

BVOA PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2023

In preparing for the Annual General Meeting that I'm not able to attend, I was struck by the fact that the BVOA is 50 years old, that it's been 50 years since the original developer handed over the reins of managing the property to the villa owners. Among all the homeowner associations created in Treasure Cay, we can be very proud that the Beach Villas has survived while others haven't, that we have a stable, committed and civil board of directors that has stayed true to the legal documents that govern us, and that we are in stable financial condition with dues that are measurably lower than other associations even when factoring for insurance costs.

Over the past year, we have continued to make improvements to our villas, the office/laundry, the pool, the deck, and the beach. The ocean-side stone wall, one of the most important barriers protecting the pool, has been rebuilt, including a unique design to deflect blowing sand from getting into the pool. The pool area now features all new furnishings and umbrellas, as well as 3 tiki umbrellas. The utility of the deck has been greatly enhanced by the addition of two large sails and a gas fire pit. And the beach now features 8 tiki umbrellas and the former pool chaise lounges.

There are still too many villas that are not completely rebuilt and, no doubt, some few of our owners will have to be pushed or dragged across the finish line. As we come to the 4th anniversary of Dorian in September, there is no good reason for individual villas to be anything but finished and the Board will stay focused on that, while offering whatever help we can to those who need it.

The sewer project, delayed numerous times over the past three years, is truly in the final stages, as the 3-phase power line was recently connected to our new lift station and the pumping tested. The negotiations that I and others undertook with Water Sewer Corporation have resulted in a project that cost well over \$3 million, to which users contributed barely 10%. It will be nice not to have to constantly think of all that could go wrong relying on pumping and hauling of our sewage. Despite some skepticism that we could do it, we have gone over 3 years of pumping and hauling sewage without a back-up into a single villa related to the project.

We have been insistent that the power panel for our new lift station be able to accommodate a generator, which we would have to install at our own cost. As the other key lift stations between the Beach Villas and the injection well (past the fuel dock) will have back-up power, it makes sense for us to do so.

Future work:

With the sewer project wrapping up and heavy reconstruction of villas almost completed, we will focus on appropriate road, parking lot and sidewalk repairs, as we bring our common areas back to pre-Dorian condition.

Other capital improvements on our agenda for the coming year include the addition of golf cart parking near the pool so we can keep the roundabout clear, and expansion of the parking lot at the rear of Villas 501/502 that will greatly improve its utility and provide space for an additional 6-8 vehicles.

The Board has been discussing since last year the eventual construction of a pavilion type building at the pool to greatly expand the uses to which the whole pool area may be put. I had hoped that we would have a concrete plan to present at this year's Annual Meeting so that we could actually get into discussions of design options, costs, uses, etc., but we're not there yet. Research will continue.

In the meantime, we have continued to welcome a host of new owners to the Beach Villas, all of whom have been attracted by the unsurpassed value represented by the villas and by the unmatched sense of community that is so evident. When asked what brought them to us, new owners have universally cited value and community. It is also noteworthy that the sales prices of completed villas are averaging about \$50,000 more than pre-Dorian values.

With about 70% new villa ownership post Dorian, we have attracted younger families to replace the many veterans who have left and one pattern that appears evident is that we are losing a core of long-term winter residents, who were here 4, 6, 8 months and who were very much the backbone of the community, filling a wide range of leadership roles within both the BVOA and the larger Treasure Cay Community. Visits for most of our new owners are shorter but more frequent than in the past, which may present some challenges in developing the next generation of BVOA and TC community leaders.

As our population of occupied villas grows, we will need to address garbage disposal. We have done surprisingly well using our landscape truck and having people bring their bagged garbage to the truck, but I judge that we're about at our limit. Our annual cost of twice weekly pick-up from the in-ground containers pre-Dorian was about \$50,000. We've investigated options for replacing the many container covers that were lost to the storm and have identified some. In the long run, in-ground storage between pick-ups is the logical choice based on decades of experience. Whether a new owner of the TC resort will elect to be in the garbage business is unknown and contractors from Marsh Harbor are not economically attractive. We have lots of questions to be answered.

In thinking about the savings we've achieved by handling our own garbage, I'm reminded that one of the reasons we haven't had to raise dues post Dorian is because of the significant savings we realized by not paying for outside services, including garbage, emergency services and community-wide security (\$100,000 per year combined). And, we had \$81,000 in gross income from the sale of a repossessed villa (604). As the need to re-instate these services becomes reality, an increase in dues also becomes a reality. There's no reason to anticipate a 5th year with no dues increase.

Along with a high percentage of new owners has come a much higher percentage of villas now offered as short-term vacation rentals. With the advent of Airbnb and similar rental arrangements, we're seeing many more weekend rentals and 4–5-day rentals than ever before, including many more rentals to young adults in their 20's and 30's. Weekend rentals have sometimes felt like "bashes," that don't mix well with the traditional family rentals that have characterized the Beach Villas for decades. There's lots of education to be done with owners in how to successfully manage short-term rentals and to minimize the demands on our BVOA staff from poorly managed rentals. The number of inquiries our office gets from renters about very mundane matters (water, laundry, liquor, shopping, taxis) is already excessive. The BVOA is not in the business of rental management. We will try to offer guidance about what is needed and what works.

As to the larger Treasure Cay Community, medical care is a topic we all need to be concerned about, noting that the Corbett Clinic continues its ongoing effort to find a replacement for Dr. Hull, and that, while Treasure Cay Emergency Services has volunteers legal to drive the ambulance, they cannot legally transport from a medical emergency without a Bahamian licensed EMT, of which Treasure Cay has none. So, if you need an ambulance now, it has to come from Marsh Harbor. Fortunately, we have a sufficient number of fire department volunteers and adequate equipment to address most fires.

Emergency evacuation from Treasure Cay or Marsh Harbor to the US is another topic that we need to collectively address with the larger TC community. Prior to Dorian, the Treasure Cay community was very close to launching a self-insured evacuation plan. I was a part of that planning. The information from that effort needs to be dusted off by a new group.

As to Treasure Cay Resort, there has yet to be confirmation of a subsequent contract for sale of the property, which is, of course, frustrating. But given the litigious world we live in, it's not surprising that nothing is being publicly disclosed.

A thank-you, or two or three:

Thank you to my sounding board, biggest supporter, and some-time critic, Gertrude. While I wouldn't have done this if I didn't enjoy it most of the time, the not-so-enjoyable times are often unfairly shared with her. Like all that we've done together for more than 41 years, we've shared our love for, and commitment to, the Beach Villas and Treasure Cay together.

Thank you to Shantell Brutus, who had very big shoes to fill in replacing Selisha Thompson as General Manager. Shantell has filled those shoes and has demonstrated that she has the personal and professional skill set needed for the job. She is from a Treasure Cay family, knows all the people in Abaco who need to be known to get things done, and things are getting done.

And to Israel Wallace, Landscape Supervisor, a kind and gentle soul, who has been with the BVOA for over 30 years and has invaluable knowledge about how things work. And to our gardeners,

Louben, Illair, Philip and Tony, who have a good skill set and always a friendly smile and big “hello.”

Finally, thank you to my fellow board members: to Bill Chew who has served multiple terms and is always available for a hands-on assist, including chairing this AGM; to Susan Slaff who has ably taken on the role of treasurer for the past two years and who has been front-line in dealing with the dreadful banking system in the Bahamas; to Steve Wainwright, our secretary, who has kept you all informed of the work of the Board, and who has taken on the role of ombudsman in dealing with issues that often stretch the imagination; to Derek Russell-Murray who took on responsibility for the pool, its equipment, the reconstruction of the stone wall out to the beach, the installation of the sails on the deck and the new tiki umbrellas at the pool and on the beach; to Allen Butts who has been flying in regularly and been willing to lug in whatever he can fit in his plane; and to Joni Manz who diligently researched a host of alternative lighting solutions for us. I will continue to preach the need for a “hands-on” board and praise those who are willing to do it.

And one last thought about the Board of Directors: It has been my privilege to serve on this board since 2010, most of that time as president. My goal in the remaining two years of my term is to see that there is an effective transition to new leadership of the board. To that end, I will work with the board to elect a new president and to support that new president in the building of an effective leadership team.

Bill McLean
President, BVOA
3/5/23