



Re: Mamanda's advertisement

faizah jamal <breathconnection@yahoo.com>

Wed, Jun 12, 2013 at 10:29 AM

Reply-To: faizah jamal <breathconnection@yahoo.com>

To: Zulkarnine Hafiz <zulkarnine@figolive.com>

Cc: Mas <mas@mamanda.com.sg>, "Rosa DANIEL (NHB)" <rosa_daniel@nhb.gov.sg>, "Alvin TAN (NHB)" <Alvin_TAN@nhb.gov.sg>, "Norsaleen SALLEH (NHB)" <Norsaleen_SALLEH@nhb.gov.sg>, "ZURAIDAH ABDULLAH (SPF)" <zuraidah_abdullah@spf.gov.sg>, Julina Khusaini <julina@mhf.org.sg>, "mlsss@nus.edu.sg" <mlsss@nus.edu.sg>, "idris@sph.com.sg" <idris@sph.com.sg>, "siti_habibah@sza.com.sg" <siti_habibah@sza.com.sg>, "idris_bidin@sp.edu.sg" <idris_bidin@sp.edu.sg>, arohim <arohim@singnet.com.sg>, "mnaz@vsapac.com" <mnaz@vsapac.com>, Nur Hidayah Abu Bakar <hidayah.bakar@lasalle.edu.sg>, "zuraida@mendaki.org.sg" <zuraida@mendaki.org.sg>, "Lionel YEO (STB)" <lionel_yeo@stb.gov.sg>, "saat@sph.com.sg" <saat@sph.com.sg>, "warren@sph.com.sg" <warren@sph.com.sg>, Khir Johari <khir19@gmail.com>, "MCI Yaacob IBRAHIM (MCI)" <yaacob_ibrahim@mci.gov.sg>, "halimah_yacob@parl.gov.sg" <halimah_yacob@parl.gov.sg>, Hidayah Amin <hidayah.amin@gmail.com>

Dear Zulkarnine

I had taken my time to reply to your email of 9 June 2013 as I wanted to ensure that I am clear in my thoughts and choice of words to reflect my concern.

Just as I was about to send the email, I read the latest one that you sent on 11 June.

As it turned out it was a good thing that I delayed my response. It has shown me that it is even more imperative that I am as clear as I possibly can.

I am sorry to disappoint you yet again. At the risk of being repetitive, no, there is no hidden agenda, no desire to defend or endorse a particular individual, no wish to discredit anybody.

In that regard, you will find that in this email I also have no desire to comment on things that have been raised which I consider distract and detract from my original concern. I also will focus on addressing the issue to you as the ad was sent to me from your company.

So back to the **real** issue at hand – your ad.

I have only three things to make clear.

The first one is this.

I assure you that that I am fully conscious of my decision to write to your company in my capacity as Nominated MP. It is in line with the theme of a series of questions I have sought clarity for in recent months.

On at least four occasions in my public duty as NMP I had raised these specific issues relating to Kampung Gelam both with the URA officers concerned, as well as in Parliament -

(a) (a) the issue of an F & B business along Bussorah Mall that is openly and blatantly selling alcohol and the open consumption of alcohol by their customers without regard for its extremely close proximity to Masjid Sultan, the sensitivity of the mosque officials, the Muslim public, and the long standing Islamic heritage of the area, and seeking solutions that would encourage businesses to be more respectful of, and sensitive to, local norms;

(b) the issue of F&B businesses along Bussorah Mall taking up more and more of the pedestrian space to the point of making it difficult for people to walk along the Mall;

(c) the issue of graffiti art on some shophouses along Haji Lane, seeking clarity and assurance that this be in keeping with the integrity and essence of the rich heritage and tradition of Kampung Gelam; and

(d) the opening of karaoke joints and pubs on Jalan Pinang and Jalan Kledek, seeking assurance that URA does not allow any more of such businesses to operate in Kampung Gelam.

In these instances, I did not address my concerns to the businesses, as there already had been on-going dialogue about these issues between the authorities and the businesses as well as some press coverage. What I wanted was an update and clarity.

Underlying these questions is my concern that the integrity, essence and rich tradition of Kampung Gelam does not become diluted or ignored in the zeal of businesses to make money, or due to lack of consciousness for, and sensitivity to, the many, and the rich layers of its history.

This is the reason why I took pains to mention the personal connection to Gedung Kuning as well as the stories that my mother shared when we dined at your restaurant – to emphasise the need to include this aspect of Gedung Kuning’s history in your ad. It is also to emphasise that this wonderful experience happened, thanks to someone **outside** your establishment, not within it, as feedback and suggestion to show you its attractiveness as part of your service too, to enhance your business, running an F & B business in a public heritage building.

(As an aside, I am glad that you have now managed to recall my support for your business after I had mentioned my visits. Your earlier emails had made erroneous assumptions regarding my intentions.)

This is the reason why I mentioned my involvement with FOM - to highlight to you the importance of the exacting and high standards expected of anyone involved in sharing history and heritage with the public. In addition, and in response to your fear that FOM will refer to only one particular website on Gedung Kuning that you mentioned in your latest email, I believe that FOM docents and members are discerning people.

As a result, and in my capacity as NMP as well as on the basis of my family’s four generation- long association with Kampung Gelam, I am deemed a stakeholder by URA, and invited for discussions facilitated by URA to share how the integrity of Kampung Gelam can be maintained in the face of growing commercialism and growing distance from its rich historical past. Since then I have had fruitful dialogue with some business owners who agree and realise their responsibility doing business in a heritage area like Kampung Gelam with, in one recent case, culminating in a joint collaboration as part of our free service to the public.

The query addressed to your company is based on the same concern, and in your specific case, to request that the history of Gedung Kuning be represented fairly and accurately in your marketing efforts.

These are the reasons why I had consciously chosen to write to you in my capacity as NMP, and why my concern should come as no surprise. It is absurd to even think, let alone allege, that I had been out of line or that I have an ulterior motive, or that I had been unethical or unprofessional as you have mentioned.

The second thing is this.

Zulkarnine, you are, in my opinion, in the position of upholding a public trust.

You have chosen to do business in a 173 year old public heritage building in an important heritage area.

You cannot therefore consider yourself to be, in your words, 'just an operator'.

I would imagine that it is because of your good substantial experience in the F and B business that you been awarded the honour and the responsibility and not because you are, in your words, 'simple people'.

You and your team bear a high standard and duty of care and level of responsibility. Saying that the ad is just a 'simple ad' and not meant to be, in your words, a 'history lesson', does not cut it at all. Whether you like it or not your actions will be held up to public scrutiny and questioned if need be.

The fact remains that your business is in a building where up to only 14 years ago four generations of one family had lived. For 70 years, Haji Yusof's family played a major role in Gedung Kuning and in the consciousness of the people living in Kampung Gelam. It is also a part of the rich layers of the history of the Malays as well as the larger picture of the history of Singapore.

It would only be reasonable to expect that this be reflected in your ad in some creative way or other.

A quick word about the on-going spat. At the risk of repeating myself, I have no desire to defend any particular individual. The whole saga has been repeated ad absurdum by too many parties, and gone far enough, for far too long with parties seeking to lobby support for who is more right than the other. It has distracted everyone from the real issue and the need to stay professional has been forgotten. I refuse to be distracted. It is clear to me that it is no longer the content of the dispute, but the disempowering, destructive, judgmental, ego-based language colouring all the interactions that is the real issue. It shows an inability to take full responsibility for how this has contributed to the problem, an inability to stop the blame game, the victim and the siege mentality.

Surely it is so obvious by now that this way of communicating has not worked.

It is getting tiresome, and frankly, very boring.

Lastly, no you could not have accepted an apology from me. I had not offered one. The words that you mentioned are not an apology. I did not word it right. It meant 'I am sorry that you have taken the message in the way that has caused you unhappiness.' I would like to assure you though that if any situation warrants an apology, I am happy to offer it.

I agree with you that you are indeed a new kid on the block. I honour and acknowledge you for your courage in taking on this huge challenge. This is no easy task because yours is no ordinary F & B business in no ordinary commercial location.

I also believe that you need, and in fact, deserve, support from everyone of us. It has to be a community effort.

I remember, when saying goodbye and goodnight to you at the end of the Charity Iftar last August, telling you that I am willing to support you in any way I can. I repeated this support by following it up in an email to you dated 1 Aug 2012. By patronising your restaurant, clearly, I have kept my word in at least one way that I know how.

I appreciate and I thank you for the invitation to share ideas with your PR team for the coffee table booklet. I would imagine if, after all this, I am still asked for my input, my stand as expressed in all my correspondences would have to form the basis of whatever ideas I contribute.

In the meantime, with the benefit of my clarifications, I await your response on your stand now with regards the ad in question, as this has not been addressed in your email of 9 June.

After all, that is the issue that I am concerned with.

Best regards
Faizah Jamal
Nominated Member of Parliament

From: Zulkarnine Hafiz <zulkarnine@figolive.com>
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Cc: Mas <mas@mamanda.com.sg>; Rosa DANIEL (NHB) <rosa_daniel@nhb.gov.sg>; Alvin TAN (NHB) <Alvin_TAN@nhb.gov.sg>; Norsaleen SALLEH (NHB) <Norsaleen_SALLEH@nhb.gov.sg>; ZURAIDAH ABDULLAH (SPF) <zuraidah_abdullah@spf.gov.sg>; Julina Khusaini <julina@mhf.org.sg>; "mlsss@nus.edu.sg" <mlsss@nus.edu.sg>; "idris@sph.com.sg" <idris@sph.com.sg>; "siti_habibah@sza.com.sg" <siti_habibah@sza.com.sg>; "idris_bidin@sp.edu.sg" <idris_bidin@sp.edu.sg>; arohim <arohim@singnet.com.sg>; "mnaz@vsapac.com" <mnaz@vsapac.com>; Nur Hidayah Abu Bakar <hidayah.bakar@lasalle.edu.sg>; "zuraida@mendaki.org.sg" <zuraida@mendaki.org.sg>; Lionel YEO (STB) <lionel_yeo@stb.gov.sg>; "saat@sph.com.sg" <saat@sph.com.sg>; "warren@sph.com.sg" <warren@sph.com.sg>; Khir Johari <khir19@gmail.com>; MCI Yaacob IBRAHIM (MCI) <yaacob_ibrahim@mci.gov.sg>; halimah_yacob@parl.gov.sg; Hidayah Amin <hidayah.amin@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 11 June 2013, 10:16
Subject: Re: Misrepresentation of facts on Mamanda's advertisement

Dear Madam Faizah

We were surprised by Hidayah's last email. We do not know what was her objectives in adding this email to the minister, Dr Yacoob Ibrahim and Speaker of Parliament Mdm Halimah Yacob. Is it necessary? We extended the Olive Branch didn't we? This was the very first reason why we have stop communicating and engaging with her. She likes to throw weight of these people to us. We are simple people and do not agree with Hidayah's way of engaging with us. By now, I hope you can experience the feeling of how we were treated by her.

Our concerns to you was reinforced as based on Hidayah's last email. She confirms that you are aware that she send the email to Madam Rosa Daniel cced to the rest and even the press. That was a very strong message and endorsement and as NMP you gave. We concluded also that you endorsed her to include the minister and Speaker of Parliament to be part of this email list. My humble opinion is that you are putting yourself in difficult situation.

You are the Friends of the Museum, we hope you could hear us out. If we were to promote Gedung Kuning, how then if most of the articles on Gedung Kuning website is about:

1. Hj Yusoff, the family legals disputes and Hidayah Amin only. How about other historical facts? How about others whom have stayed at Gedung Kuning?
2. About time NHB or MHF should have an Official Gedung Kuning Website to educate the public a balance and factual about Gedung Kuning. Daily there are hundreds of school going children come to Gedung Kuning. There are foreign students learn about it. Imagine what kind of information we are feeding them with the current website.
3. NHB or MHF should have the rights to the domain name bearing Gedung Kuning as it is of