

Please share around.

By TOM JACOBS

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A Pearland acquaintance recently asked what this “ball park thing” in Friendswood is all about.

I assured him it isn’t really about ball parks.

It is about the integrity and meaning of democracy in Friendswood.

It is about the voters of Friendswood in May 1997 lawfully amending the city charter to prevent City Council from assuming debt, other than in true emergency situations, without voter approval.

It is about the voters of Friendswood in May 2009 lawfully declining to approve more than \$9 million in bonds for a debatable new library and unspecified “improvements” to the city’s parks.

It is about the Friendswood City Council not liking either of those lawful voter decisions, and seeking end runs around both of them.

It is about Friendswood City Council filing a legal action against its own citizens – in an Austin courtroom.

It is about Friendswood City Council muzzling opposition to its plans by using legal gymnastics to impose a bond of more than \$ 1 million on any who dare challenge City Hall.

It is about a sitting councilman who demonizes and dismisses those who dare challenge City Hall at “tools,” “cowards” and “ruthless special interests.”

It is about a city council that follows an ethic of backroom brokering and deal-making and cronyism, an ethic that will put more than \$1 million of Friendswood taxpayer money into the pocket of one councilman’s “friend for well over 30 years.” Councilman Barker, did it ever occur to you to recuse yourself from any vote that would steer taxpayer money to a close personal friend and business associate? Are there any more “friends” standing in the wings that we need to know about?

It’s about a “Damn the torpedoes!” approach to city governance and stewardship of taxpayer money.

It is about a city council that takes a paternalistic, condescending view of its citizenry, where “Daddy knows best” and will whip off its belt if you don’t agree.

It’s about a whole lot more than some stupid soccer fields and baseball diamonds.