
Public Comment – Dismissing the Code of Conduct Claim Against Councilmember Orbach

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Date Wed 9/24/2025 2:08 PM

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

Dear Capitola City Council,

As a long time resident and former member of the Capitola FAC - I write today with deep disappointment that the Council has allowed a baseless complaint to rise to the level of a public agenda item. To place Councilmember Melinda Orbach on trial for speaking openly about harassment and intimidation is not only absurd—it is an insult to every resident who expects their leaders to stand up for civil discourse, safety, and respect.

Councilmember Orbach has already acknowledged that naming an individual was a mistake she will not repeat, and her comments on April 17 were rooted in truth, transparency, and a mother's instinct to protect her family. She has demonstrated integrity by offering mediation multiple times through the Conflict Resolution Center, and she continues to show restraint in the face of relentless personal attacks. Instead of rewarding good-faith efforts at resolution, this Council is legitimizing harassment by agendizing a code of conduct complaint that has no merit.

The facts are clear: Councilmember Orbach described threatening behaviors accurately. She did not engage in name-calling, slander, or personal attacks – she simply set boundaries that any public servant has the right to establish. For that, she has been met with months of attacks on her character and motives online, threats of litigation, and political intimidation. Capitola residents should not have to watch their representatives be silenced or driven out by those who would rather bully than engage in dialogue.

I urge you to dismiss this claim outright on September 25. Capitola needs leaders who protect truth and principle, not those who bow to intimidation. To punish Councilmember Orbach for demanding civility is to send the message that harassment works. My own wife is in public service for Santa Cruz County and I simply can not believe the Council is legitimizing bullying in politics like we've seen in other counties and at a national level in our country. Our community is better than that and that is not the Capitola I believe in. I stand with Councilmember Member Orbach in support.

Sincerely,
Doug Crowder

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