



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ST. CLAIR

Subject	Public Complaint Re Township Conduct Policy	Section	Policy
Effective Date	October 26, 2023	Approved By: CAO	
Authority	Section 4(f) of By-law 31 of 2023		

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent and uniform process to respond to complaints received from members of the public regarding the dissatisfaction of programs, facilities, services, employees or operational procedures of the Township of St. Clair.

By introducing guidelines and standards, the process of managing and resolving complaints will become more efficient allowing staff to respond to complaints in a timely manner and provide an opportunity to improve Township programs and services.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 270(1)5 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended, and the *Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014*, require a municipality to be accountable to the public for its actions. This policy supports the Township of St. Clair's commitment to the accountability and transparency of the operations of the municipality.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy:

"*complaint*" is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction related to a municipal program, service, facility or staff member, where a citizen believes that the municipality has not provided a service experience to the customer's satisfaction at the point of service delivery and a response or resolution is expected.

POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all complaints received by staff from members of the public regarding all administrative actions and functions of the Township of St. Clair.

This policy does not apply to:

- A decision of Council, or a Committee of Council;
- Internal employee complaints;
- Matters addressed by legislation or an existing municipal by-law [ie. Property Standards By-law]
- Matters that are handled by tribunals, courts of law, quasi-judicial boards, and the like.

This policy does not address:

- Inquiries;
- Requests for service;
- Feedback;
- Compliments;
- Anonymous Complaints and Criticisms.

PROCEDURE

Complaints may be received online, in person, by phone, by e-mail or by mail.

As per the Township's current practice, anonymous complaints will not be addressed.

Formal submissions of complaints will be accepted:

- Online through the Township website (www.stclairtownship.ca) under the Contact tab;
- Verbal complaints are made in person or by telephone directly to Staff but will not be accepted without name and contact information of complainant;
- Written complaints may be filed by hand delivery, mail or email directly to Staff but will not be accepted without name and contact information of complainant.

A formal complaint shall include the following components:

- a) Name and contact details of the complainant;
- b) Type of complaint;
- c) Summary of complaint (details, location, Township employee involved, resolution requested, enclosures, date complaint submitted);
- d) Date of the incident.

All complaints should be filed as soon as possible.

It is the responsibility of Township employees to attempt to resolve issues or concerns before they become formal complaints; and to identify opportunities to improve municipal services.

For cases where informal resolution is successful, complaint logging is not required.

PUBLIC COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCESS

Acknowledgement

Township staff will contact the complainant within 5 business days. If the complainant has requested a response or resolution to a matter, then the acknowledgement of receipt should indicate an estimated timeline for further follow-up and an indication of what next steps may be expected.

Assess

If necessary, Township staff will contact the complainant to acquire additional information. The complaint may be terminated at this point if a resolution is possible, if a duplicate complaint had been previously submitted, or if it is deemed not to fit the definition of a complaint as per this policy.

Vexatious and Frivolous

The Township reserves the right to determine if a complaint is vexatious or frivolous in which case the complainant will be notified that the complaint will be received and filed, and that no further action will be taken.

Assign

Once assessed and confirmed, the complaint is forwarded to the staff member responsible in the appropriate department.

Investigate

The responsible staff member (not the member subject to the complaint) will:

- Document all notes;
- Contact the complainant where a quick resolve is possible;
- notify the complainant in writing of an approximate length of time if it is determined that the issue may result in a lengthy investigation process;
- Review the issues identified by the complainant and in doing so may:
 - Review relevant municipal and provincial legislation;
 - Review the Township's relevant policies and procedures;
 - Interview employees;
 - Identify actions that may be taken to address the complaint or improve municipal operations.

Resolve

A resolution will be provided to the complainant in writing by the responsible staff member within 30 days upon receipt of the complaint. If a resolution cannot be provided within 30 days, staff shall contact the complainant about the delay and provide an estimation of time.

The CAO may get involved in any complaint submitted according to this policy.

October 26, 2023
Date Approved


CAO John Rodey

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