

Gautho, Julia

From: J Virk <jimmyvirk80@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 25, 2025 4:23 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Item 9B Code of Conduct Complaint

Dear Capitola City Council,

I am writing with deep alarm over the Council's decision to place a retaliatory and baseless code of conduct complaint against Councilmember Melinda Orbach on the public agenda. To subject an elected official to scrutiny for speaking out about harassment is not only unjust—it sends a chilling message to every woman in Capitola that her voice may be punished for demanding safety and respect.

Councilmember Orbach has already taken responsibility for her error in naming an individual during her April 17 remarks, a mistake she has vowed not to repeat. Yet her core message was unmistakable: a woman, mother, and leader asserting her right to protect herself and her family from behavior she perceived as threatening. In a world where women's experiences are too often dismissed or silenced, Councilmember Orbach showed courage by speaking out. This should be commended, not penalized.

Far from escalating the conflict, Councilmember Orbach has pursued reconciliation, repeatedly offering to engage in mediation through the Conflict Resolution Center. Her good-faith efforts have been met with hostility, including personal attacks and attempts to undermine her leadership. By entertaining this complaint, the Council risks validating harassment and amplifying division, rather than fostering resolution.

Let me be unequivocal: Councilmember Orbach did not defame or disparage—she set clear boundaries. For this, she has faced threats, online abuse, and relentless criticism. Every woman in public office and every parent in Capitola teaching their daughters to stand up for themselves is watching this moment. To discipline Councilmember Orbach would reinforce a toxic message: stay silent, shrink yourself, and avoid challenging those who intimidate.

I strongly implore the Council to dismiss this complaint on September 25. Capitola deserves leaders who uplift women's voices, prioritize integrity over intimidation, and safeguard the right to safety and dignity in public service. Punishing Councilmember Orbach for demanding respect undermines the values of justice and equity our community holds dear.

Regards, Jimmy