

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Concerns Regarding Sebastopol's Press Policy and Its Impact on Transparency
Date: Friday, February 28, 2025 10:47:42 AM

Dear Mayor Zollman and Members of the Sebastopol City Council,

This email is in response to Laura Hagar Rush's article published today, February 28. I am deeply concerned about the new press policy, which creates unnecessary delays, discourages open communication, and restricts press access to city officials. These changes undermine transparency, weaken government accountability, and raise constitutional concerns regarding freedom of the press.

Requiring reporters to go through multiple officials before receiving a response slows down information flow, making it harder for journalists to cover time-sensitive issues. Restricting who they can talk to and how they can ask questions limits press freedom and discourages candid conversations with city staff. Additionally, prioritizing responses based on whether a topic aligns with city goals allows selective transparency, enabling message control rather than open communication. These restrictions do not serve the public interest.

You've lost my trust with this policy. As a long-time Sebastopol resident, I'm very disappointed that you would even consider these tactics, especially in the media environment we're living in. I have worked in systems engineered like your policy and that lack of transparency is a terrible choice and I'm disappointed in the mayor and council for abiding by it.

A free press plays a vital role in holding the government accountable. I urge the City Council to repeal or significantly revise this policy to ensure timely and open access to public information. I also encourage the council to work with local journalists to create a fair and effective policy that truly supports transparency.

The Sebastopol Times is an incredible tool for me to stay aware, active and engaged in my community. Your attempt to control their narrative angers me and I'll be at the council meeting on March 4 to support the opposition to this policy.

Sincerely,

Luis Malbas