

# **SAVE GUANA CAY REEF ASSOCIATION PRESS RELEASE**

## **Hope Town District Council defers Discovery permit applications 21.4.05**

Despite the Save Guana Cay judicial review challenge to the Heads of Agreement, the Discovery Developers at Guana Cay continued their attempts to press on with the development. Facing continued opposition by the residents of Guana Cay, the Developers applied for permits to build and renovate docks, build temporary construction staging facilities and temporary buildings.

Attorney Fred Smith traveled to Hope Town to appear before the District Council at their monthly meeting. About 40 residents of Guana Cay traveled to Hope Town in protest against the permit applications.

Despite the public controversy regarding the secrecy of the application process, Administrator Revis Rolle tried to prevent the residents from attending the District Council hearing chaired by Chief Councillor Walter Sweeting. Mr. Rolle said

**“I have advised the Council not to allow any members of the public to attend”.**

In response Mr. Smith led the residents in loud protest on the Government dock at Hope Town.

When the developers arrived in their boat, they were jeered and met with shouts of

**“No Golf at Guana”, “Go Away”, “No golf ‘curse’ on Guana”, “Give back our Crown Land”.**

The residents moved along with the Developers en masse to the Town Hall. Mr. Sweeting allowed representatives of the Developers and the Save Guana Cay Lobby to attend the meeting despite Mr. Rolle’s advice.

Mr. Smith said,

**“We still have not received notice of any permit applications. We don’t know what is before the Council. Nothing has been posted either in Hope Town, Man-O-Way or Guana Cay. All we ask for is an opportunity to be heard; to participate in a democratic process”.**

The District Council deferred consideration of the Developers’ applications saying that they did not have enough information to make an educated assessment. They asked the Developers for further plans, evidence of ownership, and other information.

One of the District Councillors asked the Developers represented by Mr. Ed Devita **“Are you serious about building a 1,000 foot dock into the Sea at Abaco?”**

The Developers also stated that the dock would be 75 feet wide. It transpired that some particulars were incorrect.

When questioned about whether or not the Developers had a Crown Lease, an altercation ensued between Frederick Smith and Revis Rolle who attempted to defend the Developers. Mr. Smith said

**“What is your interest in this matter? Why are you promoting Central Government’s interest? You do not run this Council! The elected Councillors do. You are the Administrator and should have no interest in promoting it!”**

Mr. Devita could not say whether the Developers had a Crown Lease or a Permit under the International Persons Landholding Act.

During the course of the meeting, it was discovered, to the surprise of the Councillors, that a new application had been submitted by the Developers. Mr. Rolle said that permits were

**“On the way from the Department of Environmental Health and Services and the Ministry of Works on the next ferry”.**

The Save Guana Cay lobby raised a great furor. Mr. Troy Albury said

**“I am a Bahamian. When I apply for a permit to build a fence, I need to produce evidence of ownership. There should be no double standard for foreign developers.”**

Mr. Walter Sweeting, the Chief Councillor, confirmed to everyone that all applications would be deferred until the necessary documentation was in place. Mr. Smith asked for a copy of the application and Rolle protested that it should not be given. The Councillors provided a copy to Mr. Smith and Mr. Ed Devita tried to snatch the document from Mr. Smith, saying that it was wrong and that he wanted to make amendments to it. Mr. Smith stated

**“Make your further application and give us a copy of that as well”.**

The Save Guana Cay demonstrators then walked with their placards and posters to Mr. John Head’s office in Hope Town. Mr. Head is a long time resident of Hope Town and owns Abaco Inn, and the people of Guana Cay protested his disdain for the environment.

Save Guana Cay Lobby met with the Developers afterward and said that they were prepared to talk and Mrs. Erin Lowe said, **“As long as there is no golf course on Guana Cay!” Frederick Smith**

