

Statement of Martha J. Toomey and Jeffrey R. McCord in Opposition to Proposed  
Summer's End Marina  
August 13, 2014

Martha J. Toomey and Jeffrey R. McCord oppose the proposal by The Summer's End Group, LLC for a Marina Project including a mega yacht marina structure. Because we were off-island when we learned of the August 20th CZM meeting and cannot return to St. John until mid- September, we are submitting written comments in the care of the Coral Bay Community Council.

We own a mooring in Coral Harbor located at N 18. 20.648 and W 64.42.718 at which we keep our 32 foot sailboat ("Sonseeahray," USCG #590321). The Mooring consists of ground tackle, chain, rope and a white ball. It is checked by a diver every six months and kept in good repair.

We have successfully used the mooring for three years, following its use by two previous owners. The sailboat "Carpe Manana" was the previous boat registered there. Before that, the "Sunset Sue" owned by Alva Crocker moored on it.

The Summer's End developers propose taking over most of the now public waters of Coral Harbor including the location of our mooring as well as many other moorings now "inhabited" by a unique community of boat owners. The community includes some of the best and most experienced sailors in the world. Some people live on their boats, which are secured on moorings safely dispersed throughout the harbor. Because the Coral Harbor portion of the much larger Coral Bay is mostly open to the sea and the prevailing trade winds and currents, moorings anchored to the Harbor bottom at which boats swing freely with bows facing wind and current work very well under most conditions.

Still, in a big storm or hurricane boaters are free to move their vessels elsewhere to more protected waters. The National Park Service on a lottery basis provides shelter to relatively small boats in "Hurricane Hole" coves within the Park when hurricanes threaten. Boats are moved there or to other sheltered harbors that can accommodate the current Coral Bay boat population.

For dinghies, the Coral Harbor boating community uses the Danish-era stone dock, which has been improved, lengthened and is maintained by the Coral Bay Yacht Club. Many of the dinghies (including ours) are low impact row boats with no engines.

A short walk from the dock is The Coral Bay Marine facility providing chandlery and boat repair services to the Coral Harbor community. Other independent contractors, including divers, carpenters and engine mechanics, also service boats moored in the Harbor including visiting boats. And, at present, maritime visitors may walk or

travel by dinghy to a variety of restaurants and two grocery stores located on or across the street from the Harbor.

Because this community consists mostly of sailboats of less than 50 feet in length served by small dinghies (many without engines), there is minimal pollution from marine oil, engine fumes or engine noise, and low overall impact on the natural environment.

This is one reason why Coral Harbor continues to be the home of many species of fish, birds and mammals. Within the past year, for instance, we have witnessed a family of dolphins at play within thirty yards of the dinghy dock and have seen a sea ray leap out of the water while we stood on the dock. Each evening pelicans – and frigate birds depending upon the weather – happily plunge and fish among the moorings, while herons and egrets inhabit the healthy mangroves surrounding most of Coral Harbor (with the exception of the barren shoreline opposite the “Voyages” building, the Cocolobo shopping center and other structures). Sea birds are often seen resting on the tops of the masts of moored boats throughout the Harbor. Visiting sailors and terrestrial tourists come annually because of the quiet, relatively pristine and picturesque Coral Harbor area as well as the larger Coral Bay.

The proposed Summer’s End marina, designed in-part to attract and accommodate motorized mega yachts and other motor boats and requiring the construction of vast docks anchored by hundreds of pilings reaching to the Coral Harbor channel, would irrevocably and radically change the very environment and community that attracted current full-time residents and attracts returning annual terrestrial and sailing tourists.

At present, mega yachts visiting the waters of St John find the services they need by anchoring off Cruz Bay. Mega yachts find the unspoiled, quiet environment they seek within Coral Bay anchorages beyond Coral Harbor. And, a few miles away on Tortola can be found Nanny Cay, a full service yacht marina that already accommodates mega-yachts and, unlike the marina proposed by Summer’s End, can actually haul them out and repair them.

Many Coral Bay boaters who need more help than can be provided by Coral Bay Marine facility and other local Coral Bay contractors, routinely go to Nanny Cay, which can provide every and any yachting service required.

As a well known disability advocate, Martha Toomey is also concerned that this project will not comply with the Americans for Disability Act, which is a federally mandated act of Congress. Has the Summer’s End group received professional counsel regarding the various ways this project must be completely handicapped accessible?

Part of the reason we bought a home and moved to St. John in January, 2010 was the quiet and unspoiled Coral Bay community. It was that community and the charming Coral Harbor that led us to purchase a sailboat. We vigorously oppose the proposed Summer's End development.

Martha J. Toomey and Jeffrey R. McCord  
Coral Bay