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## Dismiss Code of Conduct complaint, item 9B

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From Cynthia Mathews <mathews@cruzio.com>

Date Wed 9/24/2025 4:29 PM

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

To: Capitola City Council

I am writing in regard to item 9B on your agenda, the code of conduct complaint filed against your fellow council member Melinda Orbach. I have read the Code of Conduct in its entirety — a very complete and sound document — and can see NO evidence at all that Ms. Orbach has violated its standards. Quite the contrary: In reporting the behavior directed at her, Ms. Orbach was remarkably restrained in her statement. She simply stated the facts, called for civility in public discussion and behavior, and even generously initiated a call for mediation as a more positive alternative. She was entirely justified in noting the behavior directed in her; respectfully calling it to the attention of the council and community was in fact the right thing to do.

We can all recognize with sadness and foreboding the poisonous, even deadly atmosphere that has come to dominate political discourse throughout our country. Harassing public figures in their homes, vilifying them relentlessly on social media, filing unfounded suits and complaints — all this and more has eroded public respect for government at every level, and discouraged good people from even considering elected office or public service careers. We cannot let this atmosphere of hostility and harassment dominate our local communities. It has no place at all in Capitola.

I urge you to summarily reject the complaint filed by Mr. Maguire as being without cause. Beyond that, I hope you will take to heart the impact of the continuing vicious online attacks aimed at Ms. Orbach — attacks on her own character, and utterly demoralizing to well-intentioned community members and staff who simply want to serve in the best interests of their community. Who has the courage to speak out against these attacks? To remain silent is to suggest that this is acceptable behavior. It is not.

Please summarily reject the claim filed by Mr. Maguire, work to build a more positive working relationship with Council Member Orbach, and call upon the community to cease the hostile online campaign of disinformation, disparagement and harassment.

Most Sincerely,  
Cynthia Mathews  
Former Council Member and Mayor  
City of Santa Cruz