Del Norte Triplicate NEWS

Harbor Attorney Found in Contempt

By Linda Sutter January 22, 2026

On the morning of Jan 16. in Del Norte County Superior Court, the Crescent City Harbor District was formally held in contempt after its attorney, Ryan Plotz, failed to appear for a scheduled Writ of Mandate ruling initiated by plaintiff Linda Sutter.

Commissioner Nehmer was present and, according to statements in open court, texted Plotz to remind him that he was required to appear. Plotz responded that his staff had “mis-calendared the status conference,” despite the hearing date having been set on the record more than a month earlier.

The timeline is not in dispute. On Dec 12, the court held a remedies hearing at which Plotz appeared in person. During that proceeding, the Court scheduled Jan 16, as the date for issuing its ruling. Despite this clear directive, Plotz neither called in nor appeared—prompting Judge McElfresh to declare the Harbor District in contempt.

The Court went further, issuing sanctions and an Order to Show Cause. Judge McElfresh also directed that Plotz must appear physically, not remotely, at the next hearing.

For plaintiff Sutter, the incident reflects a broader pattern. Since being hired as Harbor District counsel, Plotz has repeatedly treated her—representing herself in propria persona—as though she is not entitled to the same professional respect afforded to represented litigants. His failure to appear today sent that same message to the Court, and the Court responded decisively.

The next hearing on Feb 20, will determine whether additional sanctions or corrective orders will be imposed on the Harbor District and its attorney.

Linda Sutter is a local independent journalist who reports on local government agencies. She has been a Crescent Harbor Commission candidate, and is considering a run for Harbor Commission in the 2026 election cycle.