

INTRODUCTION

- The City Clerk's Office launched its consolidated complaints handling process on March 12, 2010.
- This is the annual report on complaints received and actions taken by the City Clerk's Office in 2010. There is also a review of the complaints handling process in its first year.
- It should be noted that the City Clerk's Office delivered the municipal election in 2010. A number of complaints relating to the election and election services were received. Due to the exceptional nature of the election event and unique circumstances in how complaints are received and reviewed, they are summarized separately in this report.

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE COMPLAINTS

- From March through December 2010, seven formal written complaints were received from the public, logged, responded to and resolved by the City Clerk's Office.
- A summary table of the complaints is attached to this report.

Where Complaints Were Made

- Six of the seven complaints involved frontline CCO public service areas.
- Of these, three involved Council reception service and three involved Registry Services.
- One other complaint involved the process for hiring election staff and actions by City Clerk's Office employees. (This was not about the actual election process and is not included with those complaints.)

Subject of the Complaints and Results

- **Staff** - Four complaints related to conduct or actions of staff resulting in immediate corrective measures taken with staff in those areas.
- **Forms** - One complaint related to incorrect information on an application form which resulted in immediate corrections to the form.
- **Policy** - One complaint related to the conduct of a marriage officiant listed on a 'courtesy roster' and a perceived absence of adequate screening by the City Clerk's Office. This resulted in a comprehensive review of City Clerk's Office policy and procedures relating to marriage officiants to be implemented in 2011.
- **Procedures and Staff Actions** - One complaint involved a hiring matter and required an investigation and consultation with Legal Services. The result was comments being removed from elections employment records and an adjustment to procedures for elections hiring.
- **Anonymous Complaints:** It is the policy of the City Clerk's Office that anonymous complaints are reviewed and if necessary, investigated and corrective actions taken. We treat all complaints seriously. The City Clerk's Office does not automatically exclude anonymous complaints from the process. One anonymous written complaint was received in 2010, which resulted in the manager delivering instructions to staff on expectations for customer service and employee conduct.

Response Times

- On the elections hiring complaint, from receipt of the complaint to formal response required 47 business days to achieve satisfactory resolution.
- Excluding this complaint and the protracted investigation required, the average time for resolution of the remaining complaints, was under 7 business days.
- The City Clerk's Office procedures define standards for acknowledging receipt of complaints within the following timelines: telephone and email complaints acknowledged within 1 working day; mail and fax complaints within 4 working days.
- 3 complaints were acknowledged within the established timeframe, and 3 were acknowledged after the established standard. There was no acknowledgement for the anonymous complaint.

MUNICIPAL ELECTION COMPLAINTS

Overview

- 85 written complaints were received regarding the municipal election.
- In accordance with the CCO complaints procedure, telephone complaints may be resolved immediately and not logged in the complaints registry. One telephone complaint was escalated to a formal complaint.
- This represents a total of 86 formal complaints on the election process.
- This is an average of one formal complaint per 9,600 electors.
- 54 formal complaints were received on October 25th, election day.
- 28 formal complaints were received on or after Oct. 26th
- 4 formal complaints were received before October 25th

Breakdown of Election Complaints

- About voting place/election day staff conduct, actions and errors – 38 complaints
- Accessibility (e.g. no chairs, distance to walk, locked accessibility entrance, inadequate equipment) – 12 complaints
- Service and service levels (e.g. wait times, hours of operation, ran out of ballots, poor set-up) – 10 complaints
- Ballots and forms (unclear difference between school wards and city wards, ballot design, language on the form) – 5 complaints
- Location (inadequate parking, inappropriate use of religious facility) – 4 complaints
- Equipment concerns (does not protect secrecy) – 2 complaints
- Policy of voters list rotation – 2 complaints
- Combination of above – 13 complaints

Response and Follow-Ups

- For all 86 formal complaints received, the complainant was provided a response from the City Clerk's Office.
- Elections staff received training on the City Clerk's Office complaints handling process. Additionally, in preparation for the exceptional challenges of the election, systems were developed to receive, respond to complaints and take immediate corrective action during the election. This included on-site complaint escalation/resolution as well as making available email and telephone channels to electors.
- Complaints on the election received before the election events or when polls were open resulted in immediate corrective measures.

- Complaints received after the election were still received, logged, reviewed and a response provided. Investigations were conducted where necessary.
- All complaints received are treated as valuable feedback for planning better elections and by-elections in the future.

REFERRED COMPLAINTS

Adapting City Clerk's Office Procedure

- The City Clerk's Office complaints handling process includes procedures and instruction for staff when they receive a complaint about another division or about a matter outside our complaints process.
- Originally the procedure did not require these complaints to be logged and tracked.
- In 2010, there were 75 such 'outside' complaints directed through the City Clerk's Office complaints handling process. This far exceeded initial assumptions and expectations.
- The unexpected volume is likely because the City Clerk's Office was one of the first City Divisions to post a complaints procedure on-line with forms and instructions. Many complainants availed themselves of this channel to submit their issues.
- As divisions posted complaints procedures, the volume tapered off near year end.
- During the course of 2010, the City Clerk's Office adopted a new working procedure and began basic logging and tracking of these referred complaints.

Summary of Referred Complaints

- The City Clerk's Office logged 75 complaints which were outside the scope of the complaints procedure.
- 44 were referred to other City divisions, agencies or outside bodies.
- 31 complaints related to election matters outside City Clerk's Office responsibility or legal authority such as candidate conduct, MPAC voter's list, election signs, school board affiliation policy and legislation.

FIRST YEAR LESSONS LEARNED – NEXT STEPS

- Experience showed that staff successfully employed the City Clerk's Office complaints handling system. No major issues or gaps arose in complaints handling.
- The City Clerk's Office used the input from public complaints to correct customer service gaps and to review and improve policies, procedures and forms.
- Some refinements are needed to the actual procedures and to improve how the system is employed by staff to ensure continued success and improve acknowledgement and response resolution times.

Refinements to the Complaints Handling Process

- In 2011, the City Clerk's Office will review and refine the complaints handling process based on lessons learned during 2010.
- The review will include consideration of the following:
 - Formalize the receipt, distribution and acknowledgement of 'outside' complaints arriving through City Clerk's Office channels. Tracking of referrals needs to be improved. Logging of all actions needs to be defined and training conducted.
 - All forms and logs need to be adjusted to show acknowledgement times and response times. Formal follow-up procedures for after a response is delivered need to be better defined to ensure proper closure.

- Investigate better integration with intake and distribution of other official mail and claims received.
- Investigate an email box or other intake channels dedicated to complaints.
- Amend the procedure to address questions of conduct, service and actions of agents working on behalf of the City Clerk's Office such as contractors, consultants, etc.
- Look ahead to developing better systems for the volumes of election year complaints to improve consistency, accessibility, efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness.

Applying the Process -- Refresher Training and Follow-up

- A second round of training and follow-up with CCO staff is in order for 2011 to reinforce requirements and expectations. Lessons learned from 2010 will be shared with staff and any questions answered.
- This 'refresher' training will be delivered to the management staff and to key frontline staff serving the public.
- While response and resolution times were good in 2010, management training will emphasize greater rigour and consistency to improve referral of 'outside' complaints, improve acknowledgement times and suggest ways to shorten response times.
- Training will confirm management responsibility to contact complainants to establish target response and resolution timeframes and how to establish when the complaint may be considered 'closed'.
- Training for frontline staff will confirm roles and responsibilities regarding complaints and reinforce customer service expectations.

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Summary of 2010 Formal Complaints Received by the City Clerk's Office

	Business Unit	Complaint	Intake	Management Response/Corrections Made	Response to Complainant / Resolution
1	Elections and Registry Services	<i>Received: April 15, 2010</i> <i>Acknowl: April 20, 2010</i> Unfair treatment by elections staff regarding applicant's past performance. Concern with staff and process.	Fax	Investigation conducted by Director and reviewed with elections staff. Records adjusted as requested. Also, procedural adjustments made and staff advised for future.	Complainant provided with written apology and advised that records adjusted as requested. <i>(47 days to respond/resolve)</i>
2	Elections and Registry Services	<i>Received: April 30, 2010</i> <i>Acknowl: Same day</i> Country of birth information listed incorrectly on marriage application form.	Email	Investigation conducted by Supervisor, and actions taken to correct forms to recognize proper country name.	Complainant provided a written response on results of investigation and informed that form was adjusted as requested. <i>(7 days to respond/resolve)</i>
3	Council & Support Services	<i>Received: May 14, 2010</i> <i>Acknowl: Same day</i> Council receptionist conveyed incorrect information on open/closed status of zoo management committee meeting -- Complaint was also forwarded to zoo staff for response.	Email	Manager reviewed with staff the general procedures for making enquiries on meeting status to ensure correct information conveyed. In addition, going forward, reception staff will be provided information in-advance on open/closed status of meetings to ensure correct status on hand.	Apology letter sent to complainant advising of corrective actions and follow-up with reception staff. <i>(14 days to respond/resolve)</i>
4	Council & Support Services	<i>Received: August 23, 2010</i> <i>Acknowl: 4 days</i> Conduct of Council Receptionist	Email	Investigation by Manager and enquiries made with staff. Manager made immediate direct instruction to staff on appropriate, expected conduct and future expectations.	Email sent to complainant advising of expected staff conduct and corrective actions taken. <i>(5 days to respond/resolve)</i>
5	Council & Support Services	<i>Received: September 2, 2010</i> <i>Acknowl: Same day</i> Conduct of Council Receptionist	Email	Immediate corrective actions taken by Manager with staff person. Manager made direct instruction to staff on appropriate, expected conduct and future expectations.	Email sent to complainant advising of expected staff conduct and corrective actions taken. <i>(same day to respond/resolve)</i>
6	Elections and Registry Services	<i>Received: August 18, 2010</i> <i>Acknowl: 2 days</i> Conduct of marriage officiant – perceived lack of quality control regarding courtesy list of marriage officiants provided on request to applicants.	Email	Original complaint received by Ontario Registrar General who then provided a copy to City of Toronto Registry Services. Registry Services Manager conducted investigation and consultation with parties involved. Concerns with past practice resulted in withdrawal of courtesy lists of officiants. A policy review initiated by Manager (for new procedure in 2011).	Manager had discussions with complainant and subsequent apology letter sent. <i>(13 days to formally respond and resolve)</i>
7	Elections and Registry Services	<i>Received: December 6, 2010</i> <u>Anonymous</u> complaint on conduct of Registry services counter staff.	Mail	Manager made enquiries with staff. Manager reminded staff of expectations re. acceptable conduct and customer service standards.	Not Applicable. No complainant contact information to deliver response.