

Communication Best Practices for Planning Council Members

1. Approved Methods of Communication

- Members are encouraged to use **email as the primary method** for non-urgent communication. Emails sent to cfhpc@hfuw.org will facilitate a coordinated and timely response.
- Phone calls should be reserved for **urgent or time-sensitive matters** and must include a **voicemail** if the call is not answered.
- Messages should clearly state the **purpose of the communication** and any action being requested.
- Members are asked to contact staff **during normal business hours** (e.g., Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.), unless otherwise authorized for evening meetings.
- Calls or messages outside of these hours will **not be returned** unless there is a documented emergency.

3. Limits on Repeated Contact

- Placing multiple back-to-back calls, texts, or messages is **not acceptable**.
- Members should allow a **reasonable response time** (1–2 business days) before following up.

4. Sunshine Law Compliance

- Members must not discuss Planning Council business outside of **properly noticed public meetings**. Any attempt to deliberate, poll opinions, or influence decisions outside of meetings is **strictly prohibited**.
- Questions or concerns related to agenda items must be submitted in writing for **public comment during a noticed meeting**.
- Communication should remain focused on **official Council business only**.
- Members may not share or discuss personal information about other volunteers or community members.
- Members must follow the **established procedures** for filing complaints and/or grievances related to member conduct and Planning Council business, including submitting required forms to PCS as outlined in the policies.

6. Standards of Professional Conduct

- All communication must be **respectful, professional, and courteous**.
- Disagreements should be expressed **constructively and without personal attacks**.

7. Staff Authority and Boundaries

- Members may not direct, supervise, or assign work to staff.
- Staff are responsible for managing workflows and priorities in accordance with Council policies and applicable law.

8. Enforcement and Consequences

- Failure to comply with these communication standards may result in referral to Council leadership or Executive Committee for Violations of Member Conduct.

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