**Presentation to CPA**

**Star Fish Point Restrooms**

**January 9, 2019**

The following is the full text of remarks by the Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Ezzard Miller at this morning’s CPA hearing on the erection of public restrooms at the Star Fish Point Public Beach:

“Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Central Planning Authority.

Let me first express my most sincere gratitude to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the CPA for affording me this opportunity to address you.

I appear this morning primarily on behalf of the people of North Side— whom I am privileged and most honoured to represent as their elected representative—but also in support of the wider Cayman community that also makes use of the public beach in the Cayman Kai development.

My concern this morning is about an attempt to block the construction of public restrooms at the Star Fish Point public beach. This project has been initiated by the Government and me to fill an indisputable public need and to enhance the area.

Mr. Chairman, this project was developed and agreed by the North Side District Council with full public consultation during a lengthy multi-year series of public meetings, with the subsequent agreement and policy formulation by the Ministry of Tourism.

What this means is that what these owners are objecting to is a policy made by Government to develop a public beach in this location. In this regard, the CPA should take note that in this case the persons making representation to the CPA have no right to raise their objections to this body, as public policy is not a matter for the CPA to determine.

Now, Mr. Chairman, if these owners were objecting to nonpolicy matters, such as the architectural features of the facility, this would become the purview of the CPA and I would be happy to entertain their suggestions for improvements.

I am additionally disappointed and deeply troubled that wealthy guests whom the Cayman Islands has afforded the opportunity and the privilege of living and developing property in North Side have taken a stance that propels the construction of a much-needed public facility into a them-against-us situation.

As the elected representative of all the residents of North Side, I am most reluctant to be drawn into a portrayal of this ‘them-against-us’ polarization as an attempt to keep the local population out of the Cayman Kai area, although the related proposal by owners to erect an electronically controlled gate to the area does raise this spectre.

That would be particularly unfortunate and hurtful, as the people of North Side have welcomed the development of Cayman Kai and have worked hard over the years in playing their part in the success that this development enjoys today. The developers provide many employment opportunities for North Siders and North Siders have given of their best to the developers.

As a result, the developers and North Siders have always shared a bond of mutual love and respect.

This reciprocal relationship had been so widely acknowledged that the developers had always made sure there was proper and adequate access to the beaches for North Siders to maintain their traditional fishing, picnicking, and sea bathing. The beaches have also traditionally been used by the general public, especially during public and other holidays.

Sadly, a new crop of owners over the past decade, in particular, have been moving to erode and eliminate the use and access by North Siders and the wider community to the Cayman Kai area.

Their latest ploy over this past Christmas and New Year’s holidays is a proposal to erect an electronically operated gate at the entrance to Cayman Kai. The strategy is to restrict access by subjecting persons not resident in the area to the indignity of searches, while landowners enjoy free electronic access.

This is the third time around for this electronic gate proposal and I assure you that this will not happen on my watch.”