Riddell's Bay (Warwick Parish) Special Development Order 2020

Presented by:

The Hon. Walter Roban, JP, MP

Ministry of Home Affairs

3rd July, 2020

Mr. Speaker, earlier today I laid before the House the Special Development Order titled: the Riddell's Bay (Warwick Parish) Special Development Order 2020 [SDO]. This SDO comes at a time when the Island is reeling from an unprecedented economic downturn due to COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Section 15 of the Development and Planning Act 1974, the Order will grant subdivision approval for the purposes of residential development and also to create new conservation lands. Specifically, a total of eighteen (18) vacant lots will be approved; each to be developed with a detached house, and additionally, two (2) significantly sized vacant conservation lots will be approved to be comprehensively planted and restored which will provide a number of environmental and public benefits. Such benefits are to include the re-establishment of diverse native and endemic ecosystems as well as opportunities for passive recreational use.

Mr. Speaker, I am acutely aware of the developer's enthusiasm to proceed with this project and to this end, I am pleased to confirm that remediation and initial planting works have already begun on the site for the conservation areas.

Mr. Speaker, the preparation of this Order was preceded by the subdivision application process by the Department of Planning. This project has undergone an exhaustive environmental analysis and scrutiny.

The application submission included an Environmental Impact Statement and Conservation Management Plan. By virtue of the statutory objection process defined in the Development and Planning Act 1974, this application was afforded public scrutiny. The submission details were comprehensively reviewed by technical officers of the Departments of Planning and Environment & Natural Resources as well as Non-Government Organizations and members of the community.

Mr. Speaker, to specify the details of the scheme, the developer proposes to convert approximately twenty-five percent (25%) (or twenty-three (23) acres) of the total acreage of Riddell's Bay to residential lots while, at the same time, converting the remaining seventy-five percent (75%) of the total acreage, sixty-four (64) acres, to publicly accessible conservation areas.

Mr. Speaker, the addition of 64 acres of conservation land is a significant contributing element of the scheme. The two conservation lots are split into four categories including Nature Reserve, Open Space, Recreation and Woodland. Notably, the overall size of this conservation area exceeds

the size of the majority of Government Nature Reserves and/or National Parks on the island.

Mr. Speaker, the creation of such conservation lands will be achieved by way of conditions appended to the Order requiring the implementation of a Conservation Management Plan, a plan which details the necessary restorative works and planting works together with the financial plan for delivery and subsequent maintenance thereof.

Mr. Speaker, against the backdrop of the current challenges being faced by our community, I am certainly proud to introduce such a scheme that represents a significant ecological and social gain for the island. Further, this is one of the largest single luxury developments proposed in some time. It has, undoubtedly, tremendous potential to inject an estimated $75 million capital investment into the economy; provide a much needed stimulus to various business sectors including construction and landscaping, real estate and other retail and service industries; and most importantly, provide jobs for Bermudians.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity at this time to thank the developers for undertaking such a significant venture to create a luxury development while creating valuable conservation land for the benefit of the community. We applaud the developers for continuing to believe in Bermuda as a sound and promising jurisdiction in which to invest.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker**.