

MEDIA POLICY

Often a public relations issue results from a conflict between individual rights and the rights of a group, or the perception of a conflict. Never underestimate the power of a negative issue because the more public notice given inside and outside the Association, the harder it is to resolve the issues because more people are involved, often people who have nothing to gain except the publicity of the issue (reporters)

Designate a spokesperson-All media inquiries should be designated to a single source for responses to avoid mixed messages and various stories from being told. This adds to the conflict and confusion. The spokesperson can be a Board Member-not necessarily the President, Manager or Attorney. The spokesperson should be a person who can remain calm in the face of adversity.

Assume you are speaking on the record-If you don't want to be quoted, don't speak.

Don't repeat a negative statement-They create sound bites...Rephrase any negative questions with a positive spin (Q-Why has your association banned street play? Instead say "The reason we have designated several spots away from the street for children to play is a safety issue. The children of this community are precious, and we want them to have a safe place away from traffic to play.)

Get the facts straight-If you are unsure of what is happening, has happened, or will happen, say you are not prepared at this time to answer the questions, but ask what the deadline is for his story, do your research and call him back later.

No Name Calling-Stick to the facts, don't editorialize

Maintain Your Composure-Don't antagonize the reporters, they have free air time to give the story and you only look bad.

Be Gracious-Don't start your conversation with "there is no story", this is a sure fire way to guarantee they will be digging harder than before because they will believe you are hiding something.

Be Succinct-Clearly state why the association took the action it did, don't ramble or repeat yourself.

Don't use the "us" and "them" terms-Call homeowners by their names (Mr. & Mrs.) not "those homeowners". The Board should be the community association board.

Be proactive-Give the media good news. Invite them to the events for coverage, give positive press releases

Lead with the most important details-Who, What, When, Where & Why
Story is divided into thirds-If they have to cut the story, they will generally cut from the bottom because they are taught that the Lead is the most important; the 2nd third is the next important and the least important details are in the final third of the story.