
September 25, 2025 meeting

From Kiersten Elzy <kelzyloving@gmail.com>

Date Wed 9/24/2025 8:02 PM

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

To the Members of the Capitola City Council,

This letter is intended to convey my disappointment and concern regarding the potential compromise of our country's cherished protection of freedom of speech, on learning that Councilmember Melinda Orbach has been targeted for speaking openly about her experiences of harassment and intimidation. As community members, we expect all members to be treated equally with dignity and respect. Councilmember Orbach has publicly acknowledged that naming an individual was a mistake that she will not repeat. Her comments on April 17, 2025, were truthful, transparent, and rooted in a parent's desire to protect her family. Councilmember Orbach exhibited integrity by repeatedly offering mediation through the Conflict Resolution Center, while she continues to show restraint during ongoing, very public, and personal attacks. At this moment, the Capitola City Council has the opportunity to set an example in positive leadership and best practices. I am concerned that the decision appears to reward further the harassment experienced by Councilmember Orbach by agendizing a "code of conduct complaint" that seems without merit.

- Councilmember Orbach described threatening behaviors accurately. She did not engage in name-calling, slander, or personal attacks.
- Councilmember Orbach has endured months of online vitriol, threats of litigation, and intimidation.
- Capitola residents are witnessing bullying as an effective means for community decision-making, rather than the City Council providing an example of respectful discourse and healthy conflict resolution.

Capitola and the citizens of Santa Cruz County need leaders who are committed to truth and principle. Punishing Councilmember Orbach for insisting on civility sends the message that harassment is effective. My (now grown) children attended Capitola Schools, Junior Guards, and Little League. When they graduated from college, both from across the country and abroad, they chose to return, and each made their homes in Capitola.

I am grateful for your individual commitment to community service. There have always been, and will continue to be challenges in serving in local government, but please do not make the mistake of bowing to pressures to rebuke Councilmember Orbach. I urge you to dismiss the misguided complaint at your meeting on September 25, 2025.

Respectfully,
Kiersten Elzy-Loving
Santa Cruz, CA

