
[PDF] Item 9B Code of Conduct Complaint

From Loren Morse, REALTOR <lorensellsrealestate@gmail.com>

Date Thu 9/25/2025 9:22 AM

To City Council <citycouncil@ci.capitola.ca.us>

 1 attachment (155 KB)

Item 9B Code of Conduct Complaint (1).pdf;

Dear Capitola City Council,

See attached signed letter, but below is a body of the letter**

I write today out of profound concern that this Council has chosen to elevate a complaint rooted in retaliation and intimidation to the level of a public agenda item. To put Council member Melinda Orbach on trial for speaking openly about her own experience of harassment is not just absurd, it is a dangerous signal to every woman in this community that her voice can be punished for daring to tell the truth.

Melinda is not seeking clout. She is a full-time professional, a full-time mother, and a woman whose perspective brings much-needed diversity to Capitola. As someone who grew up only a mile away in a community made up almost entirely of white families, including my own, I know how important it is to have representation that reflects the richness of our community today. Her presence on this council is a breath of fresh air, and she represents voices like mine and many others who care deeply about Capitola's future.

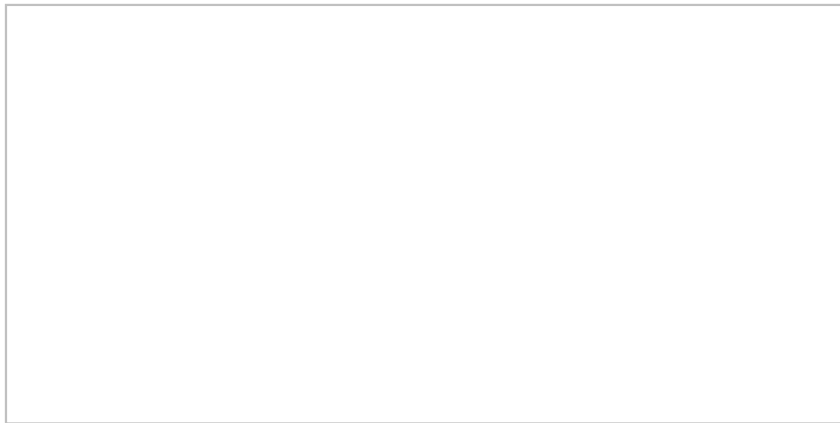
Council member Orbach has already acknowledged that naming an individual was a mistake she will not repeat. The heart of her comments on April 17 was clear, however: a woman, a mother, and an elected leader asserting her right to safety and to draw boundaries when faced with threatening behavior. In a political environment where women are too often silenced, minimized, or forced to second-guess their own lived experiences, Council member Orbach did what strong women do, she spoke up. That should never be treated as a transgression.

Rather than inflaming conflict, she has sought resolution, offering mediation through the Conflict Resolution Center multiple times. Her willingness to meet in good faith has been met not with respect, but with ongoing attacks on her character and attempts to discredit her leadership. Despite the limited time she has between work and family responsibilities, she still shows up, dedicating herself to making Capitola a better place. That commitment deserves this Council's respect and support.

Let us be clear, Melinda did not slander, demean, or lash out, she asserted her boundaries. For that, she has endured threats, online intimidation, and relentless personal attacks. Every woman in public service, and every mother in Capitola raising daughters to use their voices, is watching closely. To punish her would be to reinforce the oldest, most harmful message women hear, stay quiet, stay small, do not upset power.

I urge this Council to reject this complaint decisively on September 25. Capitola deserves leaders who stand with women when they speak their truth, who value integrity over intimidation, and who protect the right to safety and respect in public life. To discipline Council member Orbach for insisting on civility is to reward harassment, and that is something no city committed to justice and equity should tolerate.

Respectfully,
Loren



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DocuSigned by:

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Loren Morse

9/25/2025