

CITY OF HAMILTON

MOTION

General Issues Committee: October 4, 2023

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR J.P. DANKO.....

SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR.....

City of Hamilton Meta Advertising

WHEREAS, Meta announced in June 2023 that it has already started blocking Canadian news content and links on its social media sites, including Instagram and Facebook platforms; and

WHEREAS, Meta has refused to comply with federal legislation, the Online News Act, and instead has deliberately chosen to disadvantage 40 million Canadians, including nearly 600,000 Hamilton residents, by removing the ability to share local and national news on their platforms, limiting the ability for Canadians to view content from local and national news publications in Canada; and

WHEREAS, in the past several years, Hamilton has faced severe weather conditions, including extreme cold and blizzards, heat waves, and funnel clouds; as well as other emergencies, including but not limited to homelessness, crime and an epidemic related to substance use and addictions; and particularly the recent COVID-19 pandemic; in all of these situations, the ability to share timely, reliable, local news with residents was critically essential; and

WHEREAS, Meta's decision would severely impact and limit the ability of both the City of Hamilton, and individual Members of Council, to share information with residents; and to share critical and timely updates from local media; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that utilizing all available media, may at times be required for disseminating critical and public safety information, as well, that existing communication plans may contain budgetary and contractual legal obligations; and

WHEREAS, Hamilton residents have a fundamental right to a strong, free, and independent Press, one that is not censored or dictated by American social media giants; and

WHEREAS, access to reliable, quality news information, prepared by independent journalists and media, is essential to any healthy, functioning democracy.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That any new, non-critical advertising campaigns by Public Information and Media Relations be immediately suspended on all Meta-owned platforms;
- (b) That the suspension last until Meta resumes discussions with the government of Canada, or until it reverses its ban on placing Canadian media news stories on its platforms up to a maximum of 6 months; and,
- (c) That this motion be shared with the Ontario Premier's Office, local Members of Parliament, local Members of Provincial Parliament, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and all Ontario municipalities.