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Thompson brings fresh outlook to local politics

Senator Kwasi Thompson

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Senator Thompson speaks out FNM Govt. set to mediate West GB feuding investors

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By all appearances, the Government of The Bahamas, recognizing it could be faced by another "desperate" situation, is set to mediate the building battle between two investor groups, each with a high interest in West End.

On Saturday, Senator Kwasi Thompson, the Minister of State in the Grand Bahama Office of the Prime Minister, responded to a *Freeport News* article that exposed the conflict between the two investing parties.

Property encroachment looks to be the crux of the matter as the current owners of the vibrant Old Bahama Bay Resort, and Skyline Investments (Grand Palm Beach Acquisitions Limited), both have earmarked expanded projects that could greatly stimulate the economy

of the west sector and indeed all of Grand Bahama, by extension.

"We are aware of some issues which have arisen between these developers and have encouraged both developers to work together in the best interests of their respective projects and the people of West End. We want them to work together to make the redevelopment of

West End a success," said Thompson.

John MacDonald, who is the president of the island Ventures Resort & Club, of which Old Bahama Bay is a subsidiary, complained to *The Freeport News* about the lack of substantive interaction with the Government of the Bahamas, relevant to significant issues that he feels ought to be addressed.

"I questioned as to how the Bahamas Government could be so negligent in their investigation of what actually is under contract," said MacDonald.

The Freeport News under-



SENATOR KWASI THOMPSON

stands there is a particular area in question between Old Bahama Bay proper, and the property holding of the former Ginn Sur Mer entity. Thompson acknowledged that a grey property ownership area possibly exists, but, expressed optimism that "all will be fine" and he pointed out that the bigger point, to him, is the presence of two investor bodies seeking to bring substantive development and many job situations to West End.

"The area of West End needs development as the Ginn project has been stagnant for some time. I am aware of two projects which are proposed

"The government is focused on ensuring that the existing employees are protected and their employment is preserved."

~ Senator Kwasi Thompson

Safety Director advocates higher level of education

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In light of the recent tragedy that claimed the lives of two young men here on the island of Grand Bahama, a Safety Director is appealing to the public.

On September 2, the vehicle, in which they were occupants, hit a utility pole, and resulting in their electrocution. In the aftermath, Mike Sweeting, Safety Director, Carrington Management Group (CMG), a project and site management firm based in New Providence shared with *this daily* on Wednesday September 5, that had the duo known the 'Do's and Don'ts' as it relates to downed power lines and the dangers that they pose, they may have been alive today. "As a father, I can only imag-

ine what their parents are going through. The saddest thing about it is, following the incident, a video has been circulating about downed power lines, a similar video was shown at our CMG conference that was held on August 18 at The Pelican Bay Resort. A few persons and I recently shared the same values on that, in terms of the people who did not attend. We had a seating capacity for 75 persons and only 10 persons showed up. We reached out to both the public and private sector, and the community at large, to a point whereby when we realized that the event was only a day away, we decided to give the tickets out free of charge, and people still did not show up.

"My concern is, even if someone, who was of a distant relation to those two boys were there, (sometimes information travels faster than we think, for

example on 'Whats App'); if they could have shared those little detailed pieces of information, they would have known not to touch that fence.

"If persons find themselves in a similar predicament that safest thing to do would be to remain inside the vehicle, until help arrives. If however, the vehicle is unsafe to remain in, he advised that the next step would be to exit the vehicle and proceed to walk away from the accident scene, seeking shelter on the opposite side of the roadway until help arrives.

"For the most part we hear a lot about Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and other training programs but those are on the job training. You have to get to the job first. We have children who are being raised, who do not even know what a hazard is, until they get on certain jobs.

That is not good. That is why, as the Safety Director for CMG, we are going to do things differently, in terms of educating the public in The Bahamas, in terms of safety, what it is and where it begins.

"Everyone cooks in The Bahamas. There may be a minority, perhaps 10 percent of households that have a fire extinguisher in their kitchens. That is not because a fire will never take place, that is because, as far as many are concerned, we are a reactive nation, not proactive. We wait for something to happen," said Sweeting.

"You would notice that there are many videos circulating now about downed power lines. It is too late, we have lost two lives. I am not saying that it is not good that we are sending the videos out now, but what other things are going on, that many

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MIKE SWEETING

for West End. The \$2.5 billion project which is being proposed by Skyline Investments, has the potential to transform not just the community but the island of Grand Bahama. It is a very significant project for our island. I am also aware of an expansion project which is proposed by the Old Bahama Bay Condo Owners and Island Ventures Resort & Club. The Condo owners' expansion project also has the potential to positively impact the West End Community.

"It is actually good news that there are two developers who have proposed projects which can significantly benefit the people of West End and improve the island of Grand Bahama. This signifies that West End is poised for rebirth. It also confirms our belief that investor interest and confidence has increased. I am pleased and encouraged by the interest shown by both developers, as we want development in West End, Grand Bahama," further stated Minister of State Thompson.

He directed a comment, as well, to the concerns previously expressed by employees of Old Bahama Bay, who a while back claimed to have had an unpleasant experience with an individual, said, to be representing Skyline Investments. In a communication provided *The Freeport News*, the employees lamented any situation whereby Bahamian workers are disrespected in their "own country."

"The government is focused on ensuring that the existing employees are protected and

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GB farmers market draws high praises from BAIC Chairman

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Residents flocked to the Bahamas Agricultural & Industrial Corporation's (BAIC) Sec-

ond Pop-Up Farmers Market in Grand Bahama on Saturday (September 8) to shop for fresh produce and homemade Bahamian items at the headquarters on East Sunrise Highway and Alcester Road.

BAIC Executive Chairman and Member of Parliament for

Golden Gates, Michael Foulkes spoke to *this daily* about the event's success.

"It has been a massive, massive response from the people today. People were lined up from seven o'clock this morning. About 75-100 people were waiting for

the market to open. Most of the fruits were sold early. Fruits and vegetables like guinep, sugar apples, dilly, peppers, onions, thyme, sweet potatoes, papayas, bananas, mangoes, pumpkins, cantaloupes, tamarinds, limes, avocados and more, were avail-

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MICHAEL FOULKES