

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Proposed Press Policy
Date: Friday, February 28, 2025 2:19:55 PM

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the proposed press policy, which would place unnecessary barriers on communication between journalists and city officials. Such a policy would hinder transparency, restrict free speech, and make it harder for our community to stay informed about local government affairs.

Under this proposal, all press inquiries would have to pass through multiple officials including the city manager, assistant city manager, and mayor” before responses are provided. This added bureaucracy would slow down the flow of information and discourage direct interactions between journalists and city staff. Historically, reporters have been able to engage directly with department heads, allowing for more accurate and timely reporting. Limiting these interactions will only create distance between the public and its government.

Furthermore, the policy preference for email correspondence over real-time interviews poses another obstacle for journalists working under tight deadlines. Requiring a 24-hour advance notice for interviews is impractical and could prevent important stories from being reported in a timely manner. Additionally, the provision that allows the city to determine which topics warrant a response raises serious concerns about selective transparency. **It is not the role of government to decide what information the press should or should not cover.**

At a time when press freedoms are already under threat nationwide, implementing such restrictions locally would be a step in the wrong direction. Across the country, we have seen efforts to limit journalists

access to officials and control the narrative by restricting which questions can be answered. Sebastopol has always prided itself on open government and civic engagement we must not allow these principles to be weakened by policies that restrict press access.

I urge you to reject this policy and uphold the transparency and accountability that our city is known for. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Andrea Caron

Silk Moon Owner

Sebastopol Center of the Arts Board Member

Liaison to Sebastopol Chamber for Sebastopol Merchants