The Corporation of the Township of Assiginack
Passed by Council: By-law No. 2025- 5

Social Media Policy

1. Policy Statement

1.1 The Township of Assiginack is committed to continuous improvement to accomplish the mission as identified in our Strategic Plan. This document outlines the social media policy for the Township of Assiginack, emphasizing effective communication and service delivery through digital platforms.

The Corporation of the Township of Assiginack is a dedicated team who serves its community by delivering services and support in a consistent and professional manner.

1.2 Effective service delivery requires providing services in a fair, timely, respectful, and transparent fashion. This policy provides the framework for the use of social media for the Township of Assiginack. It establishes guidelines for the appropriate use and management of social media, ensuring the protection of the Township's reputation while fostering community engagement.

1.3 The Township supports the use of digital communications including, but not limited to, the Township's official website and social media accounts as methods of providing information to the public.

1.4 The Township's official accessible website, www.assiginack.ca will remain the Township's primary means of digital communication. Corporate social media accounts will complement and enhance the Township's established web presence and all social media communications will redirect to the Township's website when more information is available.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines and standards to ensure the appropriate use and management of social media on behalf of the Township.

2.2 More specifically, the Purpose of this Policy is to:

2.2.1 Protect the Township's reputation and ensure consistency and professionalism with all Township communication through social media.

2.2.2 Establish protocols, criteria, and courses of action for:

2.2.2.1 Appropriate monitoring and administration of the Township's social media pages;

2.2.2.2 Determining/adopting new social media accounts for the Township;

2.2.2.3 Providing timely, effective, and accurate information and responses;

2.2.2.4 Establishing a mechanism to address controversial or sensitive matters relating to online content about the Township;

2.2.2.5 Warranting appropriate protection of privacy of the public who engage or interact with the Township via social media.

2.2.3 Provide Township employees, Council, Committee members, volunteers, and the public with an understanding of the policies surrounding acceptable corporate and personal use of social media accounts as they relate to discussing the business of the Township.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies to Township employees, Committee members, volunteers, and Council members who make public statements on Township social media sites and other social networks that discuss, share, or comment on the Township.

3.2 This policy also applies to members of the public who use, comment, or post on Township social media sites and social networks.

3.3 The policy applies to all social media accounts used by the Township of Assiginack.

4. Responsibility

4.1 It is the responsibility of all Council members, employees, Committee members, and volunteers to ensure compliance with this policy.

4.2 Issues concerning potential non-compliance with this policy will be directed at the attention of the Clerk or CAO to ensure compliance with this policy.

4.3 Direct staff roles and responsibilities are as defined in the Township of Assiginack's Virtual Communications Strategy.

5. Definitions

5.1 "Township" – means The Corporation of the Township of Assiginack.

5.2 "Employee" – means an employee of The Corporation of the Township of Assiginack.

5.3 "Digital Communication" – means information that is shared using the Internet or mobile communication network for any purpose (i.e.: information sharing, marketing, public engagement, etc.).

5.4 "Social Media" – means the various online, accessible communication accounts or technologies that enable individuals to join and/or participate in online communities for the purpose of publicly sharing information, ideas, messages, pictures, etc. These accounts can include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, as well as blogs, mobile applications, websites, photo boards, discussion boards, or any other online location where commentary is publicly shared and attributed to the Township, an employee, or elected official.

5.5 "Social Media Content" – means content that is planned and developed by the Township's departments and posted or intended to be posted on the Township's social media pages. This refers to any posts, notices/media releases, documents, photographs/graphics, videos, links, or other information that is created, posted, distributed, or transmitted via social media.

5.6 "Social Media Moderators" – means Township staff who are designated to post, update, monitor, and review content on corporate social media pages, and who are also responsible for social media governance, strategy and implementation, and who work directly with all municipal departments and stakeholders to lead social media initiatives.

5.7 "Public Record" – means anything which is created in the regular course of conducting Township business and which documents the business of the Township, regardless of format. Public records document decisions, policies, procedures, transactions, activities, commitments, obligations, ownership,

entitlement, legal rights, etc. of the Township and are relied upon by the Township as proof of such to support Township business.

5.8 "Public Statement" – A declaration made by a Township employee, official, or representative in any public forum, which relates to the Township, its employees, and/or its business. This includes statements made on personal social media accounts which the public can view, public online forums or discussions, social networking pages, and elsewhere in the public record.

6. Guidelines

6.1 Site Content

6.1.1 Social Media is used as a communication tool for the intent of enhancing communication with the public about programs and services.

6.1.2 The Township invites the public to engage with posts while treating others with respect, including the Township.

6.1.3 The Township understands that members of the public may express concerns, feelings, or opinions that may not align with municipal decisions. Community engagement, both positive and constructive, is welcome in discussions on the Township's corporate social media. The Township will not, however, tolerate inappropriate posts or comments.

6.1.4 Each social media account used by the Township will contain a disclaimer that will reference this policy for guidelines of conduct.

6.1.5 The Township of Assiginack has zero tolerance for disrespectful or inappropriate behaviour on any of its media platforms.

6.2 Site Administration

6.2.1 Only Social Media Moderators shall post on the Township social media accounts.

6.2.2 Social Media Moderators serve as a centralized resource for the oversight of the Township's social media. They adhere to the following principles:

6.2.2.1 The Township's official corporate social media pages are monitored regularly by the Social Media Moderator(s) during business hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

6.2.2.2 Every effort is made to respond to constructive concerns and questions on the corporate social media pages. If a response is required, the goal is to address the comment within one (1) to two (2) business days; however, this time may be impacted by Township Staff availability to assist with the content of the response. A disclaimer advising of this time period will be added to the Townships Social Media Platforms; and

6.2.2.3 Account login credentials and passwords are confidential and will be stored in a secure location with the Social Media Moderator(s).

6.3 Use of Social Media by Council, Employees, Volunteers, and Committee Members

6.3.1 To facilitate compliance with public records law, prevent false or misrepresented information, and to ensure that communications from the Township are streamlined, Employees and Council that wish to use personal accounts for the promotion or marketing of Township events, property, or services must share the original post from the Township's corporate social media accounts. Employees, volunteers, committee members, and Council are all representatives of the Township and must uphold the standards of the Township branding when engaging in anything related to the Township, its services, operations, policies, and/or procedures. This includes engaging in online interaction on the Township's corporate social media pages or any online conversation that involves information about the Township on a public page. Employees, Council members, and committee members must adhere to their respective Codes of Conduct.

6.4 Municipal Staff Usage of Social Media

6.4.1 Employees are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites; however, their speech cannot impair or impede the performance of their duties, impair discipline and harmony among co-workers, or negatively affect the public perception of the Township. No employee shall speak in a way to cause deliberate harm or disruption to the mission and functions of the Township.

6.4.2 Employees may identify themselves as a Township employee; however, online postings cannot reveal confidential information about the Township. Any questions about what is considered confidential should be directed to their supervisor, Social Media Moderator, or the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

6.5 Mayor and Council Usage of Social Media

6.5.1 In accordance with the Municipal Act, 2001, Section 224, Council's social media usage must take into account:

6.5.1.1 They represent the public and must consider the well-being and interests of the Township, and develop and evaluate the policies and procedures;

6.5.1.2 They ensure the accountability and transparency of the operations of the Township.

6.5.2 If members of Council are responding to a public comment about a Township matter, they must identify themselves as a member of Township Council.

6.5.3 Social media and other types of online content sometimes garner media attention and/or legal questions. Any inquiries should be brought to the attention of the CAO. Council members are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites; however, their speech cannot impair or impede the performance of their duties, impair discipline and harmony among Council and Staff, or negatively affect the public perception of the Township.

7. Responding to Social Media Posts by the Public

7.1 Social Media Moderators regularly check the Township's social media accounts for comments and posts from the public. Schedule "A" attached to this policy outlines a comprehensive workflow for assessing and responding to social media posts based on their tone. The workflow, when followed ensures the Township of Assiginack maintains a professional presence on Social Media while engaging with the community.

7.2 Document the Interaction: Keep a record of the interaction for future references and ensure compliance with the Municipal Freedom of Information Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA.) Forward copies to the Clerk for keeping the records.

7.3 Review and Adjust: Regularly review the types of interactions occurring on social media to adjust strategies and improve engagement with the public.