



# ROTARY CLUB OF SPACE CENTER

"Service Above Self"



SPACE CENTER ROTARY CLUB

AGREEMENT WITH OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER JIM FONTENO

IN RE: BUILDING OF THE BAY AREA COMMUNITY CENTER.

After several discussions between members of the Space Center Rotary Club and Commissioner Fonteno's office, the Board of Directors in Feb. 1991 approved to raise \$100,000 over five years towards the building of a Bay Area Community Center. The above agreement was based on certain statements made by Commissioner Fonteno and/or his staff. i.e.

1. The Community Center will be built whether the Rotary Club got involved or not.
2. Ground breaking for the building will be in about three (3) months.
3. The Community Center will be built between the Cap Landolt pavillion and Nasa Road I.
4. Bay Area Senior Citizen Clubs have already started raising funds and have offered to assist the Rotary Club in it's fund raising.
5. It was first agreed that Space Center Rotary Club will have it's name on the bill-board at entrance on Nasa Rd. I. Loral Corp. who pledge \$40,000 towards the center was against the bill-board. It was finally agreed that a Rotary plaque be placed in the building.
6. The Space Center Rotary Club would have an office and a storage area in the building with a private entrance.
7. Space Center Rotary Club would have input on the design of the building to conform with Bay Area Community needs. A Rotary member (architect) was assigned to work with Fonteno's office on building design.
8. Fonteno's office said it would conduct a survey of all Bay Area Groups to determine the need and the use of a Community Center. A Rotary member had planned to do this but acquiesced to Fonteno's office.

As of March 1993:

1. Ground was not broken for the building.
2. No building starting date was available.
3. No building design was presented to Space Center Rotary.
4. No information was available to determine if this would be a multiple use facility. (survey results?)
5. Many rumors where circulating about the building. Rotary members were asking questions that could not be answered.  
What? When? & Where was the Community to be built?

A meeting was arranged with Commissioner Fonteno at his Clear Lake office on March 17, 1992. Present at this meeting were Mr. Fonteno and Rotary members Jim Hargrove, Jack Lister, Charles Hartman, Billy Smith and Victor Maria.

When told of the above, Mr. Fonteno said that he was embarrassed about not being able to give any specifics about the building. He said that he was having problems with the building in Pasadena and with the land he was acquiring at Bay Area Blvd. and Red Bluff, where he intended to build a sporting complex. He said that he would therefore cancel his agreement with the Space Center Rotary. He said that he would submit a new Community Center proposal to the Rotary Club for it's approval when the Community Center was ready to be built. Mr. Maria offered to give Mr. Fonteno the \$11,000+ raised by the Rotary Club in a car raffle. Mr. Fonteno suggested that Rotary keep possession of the money.

Mr. Fonteno did not write the letter of March 17, 1992. It was dictated to Mr. Smith by Hargrove and Hartman, typed by Pat Hargrove and signed by Mr. Fonteno

It was not until I met with members of the Senior Citizens Clubs on August 27, 1993 at the Nassau Bay City Hall that I realized the level of animosity the Senior Citizens had against the Rotary Club over this matter. It was evident that the Senior Citizens were receiving misinformation. I was surprised that Rotary was never contacted by Mr. Fonteno's liaison, Ms. Lamb, nor any other member of Fonteno's office concerning any controversy or anger on the part of Senior Citizens over the arrangements Rotary was making with Fonteno. I was very disheartened by the manner in which we learned how the Senior Citizens felt.

I told the Senior Citizens present that the \$11,000+ raised in the car raffle was placed in the Rotary Endowment Fund with the understanding that it can only be removed by the consent of the Board of Directors and only for use in a Community Project. At this time Rotary was not certain that a Community Center was to be built. In fact some of Fonteno's staff were also uncertain about this. As I told the Senior Citizens on the 27th, I had to speak to my Board of Directors and Mr. Fonteno before making any firm statement concerning the car raffle money.

At the first Board of Directors meeting in Sept., I explained my meeting of August 27th and the facts presented to me by the Senior Citizens. I explained that the flier used in the car raffle stated that the funds would be used for building a Community Center and must be held for that purpose. I also explained that I was trying to set a meeting with Mr. Fonteno, as soon as possible, to try to determine just where we stood on this issue.

JIM FONTENO - October 6, 1993 meeting:

A meeting with Mr. Fonteno was finally set for October 6, 1993 at his Wallisville Office. Present were Mr. Fonteno, Pat Hargrove and Debbie Lamb, and Rotary members Jack Lister, Charles Hartman and Victor Maria.

Mr. Fonteno stated that the Community Center will be built and that he has the money set aside and earmarked for this building. He had no other specifics. I told Mr. Fonteno of the growing animosity of the Senior Citizens against the Rotary Club over this issue. I asked him to write a short letter to all interested Senior Citizens Clubs stating that he had canceled the initial agreement and that the Rotary Club had the money (\$11,000+) deposited in an escrow account pending information from Fonteno regarding his intentions of building a Community Center.

At this meeting I learned of the letter dated May 24, 1993, signed by Terry Hesson to Commissioner Fonteno. On receiving a copy of this letter I could understand where the Senior Citizens got the information that inflamed them. I can only surmise that it was a copy of this letter that Lamb was waving in her hand when she was making accusations against the Rotary Club on August 27, 1993.

Mr. Fonteno asked us (Rotary) to send him a letter, on Rotary letterhead, telling him that the money is in a safe account and he would then do what was necessary.

LET IT BE KNOWN THAT THE SPACE CENTER ROTARY CLUB HAS DEPOSITED THE \$11,000+ RAISED BY A CAR RAFFLE IN THE SPACE CENTER ROTARY CLUB ENDOWMENT FUND INTEREST BEARING ACCOUNT. THIS MONEY TO BE USED FOR THE BUILDING OF A COMMUNITY CENTER AS PREVIOUSLY AGREED TO WITH FONTENO (SEE ITEMS #1 THROUGH #8 ABOVE ON PAGE #1). WHEN NEW PROPOSALS OR CHANGES TO THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL ARE MADE IT IS SUGGESTED THAT THEY BE MADE IN WRITING SO THAT THERE ARE NO FURTHER MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND/OR CONTROVERSY.

The Rotary Club has no objective other than to do the best it can for the community. If we have done anything to confuse or misstate our position to anyone I want to apologize. I hope that this memorandum will satisfactorily explain any misunderstanding that existed between the Senior Citizen Clubs and our Rotary Club.

Victor G. Maria  
October 10, 1993