

Gautho, Julia

From: Ron Sandidge <ronsandidge@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 25, 2025 3:19 PM
To: City Council
Subject: tonight's meeting

Dear Capitola City Council,

I write with deep 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 Councilmember Melinda Orbach on trial for speaking openly about her own experience of harassment is not only unjust—it sends a chilling message to every woman in this community: that telling the truth can be punished.

Councilmember Orbach has already acknowledged that naming an individual on April 17 was a mistake she will not repeat. But the essence of her comments was unmistakable: a woman, a mother, and an elected official asserting her right to safety and setting boundaries in the face of threatening behavior. In a world where women are too often silenced or pressured to minimize their experiences, Councilmember Orbach did what strong women do—she spoke up. That is not a violation; it is leadership.

Far from escalating conflict, Councilmember Orbach has repeatedly sought resolution, offering mediation through the Conflict Resolution Center. Her good-faith efforts have been met instead with character attacks and attempts to undermine her credibility. By entertaining this baseless code of conduct complaint, the Council risks legitimizing harassment and discrediting her integrity.

Let us be clear: Councilmember Orbach did not slander or demean anyone. She drew boundaries, as every person has a right to do. For that, she has faced threats, online intimidation, and relentless personal attacks. To discipline her would reinforce the most damaging message women hear: *stay quiet, stay small, don't challenge power*.

On September 25, I urge this Council to reject this complaint decisively. Capitola deserves leaders who stand with women when they speak their truth, who choose integrity over intimidation, and who defend the basic right to safety and respect in public life. To punish Councilmember Orbach for insisting on civility is to reward harassment—and that is something no just or equitable city should allow.

Ron Sandidge
phone: (831) 251-1950
ronsandidge@gmail.com



