



**The Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis  
Prime Minister**

**Debate on Resolution for the Development  
of a Subdivision for Young Professionals**

**Monday, April 12, 2021  
House of Assembly**

**Nassau, Bahamas**

Mr. Speaker:

It is important for us as national leaders to have a governing philosophy that guides our vision and policies on behalf of the people who sent us here.

For the Free National Movement what guides our vision is very clear:

We want to empower Bahamians with opportunities so they can realize their potential and dreams.

That is why my Government made the historic investment to expand pre-school education.

We want young people to have the start necessary for a life of learning and achievement.

That is why my Government expanded free access to tertiary education at BTVI and the University of The Bahamas.

We want Bahamians to be educated to find fulfilling careers so they can take care of themselves and their families.

That is why my Government provided millions in funding to entrepreneurs via the Small Business Development Centre and why we will invest even more in small businesses.

We want Bahamians to start new enterprises to help grow our economy and to create wealth.

Our desire to help provide opportunity to Bahamians is why we are here today debating a resolution to provide land for the development of a parcel of land in western New Providence for a residential development for young Bahamian professionals.

Access to land and land ownership helps to build and to secure intergenerational wealth, with one generation of

a family able to build on what was achieved by previous generations.

The land in question is an 83-acre parcel in the Prospect Ridge area near Baha Mar.

The development will be upscale incorporating walking paths, parks, a community center, a swimming pool, tennis court and clubhouse.

It will be ecofriendly with minimal change to the existing topography of the land.

There will be approximately 250 lots, including for single-family residences, town-homes and duplexes.

The exact number of parcels will be determined following consultations with the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection, and Town Planning on density restrictions.

Those selected will be able to purchase lots of around the size of 95x100 feet for the maximum sum of approximately \$50,000.

The Government will put in place the necessary infrastructure so that the lots would be worth in the vicinity of \$150,000 each.

The Government will also grant certain exemptions to make the construction of the homes more affordable by the waiver of customs duties on all building materials.

In order to ensure the development is completed in a timely manner, home construction will need to be completed within two years of purchase.

Mr. Speaker:

Small businesses are the heart and soul of our economy.

My Government is passionate about helping small business people.

We want new businesses established.

We want existing small businesses to grow.

In this new community, opportunities will be provided for young entrepreneurs to provide residential and commercial services for lawn and garden care, planting and removal, irrigation and drainage, landscape design, and stone and hardscaping.

In designing a residential subdivision, it is important to take waste management into account.

Opportunity will be provided for an entrepreneur to collect and dispose of domestic and commercial waste.

The entrepreneur will be required to establish a waste management plan with a waste management system.

The clubhouse will also be an organized commercial operation for an entrepreneur.

Additionally, we understand that the young people in this development will have families or be about to start families.

As a result, the community will have provisions for a preschool.

This preschool will build on the Government's ongoing programs to provide preschool education.

Mr. Speaker:

This initiative will expand access to land for a broad cross-section of young Bahamians.

We are providing young Bahamian professionals with access to land at lower rates than are available on the open market.

We consider a "professional" as "someone who is accomplished in his or her field, sufficient independently

to sustain a mortgage or the financial responsibility for a residential dwelling in the community”.

This community is not restricted to a particular type of academic or professional training.

You don't have to be a lawyer, doctor or engineer to qualify.

To be eligible you must be a Bahamian 45 years or younger who is resident in The Bahamas.

Even though this subdivision is in New Providence, Family Island residents are eligible to apply.

Applications are to be made by individuals or married couples.

Two or more people may also apply.

However, financial institutions will assess the risk determination of such applications.

Only first-time homeowners are eligible.



The first-time homeowner's status will be confirmed with the Registrar General's Department and the Department of Inland Revenue.

An applicant may only be eligible once and may only acquire one property in any such Government home-owning initiative.

The application and application process are being finalized as are other details.

It is anticipated the application process will open to the public this summer.

In the interim, at the conclusion of this resolution we will work toward:

- the finalization of the transparent application and selection process;
- the execution of architectural drawings that can be purchased off the shelf,

- and commencement of the infrastructure installation.

No applications have been accepted to date for this community.

No list of persons has been established for this community.

Guiding principles for the application process have been established.

It will be transparent.

It will be digital.

The Department of Transformation and Digitization has confirmed that it will prioritize making the application and submission of supporting documents possible online.

There will be strict adherence to the eligibility criteria.

There will be no favoritism.

No special group or special people will be prioritized.

Mr. Speaker,

My Government recognizes that the path to upward mobility and building up the middle class is through access to affordable land.

This is especially important for young people who have seen the cost of land move beyond their reach.

If we want our young people to continually improve their stations in life, they must have access to land as a foundation of their personal wealth.

My Government has a policy of empowerment through affordable land ownership.

The announcement of the community for young professionals is not the first land development of my Government.

For example, we are in the process of another type of development in Carmichael, where the lot prices started at \$15,000 for lots valued at over \$70,000.

There will be further offerings at various different price levels.

All will be in well-designed subdivisions with world-class infrastructure and suitable amenities.

Our land empowerment initiatives are not one-off endeavors.

They will go on for years and years, building on what previous FNM Governments have done in previous terms in office.

We have already identified a number of tracts of Crown Land in New Providence and the Family Islands where we will provide affordable land to Bahamians at various levels.

Our intention is for thousands of Bahamian first-time homeowners to benefit from our vision for wealth-creation, ownership and empowerment.

This is how we expand the middle class!

This is how we empower our people!

Mr. Speaker:

I was surprised to read online from Eyewitness News on March 29, 2021 various criticisms of our land initiative from the Member from the Exumas and Ragged Island.

The one thing I thought we all could agree on is providing access to land to young Bahamians.

Yet as has been their practice for our entire term, if we propose it the Opposition will find some way to criticize it!

As a demonstration of how reckless and irresponsible their criticisms have been, the Opposition went as far as opposing a number of live-saving emergency public health measures during the worst global pandemic in 100 years!

Their opposition to the emergency health measures that are saving Bahamian lives will go down as one of the most disgraceful decisions of any elected party in Bahamian history.

Countries around the world are using versions of these measures.

But because we proposed them here to save Bahamian lives, the Opposition is against them!

In the FNM we put Bahamian lives before partisanship!

In the FNM we put keeping Bahamians safe before politics!

In the FNM we believe giving land to young Bahamians is the right thing to do!

Those of us in public life should be able to agree on good policy initiatives such as this subdivision.

It is fine for legislators to make suggestions as to how to improve ideas.

However, just criticizing for political reasons is disgraceful.

We will continue to move aggressively to give land to Bahamians!

We will continue to move aggressively to empower our next generation!

We will make no apologies for supporting Bahamians!

The purpose of good government is to give a chance to those who have been historically denied opportunity.

Good government is about making sure young people in our next generation can meet their full potential.

That is why we are here.

This is the work we intend to keep doing.

Mr. Speaker:

Before I end, it is necessary that I make a few comments on the pandemic.

It has been a difficult year.

We are all tired of restrictions and being distant.

We'd all like to live the lives we were accustomed to before this deadly virus spread around the world.

But while we are frustrated, we must remain disciplined and abide by the public health measures for a while longer.

The pandemic is raging around the world.

There is particular difficulty in various parts of our region of the Americas.

South America is experiencing a significant surge, while parts of the Caribbean and North America are having challenges too.



Europe is dealing with its own upswing of cases, which has led to a wave of restrictions and lockdowns on the continent.

The pandemic is not over.

If we are slack and stop practicing the public health measures, we too could have significant problems.

In the past few weeks cases have risen in The Bahamas.

This has led to increased hospitalizations.

To help slow this spread we must redouble our efforts.

Remember to:

- Avoid mass gatherings
- Be physically distant when out
- Wear your mask properly over your nose and mouth when out

- Wash or sanitize your hands regularly, and keep them away from your face
- And, when you are eligible, get vaccinated!

Vaccinations are our way out of the pandemic.

If anyone tells you otherwise, they are giving you bad information.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is very infectious.

It spreads easily.

New variants of concern have emerged.

They are even easier to catch.

Scientists think they are deadlier too.

If you are eligible, waiting to take a vaccine could cost you your life.

While you are waiting you could catch the virus.

Unfortunately, we have one of the worst health profiles in the world due to high rates of obesity and

chronic non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension.

COVID-19 is particularly dangerous to Bahamians.

Many Bahamians have multiple comorbidities.

Do not just ignore the virus.

Do not think it won't affect you.

This pandemic will only end when a significant majority of Bahamians are vaccinated.

My Government has secured doses, and we are working day and night to secure more so that every adult Bahamian who wants to be vaccinated can be vaccinated.

But for the vaccine to work you must come forward and take it.

The more we get vaccinated, the more we can open up the economy.

This means more jobs, increased working hours and more wealth for Bahamians.

In these difficult times let's stay focused on what is important to get us through this crisis and back to normal.

Abide by the public health measures.

Get vaccinated when it is your time.

Mr. Speaker:

The Resolution we debate today will help to secure homes and a better future for more young Bahamians.

We are securing dreams and opportunities for Bahamians.

It is with great hope that I support the Resolution.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

May God continue to bless and guide our Bahamas.

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