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MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Warren Hutmacher, City Manager
Date: January 23, 2012
Subject: **Adding Links for Community Groups to the City's Website**

BACKGROUND

As discussed at the November 2011 Work Session, the Council desires to be supportive and inclusive of community groups by placing links on the City's website. At the January Work Session, staff presented research detailing the presence of community groups on the websites of surrounding municipalities as well as suggested draft guidelines, which could be used to guide decisions about the addition of groups and organizations to the City's website.

DISCUSSION

As requested, staff has used the guidelines discussed by Council to draft a policy for consideration. The purpose of the attached Website Link Policy is to outline the parameters and process to be utilized in decisions regarding the inclusion of community groups on the City's website.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adopting the Website Link Policy and placing new links on the existing Residents Page of the City's website under "Useful Information" - http://www.dunwoodyga.gov/Residents/useful_information.aspx.

WEBSITE LINK POLICY

I. **Background**

The City of Dunwoody's website serves as an electronic resource for citizens. It provides information including City events, services, initiatives, meetings, policies, ordinances, and departments. The website is also designed for use by individuals or businesses located outside of Dunwoody, including those who may be considering visiting or moving to Dunwoody. To better serve our residents, visitors, and potential residents, and to be supportive and inclusive of our community groups the City of Dunwoody provides links to external websites.

II. **Purpose**

This policy has been designed in order to outline the parameters and process to be utilized in decisions regarding the inclusion of external links for community groups on the City's website.

III. **Definitions**

City website means the website for the City of Dunwoody linked to www.dunwoodyga.gov/home.aspx.

Community group means an organization that is formed as a nonprofit organization; that is physically based within the municipal boundaries of the City of Dunwoody; and who either provides services to members of the Dunwoody community or whose mission is of specific interest to Dunwoody citizens, businesses, and/or visitors.

Homeowners Association means an organization that purports to represent the interests of a group of homeowners to preserve, protect, and enhance their quality of life.

Place of Worship means an organized place of worship, to include but not limited to churches, synagogues, and temples, whose physical address is within the City of Dunwoody; whose operation as a place of worship is enabled through zoning; and which conducts regular worship services.

School /Institute of Higher Education means any DeKalb County School or institute of higher education recognized by the University System of Georgia (or of a not for profit model) whose physical address is within the City of Dunwoody.

Splash page means the webpage linked to www.dunwoodyga.gov/splash.aspx.

Swim / Tennis Organization means an organization with a swim and/or tennis facility whose physical address is within the City of Dunwoody, is not part of a

private residence or designed for personal use of an individual family, is not created solely as a profit making venture, and that serves Dunwoody residents.

IV. Scope

The scope of this Website Link Policy applies to all current and future requests for inclusion on the City's website or splash page from organizations meeting the definition of community group, homeowners association, place of work, school/institute of higher education, and/or swim/tennis organization as defined above.

V. Process for Addition of Community Group

The City shall utilize the following process for approving and adding community groups to the City's website:

1. Application

The chief executive officer, or his or her designee, of any community group, homeowners association, place of worship, school/institute of higher education, or swim/tennis organization may make application to the City for inclusion on the City's website on a form prescribed by the City.

2. Application Review

- a. Upon the receipt of a complete application for inclusion on the City's website, the City Manager, or his or her designee, shall review the application to verify the organization is located in the City of Dunwoody and that the organization either provides services to the Dunwoody community or promotes a mission specific to Dunwoody citizens, businesses, and/or visitors.
- b. Prior to including an organization on the City's website, the City Manager may seek to determine if the website of the organization includes material or information that violates Georgia's obscenity laws or would be prohibited from being linked to a federal or state government website. If the organization's website does contain such material or information, the application shall be denied and any existing links for the organization on the City's website shall be removed. This condition shall apply to all organizations granted website links throughout the duration of their inclusion on the City's website.

3. Application Approval or Denial

- a. The City's approval or denial of an application for inclusion of a link on the City's website shall be provided to the applicant in writing within

10 days of the receipt of a complete application. Failure by the City to respond within 10 days does not automatically signify the City's approval of the application.

- b. Inclusion of a link on the City's website is not necessarily an endorsement of or a recommendation for the group or organization. The City is not responsible for materials, content as well as additional links, which can be found on these sites.

4. Adding Links

- a. If approved, the City will add a link for the organization to the City's website within 5 days of the approval.
- b. The City's webpage of community links will be accompanied with a disclaimer message indicating that by clicking on such links the user is leaving the City's website and that the City does not endorse or take responsibility for any group or the contents of their website.

VI. Exceptions

As a Gov internet domain, the City's website does not list non-government advertisements or political/campaign information.

A. No non-Government Advertisements

The Dunwoody website will not be used to advertise for private individuals, firms, or corporations or to imply in any manner that the government endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service.

B. No Political or Campaign Information

The Dunwoody website is for the operation of government, not the political, political party, or campaign environment. No campaigning can be done using the Dunwoody website. No direct links or references to websites created or operated by a campaign, campaign entity, or political committee will be allowed. No political sites or party names or acronyms will be linked.

VII. Responsibility

The City Council and the City Manager all have specific duties in regards to Website Link Policy.

A. City Council

1. Adopt a policy for adding links of community groups to the City's website.
2. Update the policy for adding website links for community groups as needed to best reflect the needs of the community.

B. City Manager

1. Ensure the City maintains a form to appropriately gather information for the review of a request to be added to the City's website.
2. Ensure applications are reviewed in a timely manner.
3. Make decisions as to the approval or denial of groups applying for a link on the City's website.
4. Ensure links for approved organizations are added to the City's website.