

July 7, 2020

Good Morning;

Honorable Novelle E. Francis, Jr., President of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature of the Virgin Islands  
Senators of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature of the Virgin Islands, and  
The listening and the viewing public.

I am David Calvert Marsh. I come before you today as a generational St. Johnian. My father, Calvert Curtis Marsh, was born in Coral Bay, St. John. He was the original owner of 10-19 and 10-41 Estate Carolina. My mom and I are now the owners of said property, which are two key properties in the St. John Marina project. On October 28, 2019, my testimony before this body spoke more so of my father's hopes for his property and the Coral Bay community. Today, I intend to speak on the benefits of the St. John Marina, not only to my immediate family but to the entire St. John community.

As a young boy living in Coral Bay and attending Guy Benjamin school, I vividly remember spending time on the Bay; walking, fishing, doing things that I wouldn't do there today. It is about time for us to revive Coral Bay. Yes, my family has prime property that can help revitalize and boost the economy. While we may be land rich, the St. John Marina is the perfect opportunity for not only us as the landowners in this project to reap benefits, but for other Coral Bay property owners to have the opportunity to become cash rich.

My mother and I are not in discussion about selling our property to Summers End Group. We are leasing the property and creating a business partnership with Summers End Group. That is the first step in this local family benefiting from the Marina. With the St. John Marina up and running, my mother will finally have the opportunity to fulfill her business endeavors in Coral Bay. My son has had conversations with me about returning home after serving in the United States Coast Guard to start a business in the marine industry. I have close friends who have approached me about opening businesses once the Marina is up.

The St. John Marina project positively caught my attention from the onset. The ongoing delays, which may be just, encouraged me to take a stand and voice my support for this project. You see, this project will provide mentorship, internship, and scholarship opportunities for our young people who are very much interested in the Marine industry. We have our young people leaving the Virgin Islands for these types of training and jobs and not returning home because the opportunity here is limited for them. I like that this project will bring a renewed energy to the St. John community. No longer would we hear statements such as "Wha you going Coral Bay fah? Ain't have nothin up deh!" Our locals will now have an opportunity to venture out to our second town, Coral Bay, with a purpose. In addition, with this influx of travel, our people will feel safe to socialize because of the added presence of security (VIPD, Customs and Border Patrol, and DPNR) in Coral Bay.

Why Summers End Group? I've known Mr. O'Connor from the time I know myself. Mr. O'Connor and my father were very close friends; so close that on my father's death bed he said to me "Any fatherly advice that you need, reach out to Bob." As I got older, I realized why my father

used the words fatherly advice. My father and I had a very close relationship, literally. I told and ask my father about any and everything. I lost my father to a generic disease when I was 24 years of age. Mr. O'Connor has always been there for my mother and me ever since. However, it wasn't a strange transition. I traveled with my father and Bob on their leisure/business trips, Lions Club functions, and many more numerous outings. While in boarding school in North Carolina, I would travel to meet them while on their baseball trips. I played ball on the same team with Bob and my father. When I returned home to St. John after college, Mr. O'Connor hired me to manage his rental business. Some may have seen it differently, but God knew why he allowed me to spend so much quality time with my father and Bob. I say all of this to say, I have complete faith and trust in Mr. Robert O'Connor, who I affectionately call Bob and therefore trust who he associates with. I appreciate him as a person, a father-figure, a businessman, and most of all a dear friend.

Roughly about 12 to 13 years ago Bob introduced me to Chaliese Summers and Rick Barksdale. He introduced them as potentially two individuals who would be replacing Brion Morrisette on the marina project. From that introduction, Chaliese and Rick have been very transparent in what they would like to see happen on our property. Through the years they sought our opinions when it came to different decisions regarding the marina. We had regular sit-downs to update us on the process of this project. I believe that Chaliese and Rick have good intentions and are working with all stakeholders at heart.

I want to emphasize, that Summers End Group has never asked or mentioned purchasing our property. However, there is a specific individual who approached me about purchasing our property; and yes, my mother and I did go and listen to this individual's interest to purchase, as any smart businessperson would do. Please keep in mind that our property was not for sale nor have we even had the thought of selling our property. Later, I learned that this individual's intentions were only a plot to stop the St. John Marina project. And no, this individual did not look like you and me. As I continued to investigate, I learned that this individual already had ownership of nearby property. I mention this to stress that it is my belief that Summers End Group is not here to gain, take, or own our property. Just like my father has talked to me about protecting our property, I have and will continue to instill this sentiment to my children, and it is my hope that they will do the same with theirs.

Senators of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature of the Virgin Islands, we are here seeking your approval to authorize the submerge water lease. My desire for the St. John Marina has forced me to play an integral part in the process. I have been transparent with Summers End Group, as they have been with me. Everything is in place; we are ready to see this project break ground and come to fruition. We have been waiting for the water lease since November 2014 and while the delays and length of time have caused an annoyance, I am still in full support of the St. John Marina.

It is time to get those non-compliant boaters, inoperable boats, and sunken/run-against vessels out of our harbor. Our Coral Bay harbor that we knew is gone and while the Marina will not bring it back to what it was in the past; it will certainly clean up, beautify, and revitalize our harbor. Our Coral Bay Harbor needs help now. I ask that while you do your due diligence keep in mind that we have a group of individuals who have joined with us locals to revitalize Coral Bay and improve the economy. This St. John Marina project is not for Summers End Group. It is for the economic development of St. John, for all of us, the people of the United States Virgin Islands. I can foresee

people renting their downstairs units or homes as an Airbnb to boaters who want to get off their vessels after sailing for days. I picture boaters coming to the nearby grocery stores to restock on food, cleaning supplies, and other needs before going back out to sea. I vision our local boaters fueling their boats right there in Coral Bay where its closer to them rather than towing it by land to Cruz Bay. I envision our locals enjoying a Sunday brunch or lunch after church at the Marina.

The Marina industry is a multibillion-dollar business. I will use the Bahamas as an example. According to a 2017 economic impact study highlighting the contribution of the marina industry to the Bahamas, the data indicated that marina boaters spent \$46.3 million in the Bahamas that year. The study also provided a list of marina visitors' expenditures, which included fuel, oil, grocery, marina services, boat repairs, fishing, boat supplies, jewelry, and scuba/snorkeling. Hence, my prior statement that the St. John Marina is for the economic boost of the community, all of us.

Let's think about it; without the St. John Marina project, what is there on the horizon for St. John? Yes, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature recently approved rezoning for a senior assist living facility, which is needed, and a restaurant and bar. Where are these two projects.... basically in "Cruz Bay" area. Let us revitalize Coral Bay. The opportunity is here for all of us.

In closing, the opposition talks about saving Coral Bay. Well, as a generational St. Johnian from Coral Bay, saving Coral Bay starts with stopping the destruction of the harbor and allowing development to clean, beautify, and rectify it. Saving Coral Bay means saving the people of Coral Bay and to do so means we must provide them with a safe community where they can feel free to provide for and sustain themselves.

As a local, landowner, and business partner I ask the members of the 33<sup>rd</sup> legislature to approve the St. John Marina water lease. We have followed the VI Code and CZM Act through the permitting process. We have scompleted the Board of Land Use Appeals process. We have been committed to the legislative process. We stand committed to this project in hopes that we can not only be land rich, but also help others in the community to be cash rich as well.

Thank you for affording me this opportunity.

Respectfully,

David C. Marsh