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Complaint Handling

Purpose:

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre recognizes the importance of public feedback and welcomes complaints as a valuable form of feedback regarding our services, operations and facilities. The information gained from complaints helps improve the quality of the services provided by the Municipality and the client experience of residents.

Scope:

This policy applies to all municipal employees.

This policy applies to complaints that are received.

This policy does not apply to:

- Requests for service
- Feedback
- Compliments
- Inquiries
- Anonymous complaints
- Request for accommodations pertaining to accessibility

These communications and requests are all handled through other mechanisms and processes.

Objectives:

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre is committed to a consistent and uniform process to respond to complaints received from members of the public. This policy is intended to enable the municipality to promptly address concerns raised by members of the public regarding programs, facilities, services, staff or operational procedures. This policy and the accompanying procedures outline the process to be followed and service standards for the handling of public complaints.

Procedure:

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre will deal with all complaints promptly, courteously, impartially and professionally. All complainants will be treated with respect and will not receive adverse treatment or any form of reprisal.

All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and other applicable legislation. The identity of the complainant will be made known only to those who need to know in order to consider the complaint. All participants in the complaints process shall keep the details of the complaint confidential except as may be required by law.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about the action or lack of action taken regarding operations, facilities or services provided by the Municipality of Middlesex Centre or by a person or body acting on behalf of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre. All complaints filed necessitate a response. Complaints should be filed on the Complaint Form.

Who can make a complaint?

Anyone who uses or is affected by municipal services can make a complaint. This includes residents, people who work in or visit the municipality, local businesses, community groups.

Some individuals may require assistance to make a complaint, and complaints can be made on their behalf, provided that the person affected has given their consent.

Complaints can be submitted:

- By email
- By phone 519-666-0190
- By mail
- By fax at 519-666-0271
- In person

Service Standards

The following Service Standards will be adhered to in the handling of all complaints received.

- Complainants must receive an acknowledgement of receipt of their complaint within three business days. This acknowledgement must identify who will be following up on the complaint as well as their contact information.
- A final response or update must be sent to the complainant within 30 days, barring exceptional circumstances.

Roles & Responsibilities:

Responsibilities

Employees: All employees are to have knowledge and awareness of the municipality's requirement to receive complaints, the process through which a complaint can be made and the service standards that apply to complaints.

Directors: Department Directors are responsible for facilitating prompt response to all complaints by their staff to ensure that service standards are achieved. Directors hold responsibility for departmental compliance to the Complaint Handling Policy.

CAO: The CAO is responsible to monitor reports and receive input to ensure all employees and Department Directors are following the established Complaint Handling Policy and that service standards are being achieved. He/She is also responsible for ensuring the receipt, tracking and response of all complaints that require his/her attention.

Monitoring/Contraventions

The CAO will monitor compliance with this policy and will follow up with appropriate departments as required. The CAO shall terminate an investigation if he/she is of the opinion that the matter is frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith, or that there are no grounds or insufficient grounds for an investigation.

Compliance

Senior Management is responsible for implementation and ongoing compliance with the Complaints Handling Policy.

The CAO will prepare annual reports to be provided to Council indicating the number of complaints received during a specified timeframe, the number of complaints meeting service standards, the number of complaints outstanding, and the number of complaints not meeting service standards.