

From: [Ann Yang](#)
To: [Reanna Guzman](#)
Subject: Fw: Upcoming Agenda Item
Date: Monday, April 21, 2025 4:50:54 PM

FYI

From: Rachel Nyback <rnyback@stcross.org>
Sent: Friday, April 18, 2025 6:00 PM
To: City Council <citycouncil@hermosabeach.gov>
Subject: Upcoming Agenda Item

Dear Council Members,

I would like to begin by noting that I am writing this message on Good Friday—traditionally one of the busiest days of my year, with numerous responsibilities and preparations underway for the Easter weekend. Nonetheless, I feel compelled to pause and address an agenda item that I believe warrants serious reconsideration.

It has come to my attention that the upcoming closed session includes a Public Employee Evaluation concerning City Manager Suja Lowenthal. I am deeply concerned by this, as it appears to be occurring outside of her regular annual review process. I respectfully question the rationale behind this decision, especially in light of her demonstrable contributions to the City of Hermosa Beach.

Under Ms. Lowenthal's leadership, we have witnessed significant progress. The Capital Improvement Projects have expanded notably during her tenure. It was through her influence and leadership that Chief LeBaron applied for and was appointed as our Police Chief. Together, they have achieved what I have not seen in over 20 years of living in Hermosa Beach: a fully staffed Police Department—an extraordinary accomplishment, especially given current nationwide staffing challenges.

Additionally, Ms. Lowenthal's thoughtful engagement helped facilitate important conversations with St. Cross, ultimately leading to their willingness to participate in the Housing Element—something that had previously seemed unlikely. Her steady presence has brought much-needed stability to a role that, prior to her arrival, saw frequent turnover.

It is my sincere hope that this evaluation is not rooted in personality conflicts, which, while not uncommon in city government, should not overshadow performance and results. Should Ms. Lowenthal depart Hermosa Beach under these circumstances, I fear it will significantly hinder our ability to attract high-caliber candidates in the future. Such a decision may send a troubling message about the stability and professionalism of our City Council.

I urge you to consider the long-term implications of this evaluation and to weigh Ms. Lowenthal's substantial achievements and dedication to our city.

Thank you,

The Rev. Dr. Rachel Anne Nyback

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[The Rev. Dr. Rachel Anne Nyback \(she/her\)](#)
[Rector, St. Cross Episcopal Church](#)
[Hermosa Beach, CA](#)

Tonight's closed session- Evaluation of City Manager Suja Lowenthal

From Karen Klink <klinky2@yahoo.com>

Date Tue 4/22/2025 2:52 PM

To City Clerk <cityclerk@hermosabeach.gov>; City Council <citycouncil@hermosabeach.gov>

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Concerns about City Manager Evaluation....

I recently learned that some City Council Members have placed an evaluation of City Manager Suja Lowenthal on the agenda for a closed session. However, I have concerns about the lack of transparency and information surrounding this evaluation. As a result, I find it challenging to support this evaluation without a clearer understanding of what's behind it.

The need for transparency is paramount in this situation. What specific actions or decisions has Suja Lowenthal taken that warrant an evaluation of her performance? Is there a particular issue or incident that has raised concerns? I think it's crucial that the public is informed about the reasons behind this evaluation, especially if it may impact her job security. Without this information, it's difficult for me to understand the justification for this evaluation.

It would also be helpful to know what Suja's staff thinks about her performance. Are there any internal concerns or issues that have led to this evaluation? Or is this a personal issue or disagreement with certain council members? I believe that understanding the perspectives of those who work with Suja Lowenthal could provide valuable context for this evaluation.

Given the current state of the city, I question whether this evaluation is necessary at this time. With many projects underway and a strong Police Department, I worry that adding uncertainty and potential destabilization may not be in the best interest of the city. While I may not always agree with Suja's decisions or those of the city council, I haven't seen any evidence that warrants her dismissal or significant disciplinary action. I believe it's essential to evaluate her performance based on facts and a thorough understanding of her actions, rather than on speculation or personal opinions.

Much Gratitude,

Karen Klink
Daughter, Advocate, Essential Caregiver
310-339-9761

Support for City Manager Suja Lowenthal

From Kathy Welch <kwelch0424@gmail.com>
Date Sat 4/19/2025 3:03 PM
To City Clerk <cityclerk@hermosabeach.gov>

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Dear City Clerk, City Council and all involved City Officials,

My name is Kathy Welch and I am writing to show my support for our city Manager, Suja Lowenthal. I have been a Hermosa Beach resident for 45 years and a homeowner for over 40 after moving from Manhattan Beach where I was born and raised.

As a resident, I have been grateful and proud to live in Hermosa Beach and benefit from the best little beach city in California, mainly due to our government which includes our police department, public works, and City Manager. I have been a part of CPAB (Citizens Police Advisory Board) for about 8 years now and have become more aware of the solid direction that our current city manager has provided our city for the last almost 7 years.

Suja has brought to our city calm, directed, and balanced leadership. She works hard to ensure our community has the resources it needs to accomplish its goals in a thoughtful and productive manner. Suja is a primary reason for such a high retention rate in our city staff, including our police department. We have no police officer openings currently and have not lost an officer in 4-5 years. That is a reflection of strong leadership that people want to be a part of.

Suja embodies a winning team and people are drawn to winners. Please do not be swayed by a vocal minority who want to have Suja fired as our City Manager.

While it may be legal, this surprise, closed door meeting being held on Tue 4/22/25 is just like a back room, covert attempt to advance a few people's agenda in order to stir things up in the city. While it may be legal, something this drastic should not be held without public input.

I will do everything I can to show my support for Suja.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Welch
854 Bard Street, HB
310 895-0335

City Manager Performance Review

From Russ Gilbert <russgilbert.hb@gmail.com>
Date Tue 4/22/2025 11:45 AM
To Mayor Pro Tem Rob Saemann <rsaemann@hermosabeach.gov>
Cc City Clerk <cityclerk@hermosabeach.gov>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from russgilbert.hb@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Rob,

I wanted to take a moment to express a concern regarding the unscheduled performance review for Suja Lowenthal on the council agenda this evening.

There seems to be a prevailing idea among many of my friends and neighbors that you would be voting for her removal, despite a string of positive reviews and, as far as I can tell, a fairly notable string of successes.

The idea that you would act at the behest of a small group of loud and irrationally angry residents who in general run counter to the opinions and preferences of the vast majority of Hermosa residents, and whose hyperbolic "concerns" are usually complete fiction is extremely troubling.

I think of Carolyn Petty's passionate insistence that, if allowed, Tattoo shops or Cannabis delivery would destroy the fabric of Hermosa. These claims were made loudly and repeatedly over months and years, and the reality simply doesn't match the false rhetoric she continues to insist is somehow true.

Of even more concern is Michael Keegan's alliance with Kent Allen, who are on video committing petty larceny together. In Kent's case that's not even the only time he's done so.

I have a lot of firsthand knowledge of Kent's bullying, lies, and crimes, as he's falsely accused me of a felony, harassed my wife and 70 year old mother to the point where I've had to submit multiple police reports, and terrorized Polly Schneider, a beloved former schoolteacher in her 90's over something as silly as tree removal.

If you'd like to see the Police reports, they are here:
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/dolg8lgzlj3630oeuzhmr/AG6lQfwMz0vDpQJ3M4x9tSE?rlkey=0pyxtjbetnioea84hb0synktj&dl=0>

Kent seems to believe he's "in the know" on something that's "going down" tonight, and is stating publicly that is the case.

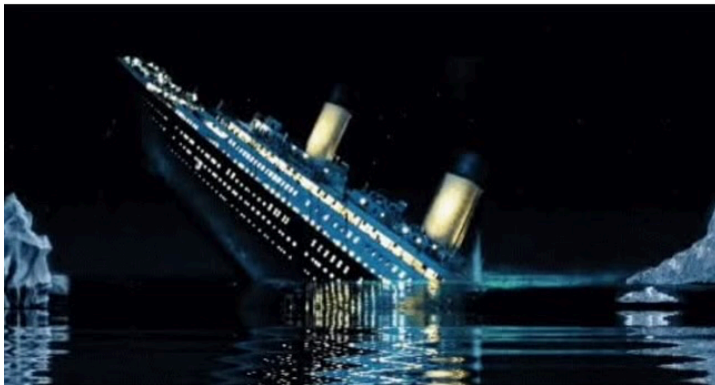


Kent Allen

3m · 🌐



It's going down tonight.



👍 Like

💬 Comment

📧 Send

➦ Share

I'm sure I don't need to tell you that, if true, his apparent foreknowledge of the coordination of 3 council members would appear to constitute a Brown Act Violation. I'd hope he's simply lying here, as is his habit, and you have no intention of voting to remove Suja.



More than that, given objective metrics like completion of public works projects and her previous glowing performance reviews, it would seem to leave the city open to a wrongful termination lawsuit. That's before we get into the chaos a sudden removal of such an active manager would cause, and the likely cascading resignations of her key employees.

There is no upside to this beyond placating a small group of mean spirited malcontents, and from what I know of you I don't think the effective halt and reversal of years of progress under your watch is the legacy you want to leave. Make no mistake, that's the only logical outcome of removing a city manager under these circumstances.

If there is information not available to the public, that needs to be brought up in public council session, not rammed through in private session with no feedback from the voters who by and large support Suja and her people.

Finally, the incredible public support she seems to have inspired really ought to be the end of the discussion.

I'd love to discuss this with you further if schedule permits. I can be reached at 513-484-2586.

Russ Gilbert
Loma Dr, 90254

City Manager

From catherine Hesse <cupkate7@icloud.com>
Date Tue 4/22/2025 11:50 AM
To City Clerk <cityclerk@hermosabeach.gov>
Cc Katie Janson <whirlyk8@gmail.com>

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My name is Catherine Vernon and my address is 2554 Ardmore Ave Hermosa Beach.

Thank you for reading my email.

Placing the city manager review out of the normal schedule doesn't feel right and should be a public conversation. This should not be closed door.

Two city council members (Francois and Keegan) have been openly discussing firing our city manager with other stakeholders and elected officials (Seeman) before a conversation has been had locally at council. This is wrong.

Hermosa Beach has made massive progress in the last several years including completing many community improvement projects and a fully staffed police department with competitive salaries. This isn't by accident. Our town is small and attracting competent police is difficult if we do not pay competitively.

Your city council leaders (Keegan and Francois) are planning what appears to be a coup and have already asked Carolyn Petty to step in as city manager. This isn't a decision they can and should make.

Thank you!
Catherine Vernon

HERMOSA PIE last day baking is tomorrow

From Hermosa Fields <hermosafields1@gmail.com>

Date Sat 4/19/2025 9:36 AM

To City Clerk <cityclerk@hermosabeach.gov>

Hi!

I wanted to take a moment to say goodbye to you, many of the residents don't realise what a difficult function and position City Clerk occupies. I am so proud to have you and all of the employee of Hermosa as business partners and friends. Hermosa Pie was successful because of the efforts of you, Doug Krause, the building and permitting dept. The city council and Mayor.

I and my son William owe a deep sincere appreciation for this city's obvious transparency. You are hard working, open and honest at all times. I have several University degree, I speak 4 different languages fluently and have worked all over the world as a wine and food professional. My last years in this line of work were spent here at home in Hermosa Beach. I have never experienced such a smoothly operating and helpful city government.

I would like to pay particular attention to two individuals who have taken years to garner my support and trust.

It's no secret that I have contributed over 1 million dollars in revenue to the South Bay and the greater Los Angeles area in my purchasing power, bills, taxes and licensing fees. It's what we do when we own important local businesses. Businesses drive the local economy.

If you could please share with the city council my heartfelt gratitude for Your city's service and support of me, my son and Hermosa Pie. I would like to commend the council for hiring Paul LaBaron as Chief. He is an amazing, hard working dedicated man who obviously loves our small beach town.

The second most amazing person I need to thank is Mrs. Suja Lowenthal.

We were struggling as a shop, Covid and the post Covid economy almost wiped us out. I was not a recipient of any financial aid during that crisis. I don't believe in that. All of us have to work twice as hard when times are tough, so we can keep a thriving, safe and successful neighborhood and city.

You know who taught me those values?

Suja. She was able to explain to me how important all of the little businesses are to Hermosas success and strength. I was ready to throw in the towel and declare bankruptcy. If Suja hadn't taken the time to talk with me, and explain city programs and goals with me, I wouldn't have made it through those dark days.

As a learned professional, I ask only that you share this with our mayor and city council. I couldn't have been the successful father, community leader and business that we are. Without Suja's guidance. I am so glad I listened to her.

I love Hermosa Beach as much as I love my profession. So thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

Sincerely,

Chef David Wallace

Owner Hermosa Pie and Cake Co. Llc.

Concerns Regarding 04/22 Agenda

From Jacene Dimson <jacened@gmail.com>
Date Tue 4/22/2025 1:59 PM
To City Clerk <cityclerk@hermosabeach.gov>
Cc Jacene Dimson <jacened@gmail.com>

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Hello,

My name is Jacene Dimson and I'm reaching out as concerned business owner in Hermosa Beach.

I'd like to understand why there is an agenda item today for a review of our city manager. This is not part of the normal schedule and I strongly feel that is not right.

THIS SHOULD BE A PUBLIC CONVERSATION.

It is unfair and wildly bothersome that some council members have been openly discussing firing our city manager before a conversation has been had at council.

We desperately need stability and that is not what I expect from elected officials. We need decorum and progress.

The city has made significant progress in the last several years including completing many community improvement projects and a fully staffed police department. I credit our current city manager.

Hermosa is a better version of itself today because of Suja. If we are to assess her effectiveness, it should be public and on regular schedule.

Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts.

Sincerely,

Jacene Dimson

—
Jacene Dimson
310.930.5667

Comment in support of City Manager, Suja Lowenthal-4/22 City Council Meeting

From Kamala Horwitz <kamalah@icloud.com>

Date Tue 4/22/2025 12:22 PM

To City Council <citycouncil@hermosabeach.gov>; City Clerk <cityclerk@hermosabeach.gov>

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I am a resident of Hermosa Beach and am concerned about the lack of transparency as it relates to the performance review of City Manager, Suja Lowenthal. I am sharing my concerns, as I cannot attend the City Council meeting tonight due to my work schedule.

Suja Lowenthal is skilled at what she does and is highly regarded. If there is no reason for the performance review and no transparency in the process there will be a negative impact on the ability of the city Hermosa Beach to function well, to meet the needs of the residents of Hermosa Beach and to retain and attract talent.

Thank you

Kamala Horwitz, M.A., LMFT
2200 Pacific Coast Highway, Suite 215
Hermosa Beach, CA 90254
424-241-0422
www.kamalahorwitztherapy.com

Public Comment Item 4d on Closed Session

From Mary Campbell <drmarycampbell@gmail.com>

Date Tue 4/22/2025 2:03 PM

To City Clerk <cityclerk@hermosabeach.gov>

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Members of the City Council,

I understand that there will be a discussion in Closed Session tonight about the performance of our City Manager, Suja Lowenthal. Therefore, I want to provide my perspectives as a former City Council member who worked directly with Suja through most of my Council tenure. I was part of the Council body that hired Suja and had a front row view of her outstanding leadership knowledge and capabilities and how she used them to “turn the Titanic” on a significant number of seemingly intractable challenges we were facing at the time she stepped into the role. I was (and still am) enormously impressed by how quickly she assessed and addressed multiple organizational issues that required immediate and significant attention. I was able to directly observe her identify the root causes for areas needing improvement and make the many important strategic decisions required to organize City resources to realize critical improvements in the ways we manage operational systems and technologies, strengthen public safety departments and staffing levels, and grow a talented workforce into a more cohesive and high-functioning system of departments. This has benefited our entire community. So much of what our City Staff do every day goes unnoticed and underacknowledged by most residents. While most know that this goes with the territory in public service work, it is important to call attention to the complexities of the jobs they do each day and how wholeheartedly they work on our behalf. We are so fortunate. No one works harder and takes that job more seriously than Suja Lowenthal. Moreover, she has earned deep respect and loyalty from the city employees that have also had a front row view of her dedication to her role and this precious community. That doesn't happen by accident, and it doesn't happen overnight. I hope this same level of integrity is present in the closed session meeting discussions this evening.

Mary Campbell – Former Council Member and Mayor of Hermosa Beach

From: John Keenan <jkeenan@aegworldwide.com>

Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 5:30:39 PM

Dear Council Members:

As nearly 20-year residents of Hermosa Beach, my wife Kristen and I are writing to express our strong and unwavering support for City Manager, Suja Lowenthal, and to urge the Council to reject any agenda item or effort seeking her removal.

Over the course of Ms Lowenthal's tenure she has demonstrated outstanding leadership, professionalism and a clear commitment to the long-term health and progress of our city. She has consistently prioritized transparency, process, fiscal responsibility and community engagement and under her guidance , our city has made measurable progress on a number of its key initiatives.

Removing a capable and respected City Manager like Ms. Lowenthal - particularly for political reasons and without due process, any transparent rationale or meaningful public input - would not only be disruptive to the city but deeply counterproductive. Such action would send a very concerning message about the stability of this council's governance and potentially jeopardize critical projects currently underway.

Hermosa Beach should be the place that embraces a range of perspectives from

smart, capable and dedicated people - no one that seeks to punish them for doing their job. Leadership requires courage, and courage means we should value competence over convenience and unity over division.

I urge the Council to act in the best interests of the City and its constituents and reject any attempts to remove her without cause.

Our city deserves, steady, competent leadership and that is exactly what we have in Suja Lowenthal.

Sincerely,

John and Kristen Keenan

1202 Cypress Ave

Hermosa Beach, CA 90254

Suja Lowenthal

From Tara Owen <tslitwin@gmail.com>

Date Tue 4/22/2025 1:14 PM

To City Council <citycouncil@hermosabeach.gov>; City Clerk <cityclerk@hermosabeach.gov>

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Hello City Council Members,

I am writing in support of

City Manager, Suja Lowenthal as a 11 year resident and homeowner in Hermosa Beach. I have had the pleasure of interacting with Mrs. Lowenthal several times during my residency in Hermosa Beach through my organization of several events in the city. she has always been helpful and competent in her role as City Manager.

The mere consideration of an off-cycle performance" review" for an exceptionally competent and highly regarded city manager like Suja Lowenthal—without clear justification—sends a destabilizing message to both city staff and the broader Hermosa Beach community. For staff, it undermines morale, disrupts continuity, and creates uncertainty around leadership priorities, making it harder to retain talent and sustain productivity. Suja is a highly skilled and steady presence in City Hall, coordinating departments, ensuring operational efficiency, and fostering collaboration across agencies. Forcing a sudden and unexplained departure would erode public trust, appearing politically motivated and lacking transparency. Such disruption, with all that's going on right now, will weaken institutional memory, stall important initiatives, and ultimately compromises the effectiveness and responsiveness of Hermosa Beach's government.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Best,
Tara Owen
734 Loma Drive
Sent from my iPhone