



Municipal Complaint Policy

Policy Statement

The Municipal Complaint Policy is intended to provide a consistent and uniform process to respond to program and service delivery concerns raised by members of the public. The Policy will assist the municipality in continuing to provide excellent service to the public, and will contribute to the continuous improvement of operations. The Municipality strives to maintain a high level of customer satisfaction.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles and processes for the disposition of complaints related to services delivered by the municipality. This policy will improve customer satisfaction by providing timely and accurate response to complaints and use complaints as an opportunity to improve programs and services.

Definitions

Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction related to a municipal program, service, facility or staff member. Complaints are distinct from:

Request for service: request for a specific service such as road repair, sign replacement, by-law enforcement, building code enforcement.

Enquiry: a general or specific request for information regarding a municipal program or service.

Feedback: an opinion, comment or expression of interest in a municipal program or service .

Requests for service, enquiry or feedback should be directed to the applicable department.

Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

1. It is the responsibility of the complainant to attempt to resolve concerns by contacting the relevant department head.
2. Provide adequate details to ensure a proper investigation.
3. Complaints must be signed and dated. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.
4. Provide a suggestion of how the situation can be improved or the complaint can be resolved.

Council

1. The role of Council is to develop policies and procedures on how to receive, investigate, respond and resolve complaints.
2. Complainant cannot seek a remedy by calling a Council member(s)
3. Council member(s) should direct a complainant to this policy.
4. Council may request a status report on a complaint through the Clerk. If the subject matter falls under the criteria of section 239(2) of the Municipal Act, Council may put forward a motion to move into close session.

Administrator

1. The Administrator will ensure compliance with this complaint policy. All complaints received will be date stamped. Complaints received addressed to Council will be processed according to this policy. A status report will be provided in the next closed session of Council if required.
2. All complaints, investigations, results and or actions will be documented.
3. The Administrator will treat complaints as confidential as possible to protect the complainant's privacy to the extent that it does not impede the investigation. Complaints maybe subject to freedom of information requests.
4. It is within the Administrator's discretion, in consultation with the relevant department and/or Council if required, to deem a complaint vexatious or frivolous.

Department Heads

1. Staff will attempt to resolve concerns before they become Complaints. These concerns do not need to be in writing to be investigated at this stage.

2. Staff will document the investigation if one is required.
3. Staff may consult with other departments or the Administrator.
4. Staff may identify and bring forward opportunities to improve services.

Complaints against the Administrator

If a complaint is made against the Administrator, the complaint shall be submitted to the head of council. The head of council shall follow all responsibilities and procedures assigned to the Administrator as described below. The head of council may consult with other senior staff. The head of council may consult with the municipal council and/or legal counsel.

Procedures

It is the responsibility of the complainant to attempt to resolve concerns by contacting the relevant department head.

Where a resolution cannot be achieved with the department head, complaints shall be submitted to the Administrator on the form attached as Schedule "A" to this policy and will include:

1. Name, phone number, email, and mailing address of the complainant
2. Nature of the complaint;
 - a) Background details leading to the complaint
 - b) Date, time and location
 - c) Name of any employee previously contacted regarding this complaint.
 - d) Date complaint was submitted
3. Actions the Complainant is requesting from the Municipality.

Upon receiving the complaint, the Administrator will date stamp the submission and, within 7 calendar days, acknowledge its receipt to the complainant.

The Administrator shall review the issues identified by the complainant and in doing so may:

- (a) Consult with other staff as appropriate
- (b) Review relevant provincial legislation
- (c) Review any relevant municipal policies and/or procedures
- (d) Review any existing related documents
- (e) Interview employees or member of the public involved in the complaint
- (f) Identify actions that may be taken to address the complaint or improve municipal operations
- (g) Take other actions the Administrator deems appropriate to expedite the resolution of the complaint when necessary

Upon receipt of the complaint the Administrator may delegate the authority to investigate and/or respond to the complaint to another employee

The Administrator will not delegate this authority to an employee who is named in the complaint or who may be interviewed as part of the investigation

The Administrator shall maintain a file for the complaint in compliance with our current records retention bylaw.

Decision

Within 30 calendar days from the receipt of the complaint, the Administrator shall provide a written response outlining the results or the status of the investigation to the complainant. If a response is not available within the 30 calendar days the complainant shall receive in writing the reason for the delay and an estimate as to when a response will be provided.

The response will note whether or not the complaint was substantiated with reasons.

The response will provide actions the municipality has or will be taken. Detail details regarding discipline of staff members will not be disclosed. Discipline of staff will be in accordance with the Township's current discipline policy and procedures.

Exclusions

This policy is not meant to address;

1. Complaints about non-municipal services
2. Issues addressed by legislation
3. A decision of Council or a decision of a committee of Council.
Persons may send a letter to the Clerk for the inclusion in the next public agenda package.
The letter must be signed and dated and include information as to why the decision should be reconsidered.
Persons may also, through the Clerk, request to appear as a delegation following the procedure to appear before council.
4. Complaints about members of Council
Refer to By-Law 09-18 Council Code of Conduct.
5. Internal employee complaints,
Staff will refer to the staffing complaint policy

