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**GENERAL PURPOSE OF POLICY**

85.1 It shall be the policy of Region of Queens Municipality to have a standard policy for handling of complaints made by members of the public and subsequent documentation and follow-up procedures. This policy is to enable Region of Queens Municipality to promptly and effectively address program and service delivery concerns raised by members of the public and assist Region of Queens Municipality in providing excellent service to the public and contribute to continuous improvement of operations. Region of Queens Municipality strives to reduce customer dissatisfaction by providing a timely and accurate response to complaints and using complaints as an opportunity to improve program and service delivery issues.

**POLICY APPLICATION**

85.2 This policy applies to all areas of the Municipality's operations but is not meant to address:

- a. Complaints about non-municipal services;
- b. Issues already addressed by legislation, or an existing Region of Queens Municipality bylaw, policy or procedure;
- c. A decision of Council or a decision of a committee of Council.
- d. A grievance covered by the Region of Queens Municipality's collective agreements;  
or
- e. Internal employee complaints.

**INTERPRETATION**

85.3 In this policy:

- a. "Complainant" means the individual filing the complaint with Region of Queens Municipality;
- b. "Complaint" means an issue or concern raised with a municipal program, service, or operation which is not resolved at the time of the incident and for which the complainant submits their concerns to Region of Queens Municipality in accordance with this policy;
- c. "CAO" means Chief Administrative Officer of Region of Queens Municipality.
- d. "Council" means council of Region of Queens Municipality;
- e. "Designated Officer" means Deputy Clerk of Region of Queens Municipality;
- f. "Employee" means an employee of Region of Queens Municipality;
- g. "Mayor" means Mayor of Region of Queens Municipality;
- h. "Ombudsman" means Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman.

**DESIGNATED OFFICER**

- 85.4 a. A Designated Officer may delegate the authority to investigate a complaint to another employee, where s/he deems appropriate.
- b. A Designated Officer may not delegate the authority to investigate a complaint to an employee who is or may be named in the complaint.
- c. If a complaint is made against the Chief Administrative Officer, the Mayor shall review the matter and may:
- i. consult with Council;
  - ii. consult with legal counsel; or
  - iii. refer the matter to the Ombudsman.

**FRONTLINE RESOLUTION**

- 85.5 It is the responsibility of the complainant to attempt to resolve concerns by dealing with the employee(s) directly involved with the issue where appropriate.
- 85.6 It is the responsibility of all employees to attempt to resolve issues or concerns before they become complaints and identify opportunities to improve municipal services.

**FILING A COMPLAINT**

- 85.7 Where frontline resolution cannot be achieved, complaints should be submitted to the Designated Officer and include:
- a. The name, phone number, e-mail address, and mailing address of the individual submitting the complaint.
  - b. The nature of the complaint including the:
    - i. background leading to the issue(s);
    - ii. date(s), time(s) and location(s) of the incident(s); and
    - iii. name(s) of any employee(s) previously contacted regarding the issues(s); and
  - c. Any action(s) being requested of Region of Queens Municipality.
- 85.8 Complaints may be submitted on the form provided in Schedule A.

**RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

- 85.9 The Designated Officer shall acknowledge in writing that the complaint has been received within 10 business days of receipt of the complaint.

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**INVESTIGATION**

85.10 The Designated Officer shall review the issues identified by the complainant and in doing so may:

- a. review relevant municipal and provincial legislation;
- b. review Region of Queens Municipality's relevant policies and procedures;
- c. review any existing file documents;
- d. interview employees or members of the public involved in the issue;
- e. identify actions that may be taken to address the complaint or improve municipal operations; or
- f. take other actions the Designated Officer deems expedient to resolving the matter.

85.11 The Designated Officer shall maintain a file of the complaint in compliance with the Region of Queens Municipality's records management policy.

**DECISION**

85.12 Within 30 calendar days of receipt of a complaint the Designated Officer shall provide a response in writing to the complainant. The response shall include:

- a. whether the complaint was substantiated,
- b. if the complaint is not substantiated, the Designated Officer shall provide reason(s) for his/her decision.
- c. any actions Region of Queens Municipality has or will take as a result of the complaint.

85.13 If the Designated Officer is unable to provide a response within 30 calendar days, s/he shall notify the complainant of the delay and provide an estimate of when a response will be provided.

Approved by Council: August 14, 2018

Effective Date: August 14, 2018

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## **Complaint Handling Policy**

### **Schedule A - Region of Queens Municipality Complaint Form**

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

(h): \_\_\_\_\_ Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

(w): \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

(c): \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

What is your complaint? Please include relevant date(s), times(s), location, and background information, including municipal employees you have contacted regarding this matter. Additional space is available on the back of this form. Additional information such as relevant photographs can be attached to this form.

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How could the situation be improved?

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Additional information:

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<i>OFFICE USE ONLY</i>	
Received/recorded by:	Date:
Forwarded to:	Date:
Acknowledgement Letter <input type="checkbox"/> Sent Date: _____ Staff Name: _____	Additional correspondence <input type="checkbox"/> Sent Date: _____ Staff Name: _____ Reason: _____
Action Taken:	
Final Response Letter <input type="checkbox"/> Sent Date: _____ Staff Name: _____	