



CORAL BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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Testimony before the Committee of the Whole

33rd Legislature of the Virgin Islands

October 28, 2019 (submitted October 25, 2019)

Senate President Francis, distinguished Senators, and members of the community,

I am Sharon Coldren, President and volunteer Executive Director of the Coral Bay Community Council, a nonprofit organization serving the people of Coral Bay for 16 years.

Thank you for giving the Coral Bay Community Council (CBCC) an opportunity to testify on CZJ-04-14 (W) in Coral Bay, St. John.

First, if you have the time or interest today after the hearing, please come out to our office in Coral Bay to learn more about our work or take a tour of the marina site or other areas of our community. We welcome you. We would like to share our environmental knowledge, and community cleanup, stormwater and other grant and community-funded projects with you, and we could talk further about environmental, marine or other aspects of the Summer's End project with you and your staffs.

The Coral Bay Community Council is the local watershed management agency, and a nonprofit agency supported by over 450 members who are residents and property owners. Today we are involved in many aspects of the hurricane recovery and renewal process in Coral Bay, including ways to grow and improve our economy for all our residents. CBCC is especially concerned with assuring that development is done with good practices for both the environment and for the general public, and in accordance with the community's vision. See our website at www.coralbaycommunitycouncil.org.

To understand the community's broad and growing opposition to this project, its important to know the fundamental characteristics of remote, rural Coral Bay – that aren't really subject to change.

Recognizing Facilities Realities in Coral Bay

- **97 Blind Curves on Route 10 to reach Coral Bay, half day to full day to do business on St. Thomas**
- **Remote – hard to get service people out, parts from St. Thomas**

- **Very high cost construction and repair - therefore "KISS" principle**
- **Limited ability to have public water & sewer utilities for Coral Bay:**
 - **Costs & Public Priorities**
 - **Low population – about 1/3 of total St. John population**
 - **Surrounded by National Park & Coral Reef National Monument waters – cannot use Reverse Osmosis seawater for potable water.**
 - **Topography and wetlands – makes piping and wastewater treatment hard.**
 - **All buildings must have their own potable water (not desal) and wastewater systems (big concern close to ocean or in wetlands).**

(Note: CBCC has published Water and Wastewater Plans (2015) and a Solid Waste Management Plan (2015) as watershed management plan projects with federal funding. <https://coralbaycommunitycouncil.org/water-and-wastewater/>)

All these fundamental characteristics make any kind of large-scale development in Coral Bay more difficult, if not ultimately impractical and not profitable. It can be a very successful small family-owned business area, with the proper kinds of encouragement and assistance. CBCC and our community are committed to this kind of growth.

I have appended to this testimony the key findings of our latest community vision survey in July 2019. Complete report here: <https://coralbaycommunitycouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Coral-Bay-2019-Facilities-Vision-Survey-Results.pdf>.

Now to the question we face today:

This hearing is not about whether building a marina of some kind, somewhere in Coral Harbor or on St. John would be a good thing for the VI Marine industry and the economy. This hearing is about **whether the Summers End St. John Marina has any reasonable chance of meeting this objective, or any other positive development objective?** Testimony at this hearing will also point out the defective nature of the permit document and content which will mostly be discussed by other testifiers. These concerns are fully shared by CBCC.

First – the basics:

The proposed marina is in the wrong location. The shoreline is open to the ocean. There are extensive sea grass beds and sea turtle habitat within the marina footprint. The location would be subject to major impacts from tropical weather.

- **The marina is far too large.** The project proposes to dedicate 28 acres of Coral Bay Harbor to one private marina (roughly 50% of the entire inner harbor). The project would restrict other land owners from utilizing their shoreline.

- **There will be extensive environmental impacts to an aquatic resource of national importance.** The environment includes Essential Fish Habitat utilized by protected species (sea turtles, corals, marine mammals). The fringing mangroves in the project vicinity are a unique habitat for multiple shark species. Endangered coral species and seagrass will be harmed.
- **It is inappropriate to locate this kind of marina in such close proximity to the Virgin Islands National Park.** Direct and indirect impacts to Hurricane Hole, Coral Reef National Monument and VI National Park are likely to be extensive. Significant impacts to the quality of the human environment in Coral Bay are anticipated. There is no mitigation possible for any of these impacts.
- **The basic purpose can be fulfilled elsewhere on St John in better locations with less environmental impact.**
- **The acoustic impacts from marina construction (pile driving) would resound throughout the valley, hillsides, and underwater causing significant impacts to the human and marine environment – for over 400 work days – all day long - 600 Bangs per day.** This is assuming sand and clay – should they hit rock (for which no geologic studies have been done, according to NOAA-NMFS) it could take much longer – and cost much more. (The project sounds more and more like Pond Bay and other failed bankrupt projects, but as a community we are not willing to have a half built marina scar our bay.)
- **The project is not economically viable and is likely to fail while causing adverse impact to the local economy of Coral Bay** – as it has during its planning, would during its construction, and afterwards.

For complete information about the above conclusions, see the May 4th 2018 Comments by CBCC and *Pro Bono* Attorneys for Save Coral Bay to the submissions to the Army Corps (ACOE) in 2017 and early 2018 by the developer – also submitted.

<https://coralbaycommunitycouncil.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/EVAcUtMcMUdPqO5FFmTbavkBXku5nOmfrg3jPg6CcTcSPw?e=DUqeUL>

Since that time, the applicant has initiated environmental studies required by the NOAA NMFS and under the Section 7 Endangered Species act. **These studies and a government response to them will take several years minimum, and can lead to additional study requirements, should the applicant continue to try to promote their project in the face of environmental facts that show their plans would cause significant environmental damage.** Furthermore, proving in advance that any legally required “mitigation” activities to balance the environment losses would achieve the desired results is another expensive, time-consuming study process, not yet done. Additional information on this can be found in the NMFS response, also submitted, and linked here (highlights added)

<https://coralbaycommunitycouncil.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/EWa5HOEZFIRLpu8P6AJrOBQBy3UNwbap6pyDO5XCcwTbFw?e=O10NW8>

The unprecedented size and extent of the applicant's marina, as well as the completely unsuitable location for any marina are primary factors in the likelihood the marina will be denied by the Army Corps as "not in the public interest", but not till after the applicant has been given the full opportunity to be evaluated by every relevant federal agency. So after several more years of studies – say in 2023-- (based on reviews of other contentious projects), the Army Corps could issue a denial – OR the Army Corps could decide--under the current recommendation of the Virgin Islands National Park leadership due to its proximity to the Coral Reef National Monument--that a complete federal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required, which would require another expensive multi-year study, public hearings, etc.

Looking back at the permitting process for this project, much was done poorly. For those of you familiar with the CZM Act and Virgin Islands conservation laws, perhaps you can agree with CBCC's assessment that the initial permit applications would never have gotten through the CZM process in 2014, if Virgin Islands laws meant to protect our environment and ensure complete legal interests in the properties had been properly followed at the time. The Federal Agency letters from EPA, NOAA, and FWS in August 2014, and CBCC's and other local environmental organizations comments prior to the acceptance of the CZM complete application were extremely negative on the project and suggested recasting it. At the CZM public hearing, at least 43 parties presented detailed information about serious flaws in the project concept and the application. But the CZM Committee and DPNR went forward with no recognition of the legitimacy for these expressed concerns. Just Simple Politics. But that's not a very good way to achieve the community you want, or the economy you want, or get along with your federal partners.

The Virgin Islands could have been in control under its own laws and its direct delegated role in the implementation of federal laws had it chosen to enforce or encourage following environmental laws then by refusing to accept the "complete" application or voting it down back in 2014. Instead a project that could not properly receive regulatory approval, in CBCC's opinion, was pushed forward into the various federal approval steps coordinated by the Army Corps – and kept alive all this time – freezing potential significant economic development all these years on land parcels directly in the project scope – and also those of other neighboring landowners.

So this major development project, oversized, environmentally harmful, unwanted by the community, and judged to be a half-built failure at best is still in the multi-year – probably at least a decade – federal ACOE marina approval process. It is also in at least 3 local lawsuits, and more pending. There is \$103,000 sitting in the Save Coral Bay bank account to pay for the attorneys needed for the Virgin Islands Conservation Society lawsuit. Should it receive approval by the Army Corps, there is a nationally known environmental law firm, Manko-Gold, that is prepared to do an administrative and legal appeal *Pro Bono*. The community and the protection of law is not going to let this travesty happen.

Even for those who really want to see a marina happen:

A marina cannot be built in this location. Period. It is directly exposed to prevailing ocean waves and wind. Any marina in Coral Harbor needs to be on the north or eastern shore – where you cannot see the ocean horizon from land! As a boater, if you can see the ocean horizon – it is not a proper place for a marina, unless you have a breakwater or special mechanical devices, that are not part of this proposal, nor likely to be allowable under our environmental laws. However, it may be possible to have small access docks for dinghies and day trippers, and a water taxi in high season, along this western shoreline where the SEG currently has this permit in play (keeping these other methods from seeking permits). These docks would probably need to be removable for hurricane season.



Simply put – this St. John Marina, Summers End Yacht Club project is a **fantasy. It will not happen. It has been dragging down reasonable land and water development in Coral Bay** – and for the benefit of all St. John since 2012. It has dragged the economy before that, since the first Marina proposed here by Robert O’Connor was approved by CZM in 2006-7, and went nowhere. It is the wrong location. These dreams and the underlying agreements with the same local landowners have greatly stalled what would have been the natural commercial developments on these parcels of land during this 13-year period – and hurt these landowners – these people –directly – with promises of income (or buyouts) for their retirement years – which have not materialized. And as CBCC warned in CZM hearings in 2006 and 2014 – could not actually happen within the short, promised timeframes the applicants presented in the hearings and to the public. They have been very persuasive, but their project is a wish, not backed by facts. **Physical building on land or in the water is bounded by facts & dollars – not fantasy and dreams.**

How about making it smaller? Many people think that the current application will ultimately lead to a smaller marina in this location. The developers plan as big and invasive an idea as they can (this huge marina) and a compromise will bring the public the smaller marina they want – “win win”. Aside from the facts above, **SEG has repeatedly said they do not want to make it smaller; they do not want to remove megayachts**, or reduce the number of slips. They are past that point in this project. And the base line constraints – bad location – applies to a smaller marina.

Developer Lacks Real Community Commitment:

In the aftermath of the 2017 hurricanes, people in Coral Bay were heroically working with each other to restore our lives, homes and businesses. A notable exception was the lack of clean up at the two destroyed shoreline business properties under the control of SEG, despite many agencies pleading with SEG to do their part. CBCC wrote a letter to SEG in January 2018, requesting they clean it and offering assistance. This letter was not answered, and so we reached out to them and “the powers that be” via a newspaper article. <https://stjohnsource.com/2019/03/07/open-forum-hurricane-wreckage-still-not-cleaned-up/> Shortly after that, a couple of dumpster bin loads were removed, mostly of loose small interior items. The wreckage has not been touched in months; it has been graffitied. Other agencies and private individuals have tried to assist in getting the eyesore and dangerous debris removed. No cooperation, no success. It is near to 3 operating restaurants and several stores and must be passed by every person going to “southside” Coral Bay. Here is what it looks like today. Why don’t the developers have the community commitment to remove this eyesore on 10-19 Carolina now? What pressure will it take? **Senators – you have the most influence right now. Can you help get this eye sore removed before December 1st and the start of high tourist season?**



Property Taxes not paid:

We reviewed the property tax records on the Lt. Governor’s website: Years of unpaid taxes have accrued on some of the properties controlled by SEG. The current back taxes as shown in the tax bill information from the government website are displayed below. **The total now due (before penalties and interest) is \$40,088 on 10-41 Estate Carolina and \$ 48,774 on 10-19 Estate Carolina. Thus, realistically over \$100,000 is due and overdue to the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands on this developer’s tied up properties.**

Account #	Amount Due	Bill Number	Bill Date	Parcel #:	3-06402-0519-02	Legal Description:
0002310561.2019.RE	\$ 316.40	22280125	7/10/2019	Owner:	MARSH, CALVERT	10-19 ESTATE CAROLINA CORAL BAY QUARTER
0002310561.2018.RE	\$ 316.40	21180180	7/2/2018	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;"> <p>Property Data</p> <p>General Information Residence Condominium and Timeshare Commercial Building</p> <p>Parcel Number: 3-06402-0519-00 Proposed Value:</p> <p>Description: MISC. COMM. Total Value: 132,200.00</p> <p>Total Land Sq Ft: 10,454 Land Value: 132,200.00</p> <p>Value Neighborhood: STJ GENERAL Building Value: 0.00</p> <p>View: VERY-GOOD Most Recent Sale:</p> <p>Topography: GENTLE-SLOPE Date:</p> <p>Entrance: EXTRIOR-ONLY Price:</p> <p>Document Number:</p> </div>		
0002310561.2017.RE	\$ 1,707.82	20233135	5/31/2017			
0002310561.2016.RE	\$ 1,707.82	19347679	6/27/2016			
0002310561.2015.RE	\$ 1,707.82	18170943	8/22/2015			
0002310561.2014.RE	\$ 1,707.82	17598844	2/25/2015			
0002310561.2013.RE	\$ 1,707.82	16571224	8/28/2014			
0002310561.2012.RE	\$ 879.75	15647169	7/15/2013			
0002310561.2011.RE	\$ 879.75	14640812	2/27/2013			
0002310561.2010.RE	\$ 816.74	13682602	6/24/2012			
0002310561.2009.RE	\$ -	12819388	2/17/2012			
0002310561.2008.RE	\$ 879.75	12169530	7/15/2011			
0002310561.2007.RE	\$ 879.75	11038180	2/7/2011			
0002310561.2006.RE	\$ -	9828125	6/24/2010			
0002310561.2005.RE	\$ -	5719999	11/17/2006			

(RESTAURANT ISLAND BLUES)

Account #	Amount Due	Bill Number	Bill Date	Parcel #:	3-06402-0519-01	Legal Description:
0002310555.2019.RE	\$ 476.37	22450493	7/10/2019	Owner:	MARSH, CALVERT C/C	10-19 EST. CAROLINA CORAL BAY QTR
0002310555.2018.RE	\$ 476.37	21328372	7/2/2018	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;"> <p>Property Data</p> <p>General Information Residence Condominium and Timeshare Commercial Building</p> <p>Parcel Number: 3-06402-0519-01 Proposed Value:</p> <p>Description: MF 5-10 UNITS Total Value: 67,000.00</p> <p>Total Land Sq Ft: Land Value: 0.00</p> <p>Value Neighborhood: STJ GENERAL Building Value: 67,000.00</p> <p>View: VERY-GOOD Most Recent Sale:</p> <p>Topography: GENTLE-SLOPE Date:</p> <p>Entrance: EXTRIOR-ONLY Price:</p> <p>Document Number:</p> </div>		
0002310555.2017.RE	\$ 5,552.20	20417275	5/31/2017			
0002310555.2016.RE	\$ 5,552.20	19532072	6/27/2016			
0002310555.2015.RE	\$ 5,552.20	18369801	8/22/2015			
0002310555.2014.RE	\$ 5,552.20	17503001	2/25/2015			
0002310555.2013.RE	\$ 5,525.65	16477009	8/28/2014			
0002310555.2012.RE	\$ -	15586614	7/15/2013			

(HOTEL SHORELINE INN)

Account #	Amount Due	Bill Number	Bill Date	Parcel #:	3-06402-0519-00	Legal Description:
0002310549.2019.RE	\$ 939.94	22142009	7/10/2019	Owner:	CALVERT MARSH, INC	10-19 CAROLINA CORAL BAY QTR
0002310549.2018.RE	\$ 939.94	21045155	7/2/2018	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;"> <p>Property Data</p> <p>General Information Residence Condominium and Timeshare Commercial Building</p> <p>Parcel Number: 3-06402-0519-00 Proposed Value:</p> <p>Description: MISC. COMM. Total Value: 132,200.00</p> <p>Total Land Sq Ft: 10,454 Land Value: 132,200.00</p> <p>Value Neighborhood: STJ GENERAL Building Value: 0.00</p> <p>View: VERY-GOOD Most Recent Sale:</p> <p>Topography: GENTLE-SLOPE Date:</p> <p>Entrance: EXTRIOR-ONLY Price:</p> <p>Document Number:</p> </div>		
0002310549.2017.RE	\$ 939.94	20085812	5/31/2017			
0002310549.2016.RE	\$ 939.94	19089421	6/27/2016			
0002310549.2015.RE	\$ 939.94	18014138	8/22/2015			
0002310549.2014.RE	\$ 939.94	17502990	2/25/2015			
0002310549.2013.RE	\$ 939.94	16476998	8/28/2014			
0002310549.2012.RE	\$ -	15545056	7/15/2013			
0002310549.2011.RE	\$ -	14693810	2/27/2013			
TOTAL ALL BILLS	\$ 48,774.41					

(LAND ONLY / NO BUILDINGS)

Account #	Amount Due	Bill Number	Bill Date	Parcel #:	3-06402-0724-00	Legal Description:
0002310809.2019.RE	\$ 5,073.70	22141998	7/10/2019	Owner:	CALVERT MARSH, INC.	10-41 EST. CAROLINA CORAL BAY QUARTER
0002310809.2018.RE	\$ 5,073.70	21045144	7/2/2018			
0002310809.2017.RE	\$ 5,988.04	20085801	5/31/2017			
0002310809.2016.RE	\$ 5,988.04	19485630	6/27/2016			
0002310809.2015.RE	\$ 5,988.04	18014127	8/22/2015			
0002310809.2014.RE	\$ 5,988.04	17503089	2/25/2015			
0002310809.2013.RE	\$ 5,988.04	16477097	8/28/2014			
0002310809.2012.RE	\$ -	15586702	7/15/2013			
TOTAL TAX UNPAID	\$ 40,087.60					

Why are these taxes not paid? **Why is the 33rd Legislature even considering approving a permit and lease schedule - related to land that has not kept up its taxes?**

Note that we have heard (without conclusive documentary evidence) that the agreements with the underlying landowners provide for a long-term payout (similar to a ground rent lease), but leave the landowners responsible for the land taxes (not the lessee which is usually the case). In the particular case of 10-19, it is believed that the lessee (SEG) is responsible for the building taxes and insurance for the Island Blues and Shoreline Inn buildings, now hurricane wrecks, but not the underlying land taxes.

This is troubling on various levels. First why has SEG not kept up with the taxes? With the multiple millions of dollars they claim to have access to, these taxes are known expenses and should be trivial amounts to pay – and keep up with ON TIME. Second, since we are told SEG was required to have insurance on the buildings, was there insurance? Was there a payout? In any case, why is the wreckage of the two shoreline buildings still not removed?

If it is true that the underlying landowners were left with responsibility for the land taxes, this would be a very unusual agreement. For those of you unfamiliar with commercial leases for vacant land or whole buildings: normally they are “triple net” meaning that all taxes, insurance and other facilities expenses are the tenant’s. The landlord gets a sizable check of income, sometimes increasing over time, and no direct responsibilities. Some references: <https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/040115/what-are-differences-between-single-double-and-triplenet-leases.asp> and <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/ground-lease.asp>

These deals were supposed to be good for our neighbors, the Clendinens and Marshes, when they were first announced in 2014 – retirement income for the elderly owners right away, and a nest egg and substantial inheritance for their descendants.

In this presented business case, the landowners seem to be left with ongoing land tax liabilities, and a fixed payment of “rent” (as shown in the business proforma SEG gave to ACOE in 2017) despite the fact that taxes would probably increase on the land rather quickly should the marina and new shoreline buildings be built.

In the name of everything that is fair, I ask the legislature to deny any progress on this permit until the taxes are paid in full, with assurances that the underlying local landowners are getting straight-up proper business deals for these long term leases, actual current \$ income, and that

the developer keeps the taxes paid – and actually pays reasonable rents to the property owners during the next several years while seeking federal permits, and pays the submerged land rents during that period too, since no one else can put in a permit to do something there.



Map of Land Parcels in permit and changes over time.

The Myth of a Successful Marina that provides Local Jobs:

Being a sailor myself and having travelled 8 years by boat in the Eastern Caribbean, I am personally familiar with St. Maarten, Antigua, St. Lucia, Union Island and other ports of call. I have seen a lot of different kinds of marinas – and the ones that cater to megayachts – and who gets the jobs in the marinas, and the kind of customers. From a social perspective, for the island, this kind of marina would just serve to accentuate perceived differences between haves and have-nots. Entitled visitors

Despite public statements that the reason for the marina is adding “jobs for St. Johnians”. The actual job counts in the applicants’ plans have always been low --for the whole land and water complex – including seasonal jobs. Pre-hurricane we were able to count up to 80 jobs at the existing land restaurants and stores. In a marina designed like this that cannot provide maintenance services, there is very little job or business growth opportunity – because it can’t be sustained year round (by their own plan’s admissions). That can work in a city with other opportunities, but won’t work in remote Coral Bay. It won’t feed a family, provide health insurance or pay a mortgage. The young men who seem aimless won’t find opportunities here, just more exclusion.

What is the purpose of a megayacht marina in the Caribbean?

It has to be convenient to an airport for owners and paying guests, and to allow the crew downtime and to onload supplies that have been shipped in. Without those two elements, its usefulness is very limited: “A quick stop ‘cuz something went wrong”.

When owners and yacht renters are here in the Caribbean vacationing – they stay on anchor, switching bays and views, eating the chef-prepared meals on board – that they pre-ordered months in advance. They don’t spend local money in various anchorages. They don’t stay in marinas – if they had wanted to be on land for a vacation, they rent or own a villa. They explore the VI National Park by taking their boat to the bays, or taking the ship’s tender, not by taking a rental car or taxi from a marina.

For the smaller boats, a cruising rental fleet needs a marina safe in nearly all conditions, (so it can rent 10 months a year); Not one that must be vacated in high winds, seas, or any risk of storm conditions. Individuals would probably like the marina – but according to the applicant’s business plan submitted to the ACOE in 2017, the megayachts subsidize the smaller yachts – so you cannot reduce the size of the marina. (NOTE: I am reporting what was claimed, not verifying their financials.)

“WHAT DO THE PEOPLE WANT”?

What do the people who reside in Coral Bay want? (See the survey results attached to this testimony.)

What do the people who reside in Cruz Bay want in a Coral Bay Marina?

What do the truckers, haulers, and larger construction businesses want?

The easy answer is “Different Things.”

So, dear Senators, when you talk to people about this project or any project in Coral Bay, please take note of where the person lives and what their own business interests are. Take note of whether they live in a house in Coral Bay that is in the amphitheatre that overlooks the harbor and are sensitive to noise, light or other concerns. Take note whether they would be subject to listening to the “300 strikes” of a hammer drill for EACH of the 960 pilings, at a rate of two pilings completed a day for more than a year. (per applicant estimate and NOAA NMFS letter attached). Take note of the survey results that showed just 4% wanting a large scale marina, and over 90% wanting to stay different from urbanized parts of the VI. Our character is valued.

What would happen to the current growing vacation villa tourism economy – as described this week in a CNN on-line article – seen by many all over the world? .

<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/st-john-virgin-islands-bounces-back/index.html>. Coral Bay would certainly get a different description.

What would happen to our repeat tourist business? People who now come to Coral Bay – not just once a year, but twice a year – to enjoy getting away from it all. I am worried enough

about the **three years it will take to redo Route 10 access (2021 to 2024+)** without adding heavy marina construction materials coming through our barge port and on the brand new road--or still being constructed road. This will stop other kinds of investment too.

These questions all need to be considered when deciding whether to vote for the water permit and “kick the can down the road”, “do a positive thing for development” -- **or stop now, refuse to be part of the spin, validate that our laws need to be followed** and we need to protect our ocean and natural assets.

What do we need to do instead? We need to respect the ideas that came out of the American Institute of Architects Vision workshop with Coral Bay’s people in 2013. The applicants were included. They got to make their pitch. The experts from AIA offered an alternative more closely aligned with the remote location realities, known federal and local environmental concerns, and the actual advantages “staying different” that Coral Bay has in developing a valuable tourism product integrated with quiet and nature as the selling point. This tourism product provides jobs and small business opportunities for local people on close to a year-round basis. Let’s not ruin that.

AIA PLAN: <https://coralbaycommunitycouncil.org/aiab099987-final-report-1-2014.pdf>

AIA CONCEPT SHEET <https://coralbaycommunitycouncil.org/aia-3/>

Help create an environment where new small-scale, appropriate development for such a rural area can happen that is not destructive to the environment. The claimed short-term benefits for local people have definitely not happened. The long-term benefits don’t look likely to materialize for the landowners or anyone else, even the investors.

Let’s take a stand for real recovery for Coral Bay and St. John and the best kind of economic future, by continuing to plan and follow a community vision that is good for Coral Bay and its people. CBCC and others have many ideas about access docks, entrepreneurial business, historical tourism and other improvements for Coral Bay and we will be happy to discuss them at any time with you, or if you are able to visit our office in Coral Bay this afternoon.

Thank you very much for your interest, I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,



Sharon Coldren

President

2019 Coral Bay Vision Survey:

Complete at: <https://coralbaycommunitycouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Coral-Bay-2019-Facilities-Vision-Survey-Results.pdf>

Introduction and Key Findings

In July 2019, CBCC sent out an on-line survey to ask Coral Bay residents and property owners a number of questions about their current state of recovery from Irma, priorities for infrastructure improvement, vision for Coral Bay's future, and current frustrations with everyday living. We asked what they like about Coral Bay and what they dislike – using open ended questions in their words. The purpose was to solicit community input to ensure that we understand key current issues and people's visions for the future, so that CBCC can both advocate and accomplish improvements – for our residents. This is a brief report on the findings. The detailed responses and comments are also included here, for all respondents and for full time residents. Answers were anonymous.

The survey was distributed via email to 900 persons, and placed on Facebook. CBCC's summer interns, Raquisha Edwards and Sierra Matthias helped design the survey and encouraged young people to participate. A portion of the survey was exclusively for those 12 to 18. 181 people responded. 80 are full-time residents, including 44 who work in Coral Bay. 47 live in Coral Bay seasonally. 34 did not answer the question. Q 12 (*each finding in this narrative is tagged to the question for your convenience in this way.*) In general, there was no significant difference between all respondents and full time residents in answers, but both sets of respondents are included, in case someone would like to compare them. Survey Monkey was the tool for collecting the data and analyzing it. More cross-variate analysis could be done by age, property ownership, other question answers, birthplace etc., if deemed valuable to know.

Key findings:

About two years after the hurricanes, 57% of all respondents are making progress on recovery, while another 25% are fully recovered, about 8% better off than before the hurricanes. Unfortunately, another 8% are facing roadblocks to recovery, mostly related to housing repairs. Q1

More than ½ of fulltime residents say they face financial hardship which causes them routine frustration, although only 18% say job is an issue (“cannot find a good job that suits me”). Q16

The Coral Bay Vision statements from 2006 and 2013 remain overwhelmingly supported today – by 80 percent or more of respondents. See Q2 for full statements.

Continued....

Q3 What do you like most about Coral Bay?

rural Coral Bay quietness love feel town community
atmosphere quiet Cruz Bay people away laid back
Small

Q4 What do you like least about Coral Bay?

lack potholes abandoned cars Coral Bay dumpsters gas station
trash lack resources roads activities garbage
Island Blues community Bay clean need

People – in this open “take you time to write a response” question – called out the mess that central Coral Bay is post-storms – with wrecked buildings, abandoned cars, and a highly visible open WMA trash collection area. Bad road conditions and the smell of the Sargassum near the dumpsters were also called out. 56 (about half of the 127 responses) people mentioned some aspect of the garbage and litter issue. 21 mentioned the junk cars, and 16 mentioned the abandoned, wrecked structures.

In another question (Q16) 81% said the “messy open trash collection points” caused them routine frustration, followed by 60% high electric bills, 56% citing the “slowness of visible hurricane recovery of public infrastructure”, and 53% dangerous driving conditions.

People were asked about their interest in having a number of popular amenities in Q 6. The most popular was “trails and sidewalks” at 85%. At over 70% each, various small group activities, classes and arts activities were favored, as well as small docks and boat access.

Parents were asked about activities for their children. The most desired amenity is recreational areas and playgrounds. Notably they are split on whether to have afterschool activities in Coral Bay (68%) or Cruz Bay (42%). Some want both. Q 8

People were asked what elements would be in their own vision for Coral Bay’s future in Q 10. Over 90% named these elements:

“Stay different” Avoid becoming urban, like Cruz Bay or St. Thomas

Protect the environment from future development damage

Protect the environment from past development damage, by investing in stormwater management.

Beautiful Views should be enhanced & not blocked.

Only 4% (6 respondents (2 resident and 4 other) would include a large scale marina and resort with services. But 83% would include small scale boat docks and services with moorings, no overnight docking. Also 15% would favor large scale tourism development and 87% favor small scale development only. (A few answered both yes.) Q10

What should not happen in Coral Bay? Q11 is open response. These were the most cited response types for what should not happen:

51 – large marina

21 – large hotel

27 - waterfront or other overdevelopment

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