



ROSSMOOR COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

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March 28, 2011

Mayor Kenneth Stephens
City of Los Alamitos
3191 Katella Avenue
Los Alamitos, CA 90720-1225

Dear Mayor Stephens:

I want to thank you for your letter and your offer for our communities to work together as we navigate through this very challenging governance issue. Unfortunately your offer came to me after the process had already begun. As I write this letter, our poll has been completed; therefore, I must respectfully decline your offer of a joint poll. I do believe that it is in the best interest of your community to conduct your own poll in order to obtain the same guidance from your community as we are obtaining from ours.

With that, I do want to share with you that I am frustrated by many comments and actions taken by members of your city council and disappointed that nothing was done to eliminate those actions. This situation has created confusion for me regarding your council's true intentions. It is unclear to me, based on the level of hostility that is coming from members of the Los Alamitos City Council if there really is a desire for our communities to work together or what your definition of working together really is.

I will share my concerns with you now so you know where I am coming from, but perhaps we can get together in the future to discuss these issues in person.

I am puzzled as to why an exchange of charges and counter charges [regarding Rossmoor] took place between members of your Council at your March 21st meeting. Particularly disturbing is that it took place with me and other members of the Rossmoor community in the room. I understand that legally you did not need to give us the opportunity to speak, but since it was stated that you (the Council) wanted to work together, it seems to me that it was a perfectly appropriate opportunity to allow us to respond to the comments made about Rossmoor by your fellow councilmembers.

I have to be honest with you that I felt it was disrespectful at best and unprofessional at worst that council members berated Rossmoor regarding our poll and the process we took, and for them to suggest that it was manipulated to give us the desired results and that it was "rushed", "biased", and "unscientific." It is bad enough that Los Alamitos City Council Members feel it is in their purview to judge and speak disparagingly about another community, but do so without having any facts; without once speaking to me to get the actual information is really beyond pale. It is truly a shame, because if anyone had called me, I could have shared with them that our sole intention in conducting the poll was to give our Board a sense of the community's sentiments regarding latent powers and to satisfy LAFCO that we had evidence of community support (if we did) should we vote to go ahead with our application to LAFCO.

The financial contribution from the Deputy Sheriffs Association (which was not solicited by the District) also came under attack. In fact, their involvement came about through the Rossmoor Advisory Committee, which has been meeting for several months and represents a cross section of interests regarding such things

as annexation, latent powers, incorporation and other matters of community interest. The Association only made a donation which was accepted by our Board; they did not participate in the development of the poll questions. Rather, the District received an unsolicited proposal from Probolsky Research, who stated that in the interest of transparency, that they had a request for a poll from someone in your city, but that the request had not resulted in an engagement of their firm. The polling firm worked with our General Manager in developing the poll with direction from our Board to obtain unbiased and reliable results which would guide us in our future initiatives.

I conducted the workshop that Mr. Edgar, Ms. Poe, and Mr. Stewart attended, and while it was passionate, it was not unruly or disrespectful. I am challenged to understand why you would allow members of your council to use the words "inquisition" regarding that workshop. I am unclear how one can categorize people who care about where they live, are passionate about their community, and asked direct and pointed questions as an "inquisition." I find the use of that term disrespectful to the residents of Rossmoor and I respectfully request that a formal apology be given.

Lastly, it has been stated by Mr. Edgar that "*RCSD leadership needs to be responsible and show leadership right now because you're representing your personal beliefs.*" If Mr. Edgar's definition of leadership is speaking without the facts, speaking disparagingly about another community, making accusations without allowing the accused to respond – then I want no part of his leadership. However, if Leadership is trying to find out what is best for your community; putting your personal beliefs aside to work on behalf of community interests; educating people so they can be informed to make the best decision they can; speaking respectfully, to enable others to share their ideas no matter how much you disagree—then that's the type of Leadership I want to be part of. I'm proud to say—that is what we in Rossmoor are doing. We have brought residents together from all sides of the issues; given them a place to speak and build consensus; conducted multiple workshops to inform and educate the community; hired an outside firm to create an unbiased poll to give us a roadmap on how to move forward. I challenge you, Mr. Edgar, and the entire Los Alamitos City Council to choose that path of Leadership.

In closing, I must reiterate to you that it was both embarrassing and hurtful to sit and listen to your meeting last Monday. While you did let our General Manager speak at the beginning of the meeting, neither he nor anyone else could have known what was going to be discussed during your Agenda Report 10A. To not be given an accommodation to speak at that time was to counter your stated desire for our communities to work together.

With the frustrations I am currently feeling and all that I have shared, I have not lost sight that I am charged with doing what is best for the residents of Rossmoor. For me, the best includes having an open dialogue with any and all who wish to discuss Rossmoor and its future. It is my hope that those lines of communication remain open between our two communities, but more importantly between our elected officials and most importantly between you and me. I look forward to having many more open, honest, and perhaps challenging conversations in the future on behalf of our communities.

Cordially,



Jeffrey Rips, President
Rossmoor Community Services District

CITY OF LOS ALAMITOS

March 22, 2011



Mayor:
Ken Stephens

Mayor Pro Tem:
Troy D. Edgar

Council Members:
Warren Kusumoto
Gerri L. Graham-Mejia
Marilynn M. Poe

City Manager:
Jeffrey L. Stewart

Mr. Henry Taboada, General Manager
Rossmoor Community Services District
3021 Blume Drive
Los Alamitos, CA 90720

Dear Mr. Taboada:

My colleagues on the Council and I want to thank you for taking the time to attend our City Council meeting last night. We appreciated the update on the Rossmoor Community Services District's (RCSD) potential application for latent powers and we look forward to revisiting the issue after the RCSD has adopted a formal resolution of application.

As you know, the City Council directed me to express to you, in writing, the City of Los Alamitos' desire to cooperate with the RCSD and participate actively in the polling and public outreach effort that will be undertaken by your agency. It is our goal to assist in the development of a statistically valid, balanced and scientifically defensible poll that includes the residents of Los Alamitos and Rossmoor. Toward that end, the City of Los Alamitos will provide up to half of the funding of the poll, up to an amount equal to the \$10,300.00 donated to the RCSD by the Association of Orange County Deputy Sheriffs.

We believe that this poll represents a unique opportunity to accurately gauge the sentiments of both of our communities regarding several very important and long-standing issues. There is a good deal of research and analysis to be completed in order to educate both communities, and to provide a basis for legitimate results from an informed community. To date, this polling effort represents the most valid method available in measuring the legitimate sentiments of both Los Alamitos and Rossmoor. Our offer is sincere, and we look forward to working with you, the RCSD Board and the consultant in developing a worthwhile polling tool that will serve our communities well - now and in the future.

We appreciate your time and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

CITY OF LOS ALAMITOS

Kenneth Stephens
Mayor

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