define interaction boundaries
- ▶ Goal: clarity, trust, alignment

In a Nutshell

- ▶ Fixed communication can be restrictive
- ▶ EA Directors are the local voice - own it!
- ▶ Speak to EA matters; pass corporate issues to the Chair or CAO
- ▶ Be clear which hat you're wearing, protects you and the corporation
- ▶ Balance corporate consistency with community responsiveness

You are your community's strongest voice.

Speak clearly, speak respectfully and stand firm in that role.

Thoughts to consider

- ▶ Does your RD clearly separate media, social media & engagement?
- ▶ Is EA authority explicit, delegated, implied, or unrestricted?
- ▶ Where is more clarity needed?
- ▶ What best practices should be shared provincially?

Thank You

Thank you to our panelists and to everyone for the thoughtful discussion. Sharing experiences across regions helps us all better understand how we can support effective communication and advocacy for the communities we represent.