

## Draft: Protocol for Media Relations

The public has the right to know the policies, plans, programs, and activities of the Green Space Advisor Board (GSAB). We want to use the media effectively to increase the education of the public on being good stewards of the environment and moving forward on securing land for green space in our community.

GSAB strives to maintain a positive relation with the media. This relation is essential to maintaining consistent provision of accurate and helpful information in an atmosphere of respect, fairness, and candor.

The Mayor's Office is responsible for coordinating and dissemination news about the City of Rochester Hills. City Council and the Mayor are primary contact with the media on routine matters as well as controversial issues.

On the occasion the media want to initiate contact with the members of GSAB to provide information or comments. Members are encouraged to do so on public issues about which they have expertise or on matters for which they have responsibility. It is a good practice to inform the Chairperson of such contacts with the media.

### GUIDELINES:

The following guidelines are provided to help ensure appropriate and prompt handling of media inquiries.

- A. Obtain the reporter's name and the publication or station for which they work. If you feel that the request for information is reasonable, give the reporter your full cooperation. Mass media operates around strict deadlines. Ask what the deadline is for article you are being interviewed. Respect these deadlines. Features sometimes are written over weeks and the focus of the story may change several times. The final story may not have your quote included. Certainly do not phone to complain. It is simply the way things go.
- B. Whenever possible, notify the Chairperson of your discussion with a reporter. This permits better preparation and coordination with other individuals or committees who may need to be involved to get the full perspective.
- C. In answering questions, be fair, friendly, and factual. Remember that honesty is the best policy in dealing with the media. Without it, no individual and no organization can maintain credibility. Each story has an angle or focus. You will increase your understanding of the angle by acquiring on the section of the newspaper the story is going to be placed. These clarifying questions and knowing your audience will help you answer the questions clearly.
- D. Normally the inquiries would be concerning comments on GSAB or other areas of your knowledge. Sometimes however a reporter may ask for comment on a subject outside of your comfort zone. If you do not wish to comment tell the reporter while referring them to someone you feel can handle the answer to the question.

E. There is no such things as “off the record” or not using your name. If you feel that uncomfortable with information don’t share it.

F. Remember that when you identify yourself as a member of the GSAB your comments may be interpreted as representing the City. Therefore, if you give a personal opinion on a subject, emphasize to the reporter that you are speaking for yourself, not for the City of Rochester Hills or GSAB.

G. When possible direct data type information in written form. Or follow up with resources in writing by fax or e-mail.

#### STRENGTHEN THE GSAB COMMITTEE THROUGH MEDIA CONTACT:

The media is powerful. They influence public opinion through stories and interpretation. That is why we have to understand where the mass media stands and the interests they serve so that we can be effective when the media want to talk to us.

Collecting stories and articles can give GSAB a picture of where to go to best serve the public. Understanding the power of the mass media can aid GSAB in potentially great opportunities to raise awareness and educate about the environment, open space needs as they apply to quality of life in our community.

#### ACTION STEPS for MEMBERS:

1. Be Prepared or pass on the interview opportunity
2. Be calm and honest
3. Build an relationship with the media whenever possible
4. Separate between personal view and “talking points” of the GASB
5. Reframe from naming specific properties or property owners

#### Protocol:

Green Space Advisory Board will designate one person to over see media involvement. Media contact is encouraged by all members to keep GSAB in the spot light however everyone can refer to one point of contact.

#### NAME:

Contact information:

The individual appointed will develop a strategic plan for handling the Public Relations with the media and collect articles with every ones help to have history of GSAB development to pass on to each board president.