
Item 9B Code of Conduct Complaint

From Julia Greenspan <greenspan.julia@gmail.com>

Date Wed 9/24/2025 6:17 AM

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

Dear Capitola City Council,

I write today out of profound concern for Melinda Orbach, as this Council has chosen to elevate a complaint rooted in retaliation and intimidation to the level of a public agenda item.

To put Councilmember 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. Councilmember Orbach is a newer member and has already acknowledged that naming an individual was a mistake she will not repeat. Have we lost all empathy? Her comments on April 17 were genuine and valid: a woman, a mother, and an elected leader asserting her right to safety and to draw boundaries when faced with threatening behavior. In a heightened political environment where women are too often silenced, minimizing, or second-guessing their own lived experiences, Councilmember Orbach did what leaders do—she spoke up. That should never be treated as a transgression. Rather than inflaming conflict, Councilmember Orbach 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. And now, instead of standing with her, this Council risks legitimizing harassment by entertaining a baseless code of conduct complaint. 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 leadership is watching this closely.* To punish her would be to reinforce the oldest, most harmful message women hear: stay quiet, stay small, don't 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 Councilmember Orbach sets a dangerous precedent of rewarding harassment—and that is something no city committed to justice and equity should tolerate.

Respectfully,
Julia Greenspan, MBA