

**Chapter 3**  
**TOWN CRIER OR NEWSLETTER**

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**[HISTORY - Section added in 10-1-01.]**

**§3-1. General Policy.**

The town newsletter (presently called the Riverdale Park Town Crier) shall be the official newsletter of the Town of Riverdale Park. It shall be printed on a monthly basis, 10 times during the calendar year (there shall be two issues for two-month period to allow for summer and winter holidays, i.e., December/January issue and a June/July issue). It shall provide residents with information concerning policies, proposals, and laws either adopted or under consideration. It shall also provide space for paid advertising from local businesses for a fee, except where otherwise provided. It shall provide a forum for the free flow of ideas from elected officials and residents on matters of concern to residents of the Town, the newsletter shall also announce upcoming elections and show the names of candidates for town elections as they will appear on the ballot. It shall be managed by an Editor-in-Chief, who shall not be an elected official of the town government.

**§3-2. Letters to the Editor.**

(a) General Rule - The newsletter shall accept for publication letters to the editor from town residents who are not elected officials of the town. Any letter must include a name, address and telephone number of the person submitting the letter and be signed by that person. Any person writing such letters shall be limited to one letter of two hundred and fifty (250) words or less per edition of the town newsletter. Such letters must relate to administrative, regulatory or Legislative functions of the town, or be of some matter of unique concern to the town or its residents (e.g., obituaries, events of town groups or town-sponsored organizations, history of

the town, etc.). Such letters may promote a position on matters of public policy but may not advocate support or opposition for any candidate for public office. Such letters shall be directed to the Editor-in-Chief of the newsletter and shall be printed in the next issue of the newsletter after it has been received.

(B) Time of Submission - A deadline of the 15th day of the calendar month shall be set for any submission to be printed in the next edition. If a letter to the editor is received after the submission deadline, it shall be printed in the following edition. In the event multiple submissions are received for an upcoming edition, the Editor-in-Chief shall set forth two (2) full pages for such letters and if ample space is still not available, provide a written rationale for why some letters were printed and others were held to the subsequent edition. No letter deemed appropriate under the guidelines may be held for any reason for more than 45 days before publication.

(c) Editing for Length and Content - In the event a letter exceeds the two hundred and fifty (250) word length, it shall be subject to editing by the Editor-in-Chief who shall shorten its length by removing or replacing words, but who shall not change the intent of the letter writer. In the event any portion of the content shall include curse words inappropriate for publication, the Editor-in-Chief shall have the authority to remove or replace such words at his or her discretion.

### **§3-3. Mayor's Report.**

The mayor, at his or her election, may include in any issue of the newsletter a "Mayor's Report." This report shall be limited to 1,000 words in length and may not exceed one printed page of text. The scope of such report shall relate to the legislative, administrative, or regulatory functions of the town, or be of such nature that it has unique concern to the town or its residents (e.g., obituaries, events of town groups or town-sponsored organizations, history of the town, etc.) It may include positions on matters being proposed or already before the legislative body of the town. Such report may not include advocacy or electioneering on behalf of any candidate for public office.

### **§3-4. Submissions by Town Council members.**

Any Town Councilmember, at his or her election, may include in any issue of the newsletter an article for submission. This article shall be limited to 1,000 words in length and may not exceed one printed page of text. The scope of such report shall relate to the legislative, administrative, or regulatory functions of the town, or be of such nature that it has unique concern to the town or its residents (e.g., obituaries, events of town groups or town-sponsored organizations, history of the town, etc.) It may include positions on matters being proposed or already before the legislative body of the town. Such report may not include advocacy or electioneering on behalf of any candidate for public office. The word limitation may be waived by a majority vote of the town council should a submission be of such concern that it is in the best interests of the town and its residents to do so (e.g., updated census data, redrawing of ward boundary lines, etc.).

### **§3-5. Submissions by Department Heads.**

Any department head (Town Administrator, Police Chief, and Director of Public Works Director of Code Enforcement) or their designee may submit articles for publication relating to the unique operations of that department. Such submissions may not include any matter relating to any individual that could cause any legal action to be brought against the town, (e.g., personnel matter). Such articles can include advice to residents on specific code or law enforcement concerns of those departments or explanations on the actions of said department.

### **§ 3-6. Submissions by Town Organizations and Residents.**

Town organizations and residents may submit articles for publications concerning events sponsored by those organizations or of a matter of generally concern to the residents of the town. Such articles shall be printed on a space-available basis, but the Editor-in-Chief shall make every effort to print such submissions in a timely manner. Such articles may not include advocacy or electioneering on behalf of any candidate for public office. In order to accommodate such articles, the Editor-in-Chief shall alter font sizes in order to make space available, unless it is impracticable or impossible. Such articles are subject to meeting the same deadline requirements for letters to the editor.

### **§ 3-7. Proposed Ordinances.**

Regardless of text length, the full text of any proposed ordinance shall be printed in the next edition of the town newsletter after it has been introduced at a legislative meeting of the Mayor and Town Council. By a majority vote, the Town Council may elect to permit a summary in lieu of the full text to be printed if the length of such proposal makes printing it impracticable.

### **§ 3-8. Advertising.**

(a) Generally - The town newsletter may accept for publication any advertising from a business or person either located within town or having business generally with residents of the town. A rate of \$225 for a full-page ad, \$125 for a half-page ad, \$75 for a quarter-page ad, and \$40 for a business card ad is set by the town by adoption of the ordinance and may be periodically updated by four affirmative votes of the Town Council. For any business located within the town boundaries, a valid town business license must be in place at the time of publication, unless such business is exempted from obtaining such a license.

(b) New Business Exception - Any new business may receive one free quarter-page advertisement at no cost to the business within ninety (90) days of obtaining a town business license. The operator of a new business who applies for and receives a license will be provided a letter advising them of this policy of one free advertisement and be provided information on the advertising policy for the town newsletter.

(c) Inserts - Any resident or organization may request that an insert be placed in the town newsletter provided that the nature of the materials concerns matters relating to the legislative,

regulatory or administrative functions of the town or is of such a matter that is of unique concern to the town or residents. Such inserts shall require payment at the business advertising rate, unless waived by a majority vote of the Town Council at a regularly scheduled legislative meeting, and only upon a finding that waiving the fee is in the best interest of the town and its residents.

**§ 3-9. Oversight.**

The Editor-in-Chief shall follow above procedures in making decisions concerning the production of issues of the town newsletter. Oversight of the Editor-in-Chief shall be done by the Town Administrator.