

## PEGGY MENSINGER TRIED TO WARN US

Contributed by Administrator  
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January 31, 2008 The Sabatino Report Measure M, stands for Mike Zagaris Mayor Mensinger warned of takeover Zagaris has been electing his minions to political office for most of two decades. If you're thinking of voting for Measure M, slow down and think a little harder. The language that appears on your ballot was written by land-use attorney George Petrulakis, not by the City Attorney as required by the very Charter they seek to change. Measure M will enable Zagaris not to count on new councilmembers who will be elected under district elections and who might not be beholden to him. The amended Charter will dictate what they call "accountability". It has nothing to do with accountability. The charter will be more useful to Zagaris if it is open to interpretation. A majority on a new council will have to deal with the interpretation of the charter by the city attorney. Perhaps former City Attorney Mike Milich, who went to work for Zagaris, would be rehired. The present City Council can demand that the bureaucracy be held "accountable" by a majority vote. Seven of the eight provisions can be accomplished if this Council had the will to make it happen. These charter amendments do nothing to increase the accountability of the Council. Now, think about this, your vote, is required to raise the pay of the Zagaris minions on the city council. The ballot measure does not tell you the amount of the increase in pay. The Sabatino Report will tell you. It amounts to \$250,000 per year for the seven members of the Council. The ballot measure provides that a commission will decide the increase in pay. One can assume it will be a commission consisting of minions! One member of the commission In 1987 former Mayor Peggy Mensinger warned of the Zagaris takeover. Now that he has made the Mayor Mensinger prophecy happen, he wants a constitution. In 1985 Zagaris conducted a study to start a newspaper in Modesto. The idea was not a money maker. It was cheaper to lease the Modesto Bee. Are you thinking? A Modesto Bee article by reporter Jim McClung on January 14, 1987 is available on The Sabatino Report.com web site. Mayor warns of takeover Two councilmen at center of attack by Jim McClung Modesto Bee January 14, 1987 Modesto political activists who favor growth and oppose spending millions of dollars for a community center a within two votes of taking control of City Hall Mayor Peggy Mensinger charged Tuesday. "If it's a local political machine you want to see, I nominate the one responsible for council member (Patrick) McGrath's career," Mensinger told an audience of more than 100 at a noon meeting of Modesto Women's Network. In the course of her 45-minute talk, Mensinger listed the names of more than two dozen "missionary maneuverers," "mechanisms," "manipulators," "movers" and "minions" - individuals and groups she said are part of an organized effort to take control of the council and the city's future. "That's a well organized and financed group which has carefully calculated plan to gain control of City Hall this November," Mensinger said. "The strategy is to manufacture a ceaseless series of issues and make every effort to discredit City Hall." Reaction from those singled out by Mensinger was varied, ranging from dismissal of her remarks as political rhetoric and "fantasy" to indignant surprise Mensinger's remarks were delivered under the speech title, "Campaign Finance Reform and Political Machines in Modesto," an address she said grew out of last week's "State of the City" talk. "The voters will make their decisions in November," Mensinger said in prefacing her remarks, "But they need to know more about what forces are involved and what's been going on here since 1984," Mensinger spent half of her talk on campaign reform and the two council members she contends are most closely tied to special interests: McGrath and Richard Patterson. McGrath and Patterson are a minority on the seven-member council on several issues, including the community center. Three of the five "majority" seats will be on the November ballot. Messenger contends that in the last council election 66 percent and 59 percent of McGrath's and Patterson's respective campaign contributions came from sources with an economic stake in sewer trunk extensions. Both men say those figures are incorrect. Mensinger quoted comments by both men at City Council meetings in linking them to interests against campaign reform, the community center project and land developers. "these two hold office largely as the result of special support from those who filed conflict-of-interest charges with the state Fair Political Practices Commission against me, Carol Whiteside, John Sutton and Bette Belle Smith on behalf of Modestans for an Affordable Community Center," Mensinger said. Mensinger, Whiteside, Sutton and Smith were cleared of any wrongdoing in the FPPC investigations, Mensinger said. Speaking from a prepared text and referring to charts, Mensinger identified several individuals and groups she said have been involved in the plan to "gain control of City Hall:" "Missionary Maneuverers," according to Mensinger, are the directors of the Building Industry Association, Board of Realtors and the Chamber of Commerce, and the Democratic Central Committee, the Republican Central Committee and the 27th Assembly District Committee. The "mechanisms," she said, are Modestans for an Affordable Community Center, Citizens League for Economic Advancement and Revitalization, Modestans for the Future, and the McGrath, Patterson and Carmen Sabatino campaign committees. "Manipulators" listed by the mayor are Adair Communications, The Anthony Group, the Michael Loeffler law firm and the Richie Ross campaign strategist firm of Sacramento. "Movers" in the organization, Mensinger said, are brothers Steve, John and Mike Zagaris, Steve Marchick, Jim Thayer, Jim Dignan, Ken Adair, George Petrulakis, Bill Gardner, Gwen Abernathy, Marnelle White and Keith Schneider. "Minions" - those benefiting and serving the political machine - are council members McGrath and Patterson and one-time council candidate Sabatino, according to Mensinger.

Mensinger said many of those he named in the "political machine" were major contributors to Modestans for an Affordable Community Center when the organization was started in 1984. It provided the most vocal opposition to the redevelopment project, she said. "Bob Oliver did the talking but it was the money of the Zagaris family, Steve Marchick, Bill Gardner, Jim Thayer and other developers," Mensinger said. "They were also the big supporters of the McGrath, Patterson and Sabatino campaigns in which Gwen Abernathy and Ken Adair had leadership roles along with George Petrulakis, who knows all the political techniques from working for national campaign organizations." Mensinger also

named White, chairman of the Democratic Central Committee, and Schneider of the Building Industry Association as "key links" in the political machine. Contacted later by The Bee, those identified by Mensinger had varied reactions. "It's flattering that the mayor thinks I have all this power," said Steve Zagaris. "She imagines that I control the political activities of 25 citizens, five major community groups, plus the Democratic and Republican parties. "This is, sadly her political fantasy. The reality is, however, that this city is being victimized by a group of people who are ruining the city's financial stability. The mayor, drawing on the prominence of her position and past reputation, is the chief defender of this group. "But, if the mayor expects her untruths and misrepresentations about myself or my family to dissuade me from participation in the American political process, she will truly be disappointed." McGrath echoed Zagaris in criticizing Mensinger for supporting the community center. "Once again the mayor, in a rather common political ploy, has tried to divert attention from the most significant abuse in the history of Modesto," McGrath said. "Now that the mayor and her fellow downtown property interest friends have raided our city treasury to finance their self-serving project, it is apparent that the mayor has assumed her final political role." That role, McGrath said, is "running interference for the downtown special interest to complete their cruel deception of the public in the 1987 elections. And then, to institute sweeping tax increases to pay for their bad decisions." Patterson contended Mensinger's talk was a campaign speech for council member Carol Whiteside's mayoral candidacy. "it is amazing for her to infer that anyone who donates to your campaign can own you and then when someone questions how the city has spent millions on the community center they are suspect of having a hidden agenda," Patterson said. "This is just a repeat of her last summer attack," Patterson said in reference to a campaign reform speech Mensinger gave, complete with charts, last summer. Chamber of Commerce President Stan Hodges denied his organization was part of a political machine. "Our program of action is very broad-based in support of Modesto. I don't feel we are leaning toward any particular group," Hodges said. "The mayor has tried diligently to put the builders out of business the past 14 years," said the Building Industry Association's Schneider. "I think it is naive of her to think we will be deeply involved in the political process. "And, for her to think there is a conspiracy under every 2-by-4 by those who criticized her leadership ... illustrates how out of control she has really become," said Schneider, executive director of the BIA. Oliver, a vocal opponent of the community center, said, "It looks like the mayor is becoming emotionally distraught at the prospect of Modestans finding out how much she and her ... friends stand to gain financially from the ... project." Sabatino, who was defeated in his last bid for a council seat, "That's absolutely not true," of Mensinger's suggestion that he was supported by the BIA. "She has to maintain the two seats on the council or the people will learn the real truth." Petrulakis, a student of Harvard University and one of McGrath's campaign workers in 1985, said in a telephone interview late Tuesday, "It is unfortunate the mayor of a major American city has to resort to these sorts of attacks on those she disagrees with. I will continue to vigorously participate in the debate." "This latest attempt by the mayor to intimidate concerned citizens .. will not work," Marchick said. "This outrageous diversionary tactic by the mayor shows how desperate she is to keep control of City Hall."