

# AAMJIWNAANG CHI'NAAKNIGEWIN

COMMUNITY CONSTITUTION

In Honour of  
the Past,  
the Present,  
the Future...



# **AAMJIWNAANG CHI'NAAKNIGEWIN**

## **(Community Constitution)**

### **PREAMBLE**

We the Anishinabeg of Aamjiwnaang are descendants of the Ojibwe, Pottawatomi, and Odawa (The People of the Three Fires confederacy). We have been here since the time of The Great Migration and are keepers of our traditional territory, our language, and culture and heritage.

### **Mission:**

By the guidance of the Seven Grandfather Teachings and with dedicated leadership, we strive to meet the needs of Aamjiwnaang in order to build a strong, safe, sustainable and healthy community for the benefit of present and future generations.

# **Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe**

*(One Anishinaabe Family)*

**Debenjiged gi'saan anishinaaben akiing giibi dgwon gaadeni  
mndoo waadiziwin.**

*(Creator placed the Anishinabe on the earth along with the gift of spirituality).*

**Shkode, nibi, aki, noodin, giibi dgosdoonan wii naagdowendmang  
maanpii shkagmigaang.**

*(Here on mother earth, there were gifts given to the Anishinabe to look after,  
fire, water, earth and wind).*

**Debenjiged gii miinaan gechtwaa wendaagog Anishinaaben waa  
naagdoonjin ninda niizhwaaswi kino maadwinan.**

*(The Creator also gave the Anishinabe seven sacred gifts to guide them. They are):*

**Zaagidwin, Debwewin, Mnaadendmowin, Nbwaakaawin,  
Dbaadendiziwin, Gwekwaadziwin miinwa Aakedhewin.**

*(Love, Truth, Respect, Wisdom, Humility, Honesty and Bravery).*

**Debenjiged kiimiingona dedbinwe wi naagdowendiwin.**

*(Creator gave us sovereignty to govern ourselves).*

**Ka mnaadendanaa gaabi zhiwebag miinwaa nango megwaa  
ezhwebag, miinwa geyaabi waa ni zhiwebag.**

*(We respect and honour the past, present and future).*

## **CHAPTER 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **Anishinaabemowin Definitions**

#### **1. In this Constitution:**

- a) "Aamjiwnaang" means a place where the water swirls and flows rapid and the people gather, formerly known as Chippewas of Sarnia;
- b) "Anishinabeg" means there are many first nation people, Indians, natives;
- c) "Aakedhewin" means Bravery;
- d) "Bendaazijig" means one who belongs to a group; a citizen/a community member; in this document it means, citizen of Aamjiwnaang;
- e) "Bmaadziwin" means good and healthy way of life/living. It is the holy and sacred life;
- f) "Chi'Naaknigewin" means the great law; ruling or agreement; and, this Consitution;
- g) "Dbaadendiziwin" means Humility;
- h) "Debwewin" means Truth
- i) "Gimaa" (Chief) means a leader: a boss, a chief, a king. A person selected as Gimaa or Chief in accordance with the laws governing the election process for Aamjiwnaang;
- j) "Gimaa Kwe" (Female Chief) means a female leader: a boss, a chief, a queen. The person selected as Gimaa Kwe in accordance with the laws governing the election process for Aamjiwnaang;
- k) "Gwekwaadziwin" means Honesty;
- l) "Mnaadendmowin" means Respect;
- m) "Nbwaakaawin" means Wisdom;
- n) "Niigaanosewikwe/Niigaanoseweinini" (Councillor or Councillors) means a member or members of Council selected in accordance with the laws governing the election process for Aamjiwnaang;
- o) "Wiidookdaamin" means we are helping each other;
- p) "Gimaagumig" means Chief's building or Band office;
- q) Wiidookdaamin Gimaagumig Anishinabeg" means a board, commission, tribunal, committee established by the Council to assist them;
- r) "Zaagidiwin" means Love.

## **English Definitions**

- s) "Chief" means the person selected as Chief in accordance with the election process used by Aamjiwnaang;
- t) "Council" means the executive decision-making body made up of the Chief and Councillors of Aamjiwnaang selected in accordance with the election process used by Aamjiwnaang;
- u) "Councillor" or "Councillors" means a member or members of Council selected in accordance with the election process used by Aamjiwnaang;
- v) "Elected Officials" means the Chief and Councillors selected in accordance with the election process used by Aamjiwnaang;
- w) "Eligible Voter" means a Member of Aamjiwnaang, as defined by this constitution that governs Aamjiwnaang election process and, who has attained the age of eighteen (18) years by or on the date of the vote.

## **CHAPTER 2 FOUNDING PROVISIONS**

2. We the Anishinabeg of Aamjiwnaang have existed since time immemorial.
3. Through this Chi'Naaknigewin, the Anishinabeg of Aamjiwnaang are exercising our inherent right of self-government for the general wellbeing of our Bendaazijig and to provide for the Bmaadziwin of Aamjiwnaang. Our jurisdiction covers our Bendaazijig and our traditional territory.
4. Aamjiwnaang honours the Seven Grandfathers teachings of Zaagidiwin-Love, Debwewin-Truth, Mnaadendmowin-Respect, Nbwaakaawin-Wisdom, Dbaadendiziwin-Humility, Gwekwaadziwin-Honesty and Aakedhewin-Bravery.
5. The Anishinabeg of Aamjiwnaang have an inherent right to govern ourselves.

## **CHAPTER 3 CHI'NAAKNIGEWIN**

6. This document is the Chi'Naaknigewin of Aamjiwnaang.
7. In the event of a conflict or inconsistency between this Chi'Naaknigewin and any Aamjiwnaang law or regulation, by-law, code or policy or procedures, the Chi'Naaknigewin shall prevail to the extent of the conflict.
8. The Aamjiwnaang Chi'Naaknigewin guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in this Chi'Naaknigewin subject only to such reasonable limits set out in Aamjiwnaang laws as can be demonstrably justified to protect the collective interests of Aamjiwnaang and justified in a free and democratic community.

## **CHAPTER 4 JURISDICTION**

### **Law-Making Powers**

9. Aamjiwnaang has the inherent right of governance and may pass laws with respect to those matters that are integral to the community.

### **Law-Making Process**

10. A draft law may be introduced at a regular meeting of the Aamjiwnaang Council:
  - a) by a petition signed by forty or more Bendaazijig who support the proposed draft law; or,
  - b) by the Chief;
  - c) by a Councillor;
  - d) by a Wiidookdaamin Gimaagumig Anishinabeg.
11. A draft law cannot be introduced until three months after the Aamjiwnaang Chief and Council are elected into office.
12. A draft law will be approved through the law-making process set out below:
  - a) the law is introduced and considered by the Council;

- b) the Council will post in a public place the draft law for a period of 60 days for comment;
- c) the Council receives input from Bendaazijig on the law;
- d) the law is considered by Council and may be passed by at least a simple majority of the Council; and,
- e) the law is signed by Council.

13. The Council will establish rules to allow Bendaazijig participation and consultation in its law-making process.

14. The Council will establish rules regarding the process and timelines for introducing, considering, providing input, coming into force, and the publication of the Aamjiwnaang laws.

15. The Council will establish procedures for appealing or challenging the validity or application of an Aamjiwnaang law.

#### **Review and Appeal of Administrative Decisions**

16. Aamjiwnaang shall provide procedures for the appeal or the review of administrative decisions under an Aamjiwnaang law and administrative decisions of its Wiidookdaamin Gimaagumig Anishinabeg.

## **CHAPTER 5 AAMJIWNAANG GOVERNMENT**

### **Governing Principles of the Chief and Council**

17. Aamjiwnaang Bendaazijig expects the Chief and Council to:

- a) be dedicated to Aamjiwnaang, and respect this Chi'Naaknigewin;
- b) preserve and promote the peace, unity and well-being of Aamjiwnaang;
- c) provide good, effective and accountable government;
- d) communicate and consult;
- e) work respectfully with neighbouring first nations, industry, agencies and municipalities;
- f) work respectfully with one another in mutual trust and good faith, consult and inform one another on matters of common interest;

- g) speak with one voice and honour the decisions made;
- h) consider the next seven generations in all decision making; and
- i) follow the seven grandfather teachings in the decision making process.

18. Chief and Council shall abide by Aamjiwnaang oath of office.

### **Composition of Council**

19. The Council shall consist of one Chief and Nine (9) Councillors.

20. Aamjiwnaang Council will exercise the rights, authorities, and privileges and carry out its duties, functions, and obligations on behalf of the community as a whole.

### **Conduct of Individuals Elected to Office and Others**

21. The Chief and Council shall conduct all affairs of Aamjiwnaang in accordance with this Chi'Naaknigewin.

22. Aamjiwnaang shall, maintain confidentiality and conflict of interest rules that governs all elected officials, band and corporate staff, and committee members.

### **Delegation of Jurisdiction and Authority**

23. The Chief and Council may delegate its jurisdiction or authority or any part of it, in writing, to a legal entity under the rules approved by the Council.

24. Where jurisdiction or authority, or part of it, is delegated, Aamjiwnaang Chief and Council will ensure in writing that the legal entity to which the delegation has been made will be accountable to Aamjiwnaang for the jurisdiction or authority which has been delegated to it.

25. Aamjiwnaang will remain accountable to Bendaazijig for the exercise of the jurisdiction or authority it delegates.

26. Aamjiwnaang will ensure, in writing, that the legal entity to which a delegation or authority from Aamjiwnaang has been made, may not, sub-delegate that authority without the written consent of Council.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **WIIDOOKDAAMIN GIMAAGUMIG ANISHINABEG**

27. Aamjiwnaang may establish Wiidookdaamin Gimaagumig Anishinabeg, in accordance with its laws, to perform functions of its government, as determined by Council.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION**

#### **Principles of Financial Administration**

28. Aamjiwnaang Bendaazijig expects the Chief and Council, financial management and administration of Aamjiwnaang to:

- a) be prudent, open, and accountable; and,
- b) provide for effective and efficient use of the financial resources of Aamjiwnaang; and,
- c) review policies and procedures on a regular basis to ensure relevancy.

#### **Control of Financial Administration**

29. Aamjiwnaang Bendaazijig have the right to access information on matters dealing with the financial management and administration of all Aamjiwnaang services and programs, excluding information related to personnel matters and any other confidential personal information.

30. Aamjiwnaang Chief and Council and administration shall abide by Aamjiwnaang policies governing financial management, accountability and access to information.

31. Aamjiwnaang Chief and Council may develop laws to establish a system of financial administration, through which the Council will be financially accountable to Aamjiwnaang Bendaazijig, and that includes standards comparable to those generally accepted for governments in Canada.

## **CHAPTER 8 AAMJIWNAANG ADMINISTRATION**

### **Values and Principles**

32. Aamjiwnaang expects the administrative and band staff to:

- a) follow high standards of ethics, including avoiding conflicts of interest;
- b) make efficient, effective and prudent use of the Aamjiwnaang resources;
- c) be impartial and equitable in providing programs and services;
- d) be responsive to Aamjiwnaang community needs; and,
- e) provide timely, accessible, and accurate information as required by their position.

33. Aamjiwnaang administrative, band staff and committees shall agree to abide by Aamjiwnaang Oath of Confidentiality.

## **CHAPTER 9 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT**

### **Constitutional Amendment**

34. This Constitution was ratified by the Aamjiwnaang Bendaazijig under a ratification process selected and approved by Chief and Council.

35. This Constitution may be amended by following each of the steps in the process outlined below:

- a) passing an Aamjiwnaang Band Council Resolution proposing an amendment(s) to the Constitution;
- b) presenting the proposed constitutional amendment(s) to the Aamjiwnaang Bendaazijig at a duly organized community meeting;
- c) hold a referendum vote on the amendment(s). This vote will happen within three (3) months after the community meeting referred to in paragraph b) above;
- d) if at least 50% + 1 of the ballots in the ballot box are marked "YES", by the Eligible Voters in a referendum vote on proposed amendment(s), the amendment(s) become effective immediately.

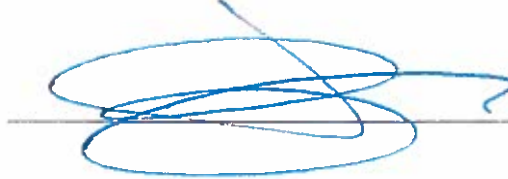
**Enactment Clause**

36. Ratified by the Bendaazijig of Aamjiwnaang this 27<sup>th</sup> day, in the month of October, in the year 2016.

Signed into Law on behalf of Aamjiwnaang Anishinabeg. This 11<sup>th</sup> day, of the month of April, in the year 2017.

**AAMJIWNAANG CHIEF AND COUNCIL SIGNATURES**

Chief Joanne Rogers



Councillor Errnol Gray

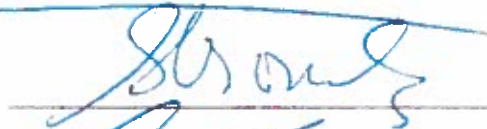
Councillor Darren Henry



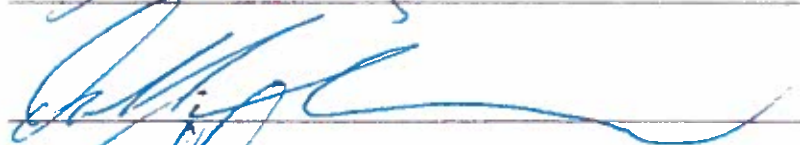
Councillor Shawn Plain



Councillor Sherri Crowley



Councillor Dallas Sinopole



Councillor John Adams

