

ERINDALE VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

CONFLICT AND COMPLAINT RESOLUTION POLICY

The Erindale Village Association (“Association”) is committed to creating and maintaining an environment characterized by constructive, productive and supportive relationships. Such relationships are often subject to contrasting styles of understanding and acting, and to different points of view. It is essential that we all recognize that human interactions are complex, often difficult, and that we all can contribute to their success.

All persons involved with the Association have an obligation to communicate openly and respectfully with one another and to provide reasons for particular decisions or actions. When disagreements arise, greater understanding by all is needed. The presence of conflict, if dealt with effectively, offers an opportunity for individual and organizational learning including the identification of policies and practices that need to be improved.

The President of the Association is ultimately responsible for ensuring that conflicts involving members and volunteers, in matters involving the Association, are resolved in a satisfactory manner. The President has a duty to inform the Board of any conflicts that impinge on the Association’s ability to function or may damage its reputation.

Conflicts should be addressed at the earliest possible opportunity as unresolved conflict can lead to a stressful, and in the worst cases, a poisoned environment.

In the event that any person or group is experiencing a conflict or has a complaint about the actions of another person, the following guidelines will apply.

1. Communicate directly with the person or persons whose action(s) is(are) the cause of the complaint. People should reasonably expect to know if their behaviour or their decision is a problem for another person or group.
2. If the circumstances are such that the person with a complaint is unable or unwilling to communicate directly with the persons or persons whose actions are the cause of their complaint, either for fear of a poor outcome, or of reprisal, the help of one other trusted person in the Association should be sought.
3. The President shall aim to resolve complaints and conflicts that cannot be resolved by those directly involved.
4. In circumstances where it is the action of the President that is the reason for the conflict, the Board may address the complaint.
5. Communication of the complaint or conflict shall first be made verbally to the respondent. If this does not lead to a resolution that is satisfactory to the complainant, the nature of the complaint

should then be communicated in writing to the President. If the President is the cause of the complaint, then the complaint should be forwarded to another Board member.

6. A third party, acceptable to all those involved, may be of assistance in helping resolve the conflict in a (1) facilitation or mediation role where the goal is to help the parties restore a positive relationship in the future, or (2) a decision-making/arbitration role where the third party investigates what happened and decides who is responsible for the situation and what the consequences for the parties should be. The choice of these two approaches should be offered to the parties involved. If a mediated approach fails to resolve the matter, an arbitrated approach can be undertaken.
7. The parties will refrain from drawing others, not directly involved, into the process as a way of garnering support or gaining attention. This would include sharing the written complaint with others.
8. Complaints and conflicts shall be dealt with in a confidential manner. Meetings to resolve a complaint shall be open only to the parties and those attempting to resolve the complaint. The parties may have an advocate or supporter present. The meetings may be with the affected parties individually, together or both. In the interest of openness, no minutes or written record of what is said in these meetings shall be recorded although, if the parties agree, the outcome of the meetings or a resulting agreement may be documented.
9. Where the Board is involved in a conflict resolution role, communication with it should be through the President, rather than the whole Board. It is the President's duty to inform the entire Board of the existence of the conflict but the Board may appoint one of their number, or an impartial party to help resolve the matter.
10. The parties, and those helping to resolve the conflict, should avoid communicating the details of a complaint, by making or responding to allegations or giving advice by e-mail. Direct in-person communication, as difficult as it is, should be relied upon. E-mail messages can be used for arranging meetings or communicating details of the resolution process.
11. The President has an obligation to act immediately in addressing a complaint if the physical and mental health and safety of any of the parties is perceived to be at risk.
12. If threats to persons are made, or the President perceives a possible danger to a party or to others, including the possibility of one party being a danger to themselves, external professional assistance must be sought immediately.

This Conflict and Complaint Resolution Policy was ratified by the Board of Directors on February 8, 2021.