



**THE CORPORATION OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF
ADJALA – TOSORONTIO**

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

ENACTED BY COUNCIL:

MOTION NUMBER:

REVISED BY COUNCIL:

MOTION NUMBER:

1. PURPOSE STATEMENT

This Policy sets out the conditions upon which the Township will use social media to improve information sharing and engage residents.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

This Policy establishes the guidelines for the Township social media use to achieve the following objectives:

- a) to ensure the social media activity is conducted in an appropriate, effective, and secure manner;
- b) to enhance public engagement by fostering transparent, timely, and effective communication with stakeholders;
- c) to administer this Policy and its related procedures in accordance with the *Municipal Act, 2001*, the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and any other relevant legislation;
- d) to establish necessary controls and procedures related to the use and monitoring of social media;
- e) to require that Township Representatives promote the goals, objectives and policies of the Township through social media in a professional manner;
- f) to clarify the boundaries between personal and professional use of social media.

3. SCOPE

The social media Policy shall apply to all Adjala-Tosorontio employees, volunteers, co-op students, elected officials, committee or board members, contractors or consultants participating on social media sites developed by the Township including

participation on non-municipal social media sites when acting as a representative of the Township.

4. DEFINITIONS

Corporate Communication(s) means the variety of ways the Township, as a government body, communicates with external and internal audiences.

Communications Division means a division responsible for managing corporate communications including public relations, social media management, crisis communication, branding, and stakeholder engagement. This division includes Communications Officer.

Social media means websites and digital applications that enable users to create, share, and interact with content online, or to participate in social networking, which may change from time to time.

Stakeholders means a resident, business, municipal neighbour, elected official, staff, upper tier level of government, board, committee, authority, agency, association, and anyone with an interest in municipal affairs.

Township means the Corporation of the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio, its agencies, boards, commissions, and advisory committees.

Township Representatives means an employee, elected official, volunteer, committee or board member, contractor or consultant who acting in capacity on behalf of the Township.

5. Municipal Use of Social Media

5.1 The Township will utilize corporate social media accounts to:

- a) Improve information sharing and broaden opportunities to communicate effectively.
- b) Enable and facilitate relevant and effective stakeholder communications.
- c) Enhance the Township's customer service efforts by increasing online opportunities for inquiries, requests, and feedback.

5.2 The Township Representatives engaging in social media on behalf of the Township may not:

- a) Disclose confidential information pertaining to the business or operations of the Township, including items discussed in closed session meetings.

- b) Disclose personal information about any individual, Township employee, elected or appointed official, client, customer, vendor, supplier etc. without their prior written consent.
 - c) Post material that is discriminatory, harassing, abusive, offensive, or otherwise inappropriate in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, the applicable Code of Conduct, and Workplace Harassment and Violence Policy.
 - d) Promote, endorse, or allow the marketing of businesses or products not related to the Township or for the purposes of economic development.
 - e) Communicate or engage in any conversations about the Township in a destructive manner.
 - f) Represent personal opinions as those of the Township.
- 5.3 The Town will maintain a single, corporate social media presence on each approved social media platform.
- 5.4 All corporate social media accounts, along with their login and password information, will be owned by the Township and not by the individual(s) managing the content.
- 5.6 New corporate social media accounts will be subject to approval by the CAO or designate.
- 5.7 Where possible, content published to the Township's corporate social media accounts will also be available on the Township's website. Hyperlinks should direct users back to the Township's official website for more information, forms, or supporting documents.
- 5.8 The Township shall not provide administrative support to the individual social media accounts for Members of Council.
- 5.9 Only authorized persons may write in the voice of the Township on social media.
- 5.10 Appropriate content for inclusion on the Township's social media includes, but are not limited to the following:
- a) Information about Municipal services;
 - b) Notices of upcoming meetings;

- c) Promotion of the Township events, programs and services, job opportunities and achievements;
- d) Policies and procedures and By-laws;
- e) Communication between staff and the community regarding municipal work or projects;
- f) Links to municipal forms and documents;
- g) Links to sites or services related to municipal such as libraries, County of Simcoe garbage; and
- h) Sharing information provided by local emergency officials.

5.11 Minimum Monitoring Standards and Actions

5.11.1 The Communications Division shall:

- a) Operate and monitor the Township's social media accounts in accordance with the content standards as outlined in this Policy.
- b) Operate and monitor Township's social media during regular business hours of Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. which may be temporarily suspended due to staff absence.
- c) Review comments and messages to determine whether a response is appropriate in a timely manner.
- d) Encourage inquiries of a time sensitive matter, containing personal or identifying information, or requests for service to be communicated through telephone and email.

5.12 Social Media Comments

5.12.1 Comments, posts, and messages are welcome on municipal social media sites.

5.12.2 Any comments from members of the community that are considered to be false, defamatory, abusive, hateful, obscene, racist, sexually oriented, threatening, or invasive of someone else's privacy will be deleted for Township social media accounts. For greater clarity this will include, but not be limited to a comment that:

- a) Includes foul language, vulgarities, or sexually explicit content;

- b) Is offensive to an individual or organization, rude in tone, discriminatory or abusive, including insults and threatening language;
- c) Is potentially libelous or contains defamatory statements;
- d) Is personal information published without prior consent;
- e) Is a Comment or hyperlink that is completely unrelated to the content of the forum or thread;
- f) Solicits, advertises, and/or promotes particular services, products, or political parties, advocacy groups or organizations;
- g) Is derogatory in nature and comments about Township employees and its services; and
- i) Is for the purpose of political campaigning by politicians, individuals running for election or individuals/groups supporting or opposing a specific political candidate on the Township's social media sites.

5.12.3 Stakeholders will be advised they are in violation of the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio's social media Policy and may be blocked from the Township's social media sites using the following process:

- a) First offence will be a warning via private message informing the user they are in contravention of the Township's social media Policy.
- b) Second offence will be a temporary ban on all social media channels for 30 days.
- c) Third offence will result in a permanent ban on all social media channels.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Responsibilities of Employees

- 6.1.1 The Township's corporate social media accounts will be maintained and managed by the Communications Division accordance with this

policy.

- 6.1.2 All Township staff, as the subject matter experts in their individual departments, are responsible for coordinating with the Communications Officer on content.
- 6.1.3 Employees should advise the Communications Officer of activities – positive or negative, that are likely to draw media interest.
- 6.1.4 Employees should adhere to standards set out in this policy and be aware of the consequences of unacceptable actions, which may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- 6.1.5 The participation in social media by employees acting in an official municipal capacity should be viewed the same way as participating in other media or public forums. This policy governs staff use of these tools for professional purposes.
- 6.1.6 Township Staff are not permitted to comment on Township business on social media sites, networks, and/or websites, unless authorized by CAO or designate. Should an employee use social media and misrepresent themselves as speaking in an official capacity for the Township or participate in content that reflects poorly on the Township, the employee may face disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

6.2 Responsibilities of Elected Officials

- 6.2.1 Members of Council should contact the Communications Division to seek advice on all aspects of the administration of this policy.
- 6.2.2 It is best practice for Members of Council to share information directly from the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio's corporate channels to ensure all information is current and accurate.

7. Emergency Management

- 7.1 In times of emergency or crisis, the Township shall communicate all information that will protect the health, safety, security of residents and their property.
- 7.2 Communications decisions shall be made by the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio's Emergency Information Officer (EIO) in consultation with Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) and CAO.

- 7.3 Communications will take any form necessary to ensure residents receive accurate, timely, and relevant information to prevent, mitigate, respond to, or recover from an emergency.

8. Elections and Political Campaigning

- 8.1 The Township of Adjala-Tosorontio social media sites are not to be used as a platform for political campaigning at any time. It is the responsibility of the Communications Division to remove content considered to be political campaigning and take necessary measures to ensure political campaigning posts are not included on corporate social media sites.
- 8.2 During a municipal, provincial or federal election, it is the responsibility of the Communications Division to “unfollow” or “unlike” any candidates on any social media sites. The Communications Division will monitor corporate social media platforms for comments containing political campaigning and remove those posts in accordance with unacceptable content as outlined in this Policy.

9. Amendments

10. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed a minimum of every 5-years, pending departmental changes.