



ROTARY CLUB
OF
SPACE CENTER

"Service Above Self"



Commissioner Jim Fonteno
North Channel Annex #26
Houston, Texas 77049

December 21, 1993

In re: Space Center Rotary Club
and the proposed Clear Lake
Community Center

Dear Commissioner,

On December 7, 1993 the Space Center Rotary Club Board of Directors raised the question about the Club's position concerning the proposed Clear Lake/Bay Area Community Center. In response, the following was submitted as a summary of actions taken by the Space Center Rotary Club and the office of County Commissioner Jim Fonteno since early 1993.

a. On March 17, 1993 Commissioner Fonteno canceled the initial agreement between Space Center Rotary Club and Commissioner Fonteno concerning the Community Center project.

b. Commissioner Fonteno agreed that when he has specific information about when and where the Community Center is to be built, he will then submit a new proposal for the consideration of the Space Center Rotary Club Board of Directors.

c. The Space Center Rotary Club has deposited the eleven thousand seven hundred eighty dollars and fifty-three cents (\$11,780.53), raised through a car raffle, in the Club's Endowment Foundation account.

d. The above funds will remain in the Endowment Fund account and can only be removed from this account by the approval of the Space Center Rotary Club's Board of Directors.

e. Commissioner Jim Fonteno had no objection to the above handling of the funds raised.

f. The Space Center Rotary Club plans to take no further action in this matter until it hears from Commissioner Fonteno.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Victor G. Maria".

Victor G. Maria
President
Space Center Rotary Club

BACKGROUND & LEARNING:

I must admit I learned alot from the senior citizens during our meeting of August 27th at the Nassau Bay City Hall. I was unprepared for the attacks and questions directed at me. It was quite evident that the Rotary Club was not privy to much of the information put forward by the senior citizens and that the senior citizens were misinformed about the intentions of the Rotary Club.

I cannot believe that there could be so much animosity built up at the various senior citizen clubs against the Rotary Club when Fonteno's office, which is the prime mover in the Community Center Project, has a liasion person (Ms. Lamb) working with the senior citizens. It seems quite evident to me that any questions raised by the senior citizens concerning the proposed Community Center project would have been directed to Ms. Lamb at the various clubs she attends. If this is true we can assume that she has known for some time that bad feelings were building up against the Rotary Club. I now ask, why did she not bring these growing angers of the senior citizens to the attention of Commissioner Jim Fonteno and to the Rotary Club so that the matter could have been addressed early and corrected to every ones satisfaction? Was Commissioner Fonteno made aware, by Ms Lamb, of the questions being asked by the Senior Citizens and if so why did he not properly address these questions or at least bring them to the attention of the Rotary Club which was being attacked?

MEETING OF AUGUST 27th:

My comments at the meeting of August 27th were in essence - that members of the Rotary Club, myself being present, met with Commissioner Fonteno in the spring of 1991 to discuss the proposed Community Center Project. It was noted that the last official word Rotary received from Fonteno's office was that the Center was to be built to the south of Cap Landolt pavillion with ground breaking to begin that summer whether Rotary decided to get involved or not. Ms. Lamb was present at that meeting. Our Rotary Club after being assured of having input on the design and use of the center, committed to raise \$100,000 over a five year period

committed to raise \$100,000 over a five year period towards the building of this community center. We later heard that because of unexpected problems the ground breaking was being delayed. As time passed rumors began circulating and misinformation spreading throughout the area about the center. Rotarians picked up on these rumors and began asking questions.

MEETING WITH MR. FONTENO - Spring of 1991

Present were:	James Hargrove	Victor Maria
	Charles Hartman	Billy Ray Smith
	Jack Lister	

I told Mr. Fonteno that I, as incoming President of the Rotary Club, could not answer the many conflicting questions being asked of me about the proposed Community Center. Mr. Fonteno explained some of the problems that he had to contend with and stated that he could not give any definite information about the center at this time. He said that he could not turn his full attention to this project until the Pasadena project was completed.

Mr. Fonteno shared some of his ideas on where he hoped to place the building and where he wanted to build a new sports area, but stated that there were several problems to overcome before this could become a reality.

Fonteno said that he felt embarrassed at not being able to give us more specific information and since he was not certain when he would be ready to start on the community center; maybe in two years - maybe in five years - maybe never; he would cancel the agreement he had with the Rotary Club. He said that when he was ready to move with plans on a Community Center in the Clear Lake area he would then submit a new proposal to the Rotary Club to consider. I then recommended to turn over to Mr. Fonteno the \$11,000 + that the Rotary Club realized from the Car Raffle. Mr. Fonteno refused the offer. It should be noted that a memo was dictated by Rotarians present to Billy Smith concerning Fonteno's canceling of the original agreement. End of meeting.

I immediately brought the above to the attention of then Club President Terry Hesson informing him that the original agreement was now canceled.

Duplicate

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MEETING OF AUGUST 27th -(continued:)

I explained to the Senior Citizens that the \$11,000 + that had been raised in the car raffle was placed in an escrow account where it cannot be used without the accord of the Club Board of Director's (15 members) and only for a community project. It was on this point, community project, that the senior citizens jumped. They demanded that the funds be turned over to them or placed in their bank account since they contributed great effort in raising these funds. They also demanded that the funds in question be used specifically towards the building of a community center.

I was informed about commitments made by the Rotary members when the senior citizens were asked to assist in selling tickets for the car raffle and I was shown a flier used during the car raffle in which it was clearly stated that the proceeds of the raffle would be used towards the building of a community center. I agreed that the Rotary Club appeared to be committed to use the raffle funds for a community center. But, before I could make a commitment to the senior citizens I wanted to talk to Mr. Fonteno and to the Rotary Board of Directors. I was verbally attacked and criticized. I was accused of fraud, of lying, of reneging on a commitment, etc. I must admit I was upset that Ms. Lamb never attempted to quell the hostility that was growing against the Rotary Club.

I tried to explain that I have no argument with the fact that the funds raised by the raffle were raised for the community center. I tried to explain that now I wanted to meet with Commissioner Fonteno since it was with his office that we first got involved in this project and I wanted to know exactly where the project now stands. I tried to explain that until I talked to Mr. Fonteno we could not be certain if there is a Community Center being planned. The senior citizens loudly exclaimed that a community center was planned and will be built.

Seeing that I could get nowhere at this meeting, I stated that I will get a meeting with Mr. Fonteno and that the decision of Rotary will be based on Fontenos recommendations.