
item 9B code of conduct complaint

From erica brown <ericabrown95060@yahoo.com>

Date Wed 9/24/2025 1:22 PM

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

Dear Capitola City Council,

I am writing to express concern regarding the decision to place a code of conduct complaint against Councilmember Melinda Orbach on the September 25 agenda. Elevating this matter risks setting a precedent that discourages elected officials, and particularly women, from speaking openly about their own experiences of harassment.

Councilmember Orbach has already acknowledged that naming an individual during her April 17 remarks was a mistake she will not repeat. However, the essence of her comments was clear: an elected representative, mother, and community member asserting her right to safety and to set boundaries when confronted with behavior she found threatening. In any healthy civic environment, public officials must be allowed to voice such concerns without fear of formal reprisal.

It is also important to note that Councilmember Orbach has made repeated efforts to resolve this conflict constructively, including offering mediation through the Conflict Resolution Center. These efforts have not been reciprocated. By moving forward with this complaint, the Council risks legitimizing continued attacks on her character rather than supporting good-faith resolution.

The record shows that Councilmember Orbach did not slander or demean anyone; she set boundaries and communicated her concerns. The consequence has been ongoing threats and online intimidation. The Council's response in this matter will send a broader signal about whether Capitola values respectful dialogue and the right of its leaders to speak candidly about safety.

I urge the Council to reject this complaint. Doing so will affirm Capitola's commitment to integrity, fairness, and equity in public service, while making clear that harassment cannot be validated through official process

Respectfully,

Erica Brown