



TOWN OF THREE HILLS

POLICY # 590

CITIZEN REQUEST AND RESPONSE POLICY

Adopted by Council on: June 22, 2020

Resolution No: 311-2020

1. PURPOSE

1.1. This policy is intended to enable the Town of Three Hills to promptly and effectively:

1.1.1. address issues and service delivery concerns raised by members of the public;

1.1.2. assist the Town in providing excellent service to the public;

1.1.3. contribute to contiguous improvement of operations; and

1.1.4. establish guidelines and standards for the efficient handling and resolution of complaints made toward the Town in order to address concerns raised and improve services.

2. AUTHORITY

2.1. The authority for this policy is by resolution of the Council of the Town of Three Hills.

2.2. The CAO is accountable and responsible for the development, evaluation and implementation of this policy.

2.3. The CAO reserves the right to vary from the processes outlined in this policy to address unusual circumstances on a case by case basis.

2.4. The CAO reserves the right to exercise appropriate managerial judgement to take such actions as may be necessary to achieve the intent of this policy.

3. APPLICABILITY

3.1. This policy shall apply to all Town citizens, Administration and members of Council regarding complaints and inquiries or requests for action on a decision received by the Town of Three Hills.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1. Whenever the singular masculine gender is used in this policy, the same shall include the feminine and neutral gender whenever context requires.

4.2. In this policy, unless the context otherwise requires:

- 4.2.1. "CAO" shall mean Chief Administrative Officer for the Town of Three Hills or his designate.
- 4.2.2. "Citizen Request" shall mean any of the following:
 - I. A Service Request as defined in section 4.2.6.
 - II. General Inquiry as defined in section 4.2.5.
 - III. Complaint as defined in section 4.2.4.
 - IV. Expression of Approval or Disapproval of municipal staff members, programs, products or process; an opinion, feedback or comment regarding a program or service.
 - V. Suggestions or Ideas submitted by a citizen with the aim of improving services, programs, products or processes.
- 4.2.3. "Complaint" shall mean an expression of dissatisfaction related to a municipal program, service, facility or staff member, where a citizen believes that the Town has not provided a service experience to the citizen's satisfaction at the point of service delivery and a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. Complaints will not include complaints regarding:
 - I. Members of Council;
 - II. Staff members that are employed by a service provider contracted by the Town. They shall be subject to the policies of that service provider;
 - III. Issues addressed by legislation, or an existing Town bylaw, policy or procedure;
 - IV. A decision of Council or a decision of a committee of Council;
 - V. Matters that are handled by tribunals or courts of law.Frivolous or vexatious complaints, as determined by the CAO in consultation with the appropriate department, may not be investigated.
- 4.2.4. "Council" shall mean the body of elected representatives who govern the Town.
- 4.2.5. "General Inquiry" shall mean a specific request for information regarding municipal service.
- 4.2.6. "Service Request" shall mean a request made on behalf of a citizen for a specific service, or notification to the Town that a scheduled service was not provided on time.
- 4.2.7. "Town" shall mean the Town of Three Hills.

5. POLICY

5.1. Guidelines

- 5.1.1. The Town shall deal with Citizen Requests promptly and respond in a format that meets the needs of the citizen.
- 5.1.2. The Town will consider Citizen Requests as opportunities to evaluate programs and services for possible improvement and will record lessons learned.
- 5.1.3. The Town will deal with Citizen Requests in an open-minded and impartial way. The Town will ensure that filing a Citizen Request has no negative implications on future dealings with the Town.
- 5.1.4. Staff about whom a Complaint is launched will be treated fairly.
- 5.1.5. The Town will provide honest, evidence-based explanations and give reasons for decisions. Information will be provided in a clear and open way.
- 5.1.6. When requested and if appropriate, the Town will inform the citizen about the lessons learned and corrective action taken within 72 hours of receipt of request.
- 5.1.7. Information will be collection, used and disclosed in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, RSA 2000 c F-25. All participants involved in the Citizen Request process shall keep the details of the Complaint confidential except as may be required by law.

5.2. Process

- 5.2.1. A Citizen Request may be made in a number of ways:
 - I. Verbally
 - A. In person
 - B. Telephone
 - II. Written
 - A. Hand delivered
 - B. Mail
 - C. Email
 - D. Through Town website
 - E. Through Town app
 - F. Town social media sites
- 5.2.2. All Citizen Requests must be tracked from initial receipt to resolution in the Town's centralized tracking system.
- 5.2.3. Upon receipt, all Citizen Requests shall be distributed to the Department Head and

delegated as needed.

5.3. Investigation

- 5.3.1. A Department Head may not delegate the authority to investigate a complaint to an employee who is or may be named in the complaint.
- 5.3.2. If a complaint is made against the Department Head, the CAO shall conduct the investigation.
- 5.3.3. If a complaint is made against the CAO, the Mayor shall consult with Council and may designate a municipal solicitor, or other qualified individual at arm's length from the municipality, to investigate.
- 5.3.4. The designated investigator shall review the issues identified by the citizen and in doing so may:
 - I. Review relevant municipal and provincial legislation;
 - II. Review the Town's relevant policies and procedures;
 - III. Review any existing file documents;
 - IV. Interview employees or members of the public involved;
 - V. Identify actions that may be taken to address the complain or improve municipal operations;
 - VI. Document all notes on a Service Request tracking sheet;
 - VII. Contact the citizen where a quick resolve is possible;
 - VIII. Notify the citizen in writing of an approximate length of time if the designated investigator determines the issue may result in a lengthy investigation process.
- 5.3.5. At the discretion of the CAO, Council may be notified of Citizen Requests for information purposes.

6. **PRIOR POLICY**

- 6.1. This policy shall supersede and replace all prior policies, oral or written, regarding privacy within the Town of Three Hills.

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