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To:

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[City Council](#)

Subject:

Disagree with Press Protocols

Date:

Sunday, March 2, 2025 7:44:18 AM

Dear Council,

I recently read about the new press protocols of the city council and I am deeply concerned. No limitations should be put on who the press can talk to and ask questions of. The press have the right to ask questions of who they choose, when they choose, in what manner they choose. I would also say that it is not only the right but also the *job* of the person they are asking to determine if, how, and when they want to respond. If they don't want to respond, the press can report that in their article.

Adding rules about limitations on who can be contacted, via what format ("email is preferred") and when ("please submit requests for interviews at least 24 hours in advance") put restrictions on the press' ability to report on topics that impact the people of Sebastapol. The flow of information will be restricted and the people of Sebastapol and the work of the city council to serve the people will suffer. Adding limitations on who can talk to the press and with what approval will also create a culture of anxiety and secrecy on the council, with dissenting voices and opinions being stifled.

Something I don't understand is, why establish these protocols in the first place? The press reporting on local governments has existed since local governments come into being. Why would the council want to place restrictions and guidance on that now? It begs the question, what are you trying to hide and what are you ashamed of? Speaking to the press is a well established part of the job of government. This should not be a surprise to the council and the council should not want to or need to impede those lines of communication.

At a time when freedom of the press and journalistic integrity is being threatened at every turn, it disheartens me greatly to see this happening at such a local level in my city.

Thanks for reading,
Dr. Morrison