

August 19, 2014

Mr. Jean Pierre Oriol

Acting Commissioner

Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources

Coastal Zone Management Program

Dear Mr. Oriol,

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the Summers End Group proposal for a marina to be built in Coral Bay. I was a full time resident of Coral Bay from 1991 until 2002. I lived on a legally moored sailboat in Coral Bay Harbor from 1991 until 1997 when I bought and lived on property in Johnson Bay. Living in the harbor gives you an amazing view of it, and an understanding of its beauty, fragility, and amazing power. When I saw the plan drawings and renderings for the SEG proposal, I wondered if the person who drew them have ever been to Coral Bay, or had ever been on a boat. There are so many flaws with the design that it would be laughable if it were not such a serious subject.

Chaliese Summers, Rick Barksdale and Robert O'Connor, managing members of the SEG, have led us to believe that, (quote from SEG Press Release – 28JUL14) “our permit applications number in the hundreds of pages of studies, research, tests, surveys, etc.” They go on to say: “Joe Mina, the civil engineer responsible for the Coral Bay Watershed Management Plan Phase I, is also the lead engineer on the St. John marina. His intimate knowledge of the Coral Bay watershed is why he was hired to integrate the St. John marina plan as a compliment to existing and future Coral Bay Watershed Management Plans, which is exactly what he has done. Joe has done a masterful job of helping us to improve conditions and extend protection to both the land and waters of Coral Harbor as one can easily see in his plan drawings. But Joe warned us that no matter how good of a job we do, there are still those that like the circus barker shout what he calls “The Imaginary Parade of Horrors.” This type of opinion is best summed up as “don’t confuse me with the facts.” (sic).”

This is incredibly disconcerting to me, and to all of us who know Coral Bay Harbor. One would think looking at Mr. Mina’s rendering that the bay depicted is calm all the time. In reality, the Trade Winds drive right down the middle of it most of the time. The large power boat depicted stern-to the dock in Zone 2 at the mouth of the harbor would be swamped by waves coming in over the stern and sunk if it were tied to a dock this way... on any given normal day with the Trade Winds in Coral Bay Harbor. The entirety of Zone 1 and half of Zone 2 depict docks that are perpendicular to predominate incoming wind and seas into the harbor. The winds may clock around in all directions, but the Harbor is exposed to the open ocean in only one direction, and a dock should not be built broadside to that vulnerability. Obviously, this would create a most unpleasant and dangerous situation. Boats owners would never use them if they were built this way.

This says nothing to the TOTAL destruction that would certainly befall the docks when another hurricane like "Marilyn" drives 10 foot waves right onto the beach where the proposed Yacht Club would sit. The docks would all end up in a tangled pile sunk in the harbor, or on top of the road where they would sit for months while welders worked tirelessly to clear the only road to the south end of the island. And where in the plan does it have any provision for the all boats they would supposedly attract to Coral Bay when storms come?

The Coral Bay Community Council just this week finally received a \$90,000 grant to clean up wrecked vessels sunk in the harbor. Who will pay to clean up the destruction of this boondoggle?

I wonder how after "5 years of planning", the Summer's End Group could be so unskilled at the very basics of harbor dynamics? And we should entrust them to obliterate this precious and renowned open navigable Harbor?

The idea that CZM would entertain an application to enter into a submerged Land Lease Agreement covering the marina footprint with them is appalling.

We need to Get Real, here! At a time when the growing fragility of the environment across the Earth is begging us to address development with real sustainability, this proposal is offensive.

The hubris and disdain shown by the numerous press releases submitted by the SEG only show us their lack of professionalism and community spirit. I believe they have doubtless found out that Coral Bay is not actually inhabited by careless derelicts who don't know how to clean up after themselves.

Coral Bay is full of brilliant minds and hearts, native and non-native, who have been struggling together to create a prosperous community in spite of the continual lack of sufficient infrastructure support.

Indeed, the Coral Bay community needs many things: a school!!!, a gas station, a small appropriate marina, a community market for farmers, fisherman and artists, an indoor and outdoor recreation center, a community center, a new launch ramp for local boats, and a recycling program to reduce waste. These are sustainable community enriching things that would promote steady economic and cultural opportunities.

This marina would be a mortal blow to Coral Bay. Please support the community of Coral Bay and deny this proposal in its entirety. Thank You for your service and your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Miller Graves