

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 4

Charles “Ted” Blackburn

Islamorada Village Manager

Candidate Report

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Cover Letter and Resume

Section 4

Charles "Ted" Blackburn
1248 Flying Bridge Lane
Osprey, Florida 34229
305-304-6198
tblackburn01@yahoo.com

Feb. 14, 2022
Village of Islamorada
Islamorada, Fl. 33036

To the Village Council,

I miss Islamorada and would love to come back to serve the council and the amazing and feisty citizens as Village Manager. I will not bore you with the past, you have the knowledge, ability and memory to check up on me. But I will touch on a few highlights of my years of service to the village. With the assistance of a remarkable staff and past council we were able to implement and participate in some transformational projects in this beautiful village.

Nothing in my previous life has come close to the sense of accomplishment derived from initiating, planning, and overseeing the Islamorada wastewater project. Persuasion, determination, and persistence helped drive the project. What seemed like endless trips to Tallahassee, Washington, D.C., and most doggedly the Key Largo Wastewater District ended with a truly game changing result. The contacts and various role models within the village, county, and state served us well and hopefully will continue to do so.

Many times, decisions are made that are not all encompassing but can also have major impacts on the village. For instance, the planning and approval for a Publix met with vocal opposition by some, but great relief by many. This has provided a truly needed service.

My background in local government and my career in finance helped me to pursue my passion in government service. I ultimately became a senior Vice President at Prudential Capital, but my role as Mayor of Sea Cliff, NY for eight years truly built my foundation for serving the public.

I want to conclude by reminding myself and the Council that institutional knowledge can sometime be a person's greatest asset. I thoroughly enjoyed working in Islamorada and the community we tried to serve. I certainly do not grasp all the issues or the solutions pertaining to Islamorada. But I do understand a bundle of them, and I feel I have a head start and a desire to find solutions. This would prove to be in the best interest of the Council and more importantly, the citizens of Islamorada.

Sincerely,

Ted Blackburn

Charles "Ted" Blackburn

Charles “Ted” Blackburn

1248 Flying Bridge Lane
Osprey, Florida. 34229
305-304-6198

tblackburn01@yahoo.com

Objective: Village Manager

Professional Experience:

Village of Islamorada, Florida 2010-2015

Mayor and Councilmember

- Initiated and supervised the creation of Islamorada’s wastewater system
- After significant loss of village assessment value, held taxes steady for 4 years
- Refinanced village debt saving major tax dollars
- Created policy for a full-service incorporated village

Town of Wilmington, Vermont 2003-2007

- Windham County Supervisory Union School Board member
Merged two school districts that had existed separately for at least 100 years
- Deerfield Valley Rescue Squad

St. Christopher-Ottile 2001-2002

Consultant

- Consulted on researched locations for group homes for disabled

Prudential Securities, New York, New York 1990-2000

Senior Vice President Agency Trading

- Worked with institutional and retail sales to generate client relationships
- Most profitable trader in government and agency department, 1999 and 2000

Village of Sea Cliff, New York 1991-1999

Mayor

- Managed full-service incorporated village
- Worked with government officials at all levels including, Senate, Assembly and Dept. of State
- Secured funding, grants and aid for the village
- Accomplished substantial waterfront cleanup and beautification projects
- Rejuvenated village boards, groups and activities

Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee, Nassau County, NY 1995-1999

Chairman and Co-founder with Tom DiNapoli, Comptroller, State of New York

- First intergovernmental union of local governments working for a common purpose om Long Island – led to pilot programs around New York state and Connecticut

Section 4

Smith Barney, Inc., New York, New York
Vice President, Head of Agency Department

1982-1990

Chemical Bank, New York, New York
Vice President, Head of Agency Department

1972-1982

Education:

Wake Forest University. Winston-Salem, North Carolina

- B.A., Political Science, 1970

University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland

- Graduate studies, Philosophy and Theology, 1970

Candidate Introduction

Charles “Ted” Blackburn

Charles (Ted) Blackburn

After graduating from Wake Forest University and graduate work at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland I was broke and went to work in New York. For almost thirty years I was a U.S. treasury and agency trader and headed the agency desk at three firms. I worked on a trading floor and traded positions, at times approaching a half a billion dollars (seemed like funny money). I bring this up because quick decision making under pressure, some knowledge of financial markets and being profitable were part of the job; along with gladly having to force out rogue traders on my desk occasionally.

My financial career alone would not qualify me to apply for the Village Manager position in Islamorada, only peripherally. My eight years as Mayor of Sea Cliff, New York gave me hands on experience in all facets of local government and made me very comfortable in managing a village. Sea Cliff was a strong mayor town, elected separately from the board, so the administrator reported to me with the council approving.

The budget, grant work, public works, administration, grand projects and dreams were all under the Mayor’s supervision. We had a wonderful, experienced staff and accomplished some rather dramatic projects along the way. Public access to the waterfront was important and had been neglected, which coincidentally was an area for which New York State was interested in providing funds.

So, we dreamed and built with the state as financial partner. The results were three parks leading to the water with terraced stairways and gardens using low maintenance plants and providing protection from storm runoff. One of the parks replaced a boardwalk along the harbor that had been destroyed by a storm at least sixty years earlier.

We purchased a waterfront home and property which expanded our public beach, built an outdoor stage and created more parking in one large project. We replaced firetrucks, garbage trucks, accounting systems and renovated buildings always trying to bring in grants to enable us to accomplish these tasks at the lowest cost to our citizens. The accounting system involved converting a ledger system to computers, no easy task in the day.

I mentioned earlier I had no problem firing a rogue trader which simply was a matter of right and wrong. But as Mayor I did have to terminate staff including a librarian for budgetary reasons and that was tearfully awful but necessary. Included in my negative human resource experience is firing the minister of my church (twelve years). I am not sure what this has done for my future afterlife, but it cannot be good.

On the hiring side of human resources, I have hired clerks, building inspectors and directors, financial officers, auditors and most local government positions. Human resource issues are complicated, sensitive and essential. Yet often the most important skill is human understanding and compassion.

Charles “Ted” Blackburn

My Sea Cliff experience has been the second most rewarding part of my working life to date. Although there were ups and downs, I can still drive through town and witness projects, see staff, feel proud and at home twenty-three years later.

Section three of my working life, I believe, represents my most fulfilling and productive. I cannot fool you fellows.

I was on the Council and Mayor when most of you were either currently involved in the community or already had been involved. David, I am sorry I missed you, but I do see you in action online.

The point is you know my demeanor and leadership style along with my successes and failures. Nevertheless, I will try to list a few activities in which I was involved while serving on the council.

In 2010 interest rates were coming down rapidly and we were still in a real estate disaster. The assessed value of Islamorada had dropped by over a third. We had a level of service we were expected to provide and inadequate funds to accomplish this. The economy and markets were still unstable so raising taxes was not an option. Various budget remedies were tried such as not replacing employees that left. Obviously, we held or cut the budget where we could and looked for savings. Our debt was a problem (always is) and I knew the 10yr. U.S. treasury note had dropped to 2% or under in 2011 through 2013. I suggested we refinance all the debt we legally could and Maria Bassett our new Finance Director got the job done. This approach saved the village significant dollars over an extended period.

Trying new initiatives was impossible, yet we had a rapidly approaching Florida state deadline for sewerage the village and we had not started. After investigating various real estate for a treatment plant in Islamorada we concluded that was not going to work. We looked to the Key Largo treatment plant. After a few fits and starts, I was asked to try and negotiate with the Key Largo Wastewater Board. It took six months of difficult, time-consuming talks, but we finally produced a contract. Now we needed a building plan, a construction firm and the actual construction.

You know the result. Let me say it was all consuming and trying for me, but it was the most challenging project or event I have ever undertaken, with the help of a great staff!

For better or worse, one our wastewater contracts was changed by future councils and now the village is doing the operation of our facilities. We had projected build out plus a percentage. Large renovations on existing homes and growth have changed the pace of capacity negotiated originally in our contract. For me it would be fascinating to review all this. Wastewater is a boring topic but unavoidable in any in depth discussion on our future.

Charles “Ted” Blackburn

On a brighter note I was involved with Dick Hagood, Pasta Pantaleo and my wife Sara, in the origination of the Morada Way Art District. The Wet Net affordable housing development originated and completed while I was in office. Many of our outstanding current staff including our Finance Director and Village Attorney were hired while I was serving.

Publix coming to Islamorada was a particularly contentious effort. A clear majority of residents wanted the grocery store but a vocal group, understandably, opposed or at least pressed for modifications. After many positive revisions the store was built and has become a part of the community.

The candidates have been asked to talk about their biggest disappointments or failures which is a difficult task, but in my case blatantly obvious. The dreaded Fills would be mine. We had the same problem on Sea Oats Beach and were able to stop the parking problem through draconian enforcement of parking rules and true roadblocks stationed along the road. For months the roadway was an eyesore, but once the barricades were removed the parking problem dissipated. We then tried to solve the Fills issue.

FDOT and the village staff created a plan for limited public access similar to one of the choices you are considering. But first, the public wanted more input, and a working committee was formed. Constant changes in goals and usage scuttled the project, and my last term was up. Needless to say, that did not go well, and I apologize for this issue ending up in your laps. Amazingly some problems come and go while others seem to linger for an eternity.

I miss Islamorada and need productive challenges in my life. Being able to pursue the goals the citizens are expecting and administer the agenda the council sets ,with assistance from my institutional knowledge would certainly be fulfilling. Aside from day-to-day operations, the meaty issues like the build out, hardening the infrastructure, preparing for storms and endless environmental hazards make the Manager’s job perfect!

We are going to need assistance from the county, state and federal governments. We must learn where they want to spend money, and how that can tie into our plans. The infrastructure and environmental predicaments are staggering, and we will need help. Working with our Keys partners can and has accomplished quite a bit. I certainly do not know all the local players anymore, but I can easily learn and produce an argument for continued cooperation.

Closing with a little governing philosophy will guarantee the effort to put you to sleep. Anyway, government exists for one reason; to provide service. The residents decide on what level of service they are willing to fund, and elect people who can accomplish the task. Those elected people then trust in someone who might be able to take their mandate and create the services desired, and oh by the way, at the lowest possible cost. You might need someone with local knowledge and a history of accomplishing that task.

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
CHARLES "TED" BLACKBURN**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Sarasota County, FL	No Records Found
Monroe County, FL	No Records Found
Windham County, VT	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found
Vermont	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Sarasota County, FL	No Records Found
Monroe County, FL	No Records Found
Windham County, VT	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found
Vermont	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
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Credit

Excellent

Personal Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

Education

Confirmed

Social Media

Nothing of Concern Found

**Background Check Summary for
CHARLES "TED" BLACKBURN**

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for
CHARLES "TED" BLACKBURN
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: _____

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.
Facebook
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to: Charles (Ted) Blackburn
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Lynelle@cb-asso.com or via fax to (561) 621-5965 **no later than 5:00 PM MST 02/28/2022.**
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes
Charles (Ted) Blackburn

Ken Phillipson – Former Mayor, Islamorada, FL 305-304-8925

Apart from being a successful businessman, Mr. Phillipson served on the City Council and spent some time as the Mayor, which is where he became acquainted with Mr. Blackburn. They were on the City Council together starting in 2010 and worked together in that capacity for roughly five years.

Mr. Blackburn was a liaison for Islamorada to the Key Largo Wastewater District. He traveled to Tallahassee several times to speak to the state about their unfunded mandate for the sewer system. He attended all the meetings and informed the council on the updates on a regular basis. He was well liked by the Key Largo District even though he was negotiating with them. He negotiated for fair rates for both districts and for the taxpayers of the city. The situation was difficult, but he helped them through it very well.

Mr. Blackburn handles controversial subjects with grace and a calm demeanor. Islamorada did not have a national supermarket in their small town, and many in the community wanted to keep it that way, but Publix had worked for nine years to come to the town and had done everything correctly and meticulously in order to build their first store in Islamorada. It was only a matter of the Council approving it. Although there was some public opposition, Mr. Blackburn understood the importance of continuing the process with the store, and so they did move forward. It is now a very busy and popular store, without any major ramifications to the smaller stores in town.

Mr. Blackburn is active in the community. He enjoys sailing and boating and is involved with a rowing crew. He was a lifeguard for the village and served on the local planning agency. He is active in the Moose Lodge in Islamorada and served on the board of their chapter. He is a leader in the community and is respected by all who know him.

Apart from his time as Mayor for a little town in New York state, Mr. Blackburn was also Mayor for Islamorada. He is well qualified to be the Village Manager because he is intimately involved in the community and knows all the players. He is familiar with the current staff and gets along well with people in the community. He is much more qualified than the prior Village Manager, who only lasted for six months. He is highly experienced, but more than that, he is well liked and respected by the community. He will make an excellent Village Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Ted Blackburn:

- Levelheaded,
- Athletic,
- Well qualified,
- Active in the community,
- Friendly, and
- People person.

Reference Notes
Charles (Ted) Blackburn

Strengths: Ability to reason and think clearly. Because of his financial background as a bond trader on Wall Street, he is excellent in finance and operations.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Richard Russell – Athletic Director, Coral Shores High School, FL 305-522-0948

Mr. Russell has been the Athletic Director for Coral Shores High School since 1979. He has known Mr. Blackburn as a councilmember, a leader in the community in general, a member of their church, and as a lacrosse coach for the high school. They met in 2010.

As a member of the Village Council, Mr. Blackburn was one of five elected officials who helped make the decisions and govern the village. Many of those decisions had compelling arguments on both sides. Mr. Blackburn is skilled in diffusing much of the ire that was brought to the table. He has an open ear to everybody. He listens and articulates back to them what he understands their position to be and then makes sensible judgments after hearing all sides. It is impossible to keep everybody happy, but Mr. Blackburn resolved many hostilities and helped the council reach the best decision for the village.

Mr. Blackburn looks for out of the box solutions. In coaching he made use of some facilities that no one had even considered. Before he made the transition to use those facilities, he did his homework, talked to the people involved, and received their endorsements. He then went to the school board with his idea and showed how to make it work. He is solution oriented.

There is nothing in Mr. Blackburn's personal or professional conduct that would be concerning. He has not been involved with anything controversial, aside from the small daily issues in government that divide the public. He is even keeled and does not have any difficulties in handling stressful environments. Mr. Russell gives Mr. Blackburn his unconditional endorsement and support as Village Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Ted Blackburn:

- Organized,
- Disciplined,
- Articulate,
- Knowledgeable,
- Personable, and
- Goal oriented.

Strengths: Innovative and open minded.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Reference Notes
Charles (Ted) Blackburn

David Goodhue – Reporter, Miami Herald, FL 305-923-9728

Mr. Goodhue has known Mr. Blackburn since 2012. As a reporter he cannot make a biased statement about Mr. Blackburn but has seen him frequently in the community and as a village councilmember. Mr. Blackburn attended all the city council meetings and interacted with the public well during the public comment periods and at community events.

The Village of Islamorada is an impassioned, involved community. Residents show up and voice their opinions. They speak their minds to the public officials in the village. Mr. Blackburn was always prepared for scrutiny and tough questions. He was instrumental in creating the wastewater system for their village. People were concerned about the financial side of that venture and how it would work but Mr. Blackburn made time to thoroughly research the issue and address it in public meetings.

There is nothing in Mr. Blackburn's background that would be embarrassing or concerning if it came to light. He responds well to stress. He has always been collected and calm in potentially tense situations.

Mr. Blackburn is dedicated, hardworking, and friendly. Community service means a great deal to him. He would make a good city or county manager generally.

Words or phrases used to describe Ted Blackburn:

- Professional,
- Dedicated,
- Thorough,
- Involved,
- Community service minded, and
- Interactive.

Strengths: Commitment for the issues at hand.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Bob Pavey – Pastor, Matecumbe United Methodist Church, FL 765-686-3299

Mr. Pavey has known Mr. Blackburn since 2015. Mr. Blackburn was an upstanding member of the church, a member of the village council, and Mayor of the Village. He attended community events and is popular, well known, and respected.

One of the controversial issues that came up in Islamorada while Mr. Blackburn served on the City Council was the question of whether to widen the backroads of the village. Although Mr.

Reference Notes
Charles (Ted) Blackburn

Pavey and Mr. Blackburn were in favor of the option to widen the roads so it would be safer for pedestrians, it would have cost a great deal, and ultimately the rest of the council voted against the initiative. Mr. Blackburn handled the disappointment with grace and without hard feelings or resentment. He expressed his opinion but upheld the will of the council and moved forward with other projects.

Mr. Blackburn is a good example in the community. He is quick to volunteer for assignments and to accept additional responsibilities. He is very knowledgeable and has all the credentials necessary of a Village Manager. He is well liked and respected. In every respect he is the perfect man for the job as Village Manager. Mr. Pavey highly recommends Mr. Blackburn.

Words or phrases used to describe Ted Blackburn:

- Popular,
- Upstanding,
- Knowledgeable,
- Bright, and
- Respected.

Strengths: Leadership abilities, especially while on the Village Council.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Joe Roth – Former President, Chamber of Commerce, Islamorada, FL 305-393-2660

Mr. Roth knows Mr. Blackburn on several levels. He used to do insurance work for Mr. Blackburn, they served on the Parks and Recreation Committee for Islamorada together, and Mr. Roth was the president of the Chamber of Commerce while Mr. Blackburn was a councilperson of the village. They have known each other since 2005.

Mr. Blackburn worked on a controversial issue regarding sign ordinance and portable signs with business community members. Issues like hurricanes and things of that nature caused stress to the business environment and created conflict between people who did not want to have additional temporary signs on the road and those who did. In helping the two groups discuss the issue, Mr. Blackburn was fair and listened to both sides. He helped develop a solution that worked for everyone.

Mr. Blackburn can read and understand complex text and break it down so the average person can comprehend because he conveys the information in a simpler form. He understands highly sophisticated issues and discovers equitable and fair solutions. He is not an agenda driven person; he is driven by outcomes. He prefers to listen to others and make decisions on input instead of putting out solutions based on predisposed ideas and preconceived notions.

Reference Notes
Charles (Ted) Blackburn

Mr. Blackburn is always levelheaded and fair. He has the needed people skills and experience in public service to make an excellent Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Ted Blackburn:

- Fair,
- Willing to listen,
- Responsive,
- Levelheaded,
- Fair, and
- Personable.

Strengths: Communicates well with others and is approachable and friendly.

Weaknesses: Sometimes is too amenable and spends too much time listening to others about issues that did not deserve that much time and attention.

**Chris Lockwood – Former Partner, Neuberger Berman Financial Services, FL
631-805-6299**

Mr. Lockwood has known Mr. Blackburn since the 3rd grade. Although they went into related businesses in finance, and frequently speak about professional matters, they are personal friends first and foremost.

Mr. Blackburn is committed to serving the public where he lives, including being a Mayor in New York and again in Islamorada after he retired and moved to Florida. He devotes much of his personal time to public service and has a talent for organization and public administration. He is especially adept at handling interpersonal issues. Between being involved in the government bond business in his professional life and serving as mayor in two different towns and two different states, he has dealt with many personalities.

While not necessarily being a cutting-edge innovator, Mr. Blackburn has embraced change in both his personal and public service life. In his professional career he has dealt with very rapid change, sometimes on an hour-to-hour basis. In the public service business, there is a constant change related to the fiscal issues and sociology of the towns in which he lived and served. As a mayor he dealt with everything from building public works projects to overseeing the police department.

Being a municipal manager is an extension of what Mr. Blackburn has already done in his public service career. He is familiar with every aspect of public service and there is nothing in his background that is questionable or controversial. He will be a fine Manager.

Reference Notes
Charles (Ted) Blackburn

Words or phrases used to describe Ted Blackburn:

- Personable,
- Adaptable,
- Organized,
- Volunteer,
- Friendly, and
- Innovative.

Strengths: Devoting time and energy to serve the community.

Weaknesses: Between work and his public service activities, he did not leave very much time for himself for pure recreation.

**Cheryl Meads – Board Member, South Florida Water Management District, FL
305-509-2902**

Ms. Meads has known Mr. Blackburn since 2016 when Mr. Blackburn was Mayor, and she ran for village council. As Mayor, he was professional, intelligent, and well educated. He was exactly what their village needed and was one of the best mayors they have ever had.

Mr. Blackburn has a background in finance. He is a successful businessman and brought those skills with him as Mayor of Islamorada. He understands spreadsheets and explains them in a way that others can understand. He knows the director of finance and has worked with her for years.

Mr. Blackburn is willing to do the work. He cares about the community, their code, their current plan, and the current citizens. He knows how to fix problems and was instrumental in getting wastewater sewer in their town.

There is nothing in Mr. Blackburn's background that is controversial or embarrassing. He does not gossip and does not have an alcohol or anger problem. He thinks at a high level, retired young, and is still active and energetic. He would be a stabilizing factor for Islamorada if chosen to be Village Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Ted Blackburn:

- Fair,
- Calm,
- Rational,
- Righteous,
- Honest, and
- Professional.

Reference Notes
Charles (Ted) Blackburn

Strengths: Loves the community of Islamorada and wants the best for them.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Claudia Moyne – Former Mayor, Sea Cliff, NY 516-759-9251

Ms. Moyne worked with Mr. Blackburn between 1991 to 1999 while he was the Mayor of Sea Cliff and she was his Deputy Mayor. She followed him as Mayor after his term was finished and is now retired. Mr. Blackburn was a very popular mayor. Citizens were happy with him, and everybody thought he did a commendable job. Mr. Blackburn and his wife always participated in community affairs and threw many cocktail parties and other events of their own. They are active in the community and well loved by the people.

Mr. Blackburn is idealistic. He pursued the development and implementation of a master plan in Sea Cliff, which is still in place, although added to and amended many times over the years. Although he has a vision for the community, he pays close attention to the budget and runs a tight ship. He was commended by the state on that point. He started a recycling program in Sea Cliff, which was an early effort of recycling on Long Island.

Mr. Blackburn is calm and collected under stress. He thinks of solutions and does not get flustered or upset. He interacted well with the public works department even though that was a difficult situation with several personnel issues. He encouraged them to try something new, when they tended to be more conservative and did not want to change their ways. He made sure they were fulfilling their job requirements without coming off as confrontational or overbearing.

Mr. Blackburn will be a great City or County Manage because he knows much about running a community, he has experience, is hardworking, and is very personable. He gets along with everybody and is open minded.

Words or phrases used to describe Ted Blackburn:

- Intelligent,
- Hard working,
- Successful,
- Smart,
- Personable,
- Popular,
- Open minded, and
- Idealistic.

Reference Notes
Charles (Ted) Blackburn

Strengths: Gets along with others easily. In politics there are always some people who do not like the decisions that are being made, but overall, the community appreciated what he was doing for their community.

Weaknesses: Talks too much and does not want to quit even when it is late. Ms. Moyne remembers meetings that went until midnight, and everyone was tired and needed to stop for the day.

Prepared by: Amanda Jenkins
Colin Baenziger & Associates

Section 4

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Charles “Ted” Blackburn
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
December 29, 2014

Small-town character: Should it be preserved – ISLAMORADA

Author: Josh Gore

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Charles “Ted” Blackburn** is listed below.]

Election changes

As for the November council election, all five seats were open to challengers. Voters replaced incumbent Ken Philipson with former councilman Jim Mooney, and incumbent David Purdo for former state attorney Dennis Ward. Former councilman Chris Sante was elected to replace **Ted Blackburn**, who did not seek re-election. Councilwoman Deb Gillis edged out challenger Buddy Pinder to keep her seat, while Mike Forster drew no challenger. Forster was also tapped by his colleagues to serve as mayor of the new council.

One of the races drew added attention after two contenders came to blows, sort of.

While playing "Queen of Hearts" at the Islamorada Moose Lodge, Purdo took a swing at Ward after an argument broke out between the two. According to accounts from both, Ward called Purdo a thief, which prompted Purdo to throw a punch at Ward. But Purdo missed and hit a bystander instead. The police were not called to respond to the incident.

Earlier in the year, the village's administration saw a change in leadership. The council let go of Village Manager Ed Koconis and replaced him with Finance Director Maria Aguilar. Koconis was fired partly by his own doing. He declined to give up his dual role as planning director and serve only as village manager. As part of his termination, his contract guaranteed him more than \$100, 000 in severance pay. He later joined the staff of the Monroe County Planning Department.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Charles “Ted” Blackburn
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Keys Keynoter (Marathon, FL)
September 12, 2014

Rate stays the same, but taxes going up slightly - Council says increase needed to maintain level of services

Author: DAVID GOODHUE

The Islamorada Village Council on Tuesday unanimously passed an \$11 million operating budget for the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1. Islamorada homeowners will pay the same tax rate as they did the current fiscal year, although their taxes will go up slightly because property values have increased. The council passed a tax rate of \$2.53 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. So before factoring in the \$25,000 break primary homeowners receive on their tax bill, the owner of a \$350,000 house will pay \$885.50 for village services for the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Councilmen David Purdo and Ken Philipson wanted their colleagues to try harder to pass the so-called rollback tax rate, the rate that would generate the same amount of property tax revenue next fiscal year as the current year. That rate is \$2.42. Using this rate, the same homeowner mentioned above would pay \$847 in village taxes.

Councilman Michael Forster said the difference is not enough to convince him that village taxpayers are being hit by an unreasonable hike. "It's not a pittance of money, but it's not going to kill anybody," Forster said. Bob Johnson, the only resident to attend Tuesday's budget hearing, slammed the council for not trying hard enough to lower taxes. He took particular aim at Forster, whom he accused of trying to pass a tax rate before discussing the particulars of the budget.

Forster noted that Tuesday's hearing and one before were sparsely attended, and he has heard from only two constituents -- Johnson included -- who wanted him to vote for the rollback rate. "That's not a consensus," said Forster, who, as owner of the popular Mangrove Mikes Cafe, speaks with at least dozens of residents daily. "That's two people."

Mayor **Ted Blackburn** agreed, stating the proposed tax rate has been the same since the summer. He also said taxes must go up some if the village is going to provide the services residents want now that the economy is finally starting to recover after the 2008 recession. "We're trying to get back to the level of service the people of Islamorada expect, and we're trying to do it in the most economical way we can do it," **Blackburn** said. The budget includes 3 percent raises for most village employees.

Forster said Islamorada has the lowest percentage of tax rate increase than any other taxing body in the Keys, save for the small, incorporated community of Key Colony Beach. "So I feel we're doing a good job," Forster said. Part of the budget is about \$3.1 million in reserves, \$2.7 million of which is unassigned fund balance. This is in keeping with the village's goal of having unassigned reserves equal to 25 percent of total expenditures. There is one more budget hearing, on Sept. 15, where the Village Council will formally adopt the 2014-15 tax rate.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Charles “Ted” Blackburn
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Keys Keynoter (Marathon, FL)
July 18, 2014

FDOT, Harriette’s working on compromise - Removing new median is key to the negotiations

Author: DAVID GOODHUE

The Florida Department of Transportation began negotiations this week with an embattled Key Largo business owner days after the state agency took away seven of her parking spaces in its ongoing campaign to reclaim rights of way along U.S. 1. Harriette Mattson, owner of Harriette's Restaurant at mile marker 95.7, said her meeting Wednesday with FDOT officials and state Rep. Holly Raschein of Key Largo "went well overall."

In place of the open parking spaces, FDOT constructed a 6-inch-high median that created two small driveways. Raschein said part of the compromise with Mattson is FDOT removing the median. "That was absolutely my No. 1 request," Raschein said Thursday. "Both sides are equally pleased with the outcome." Mattson will likely have to install some landscaping in its place, but that takes up a smaller footprint than the median, which has made driving into the business difficult and confusing for patrons.

FDOT representatives could not be reached for comment by press time Thursday afternoon. The agency has come under fire from Keys residents, business owners and elected officials lately. They accuse FDOT of making big decisions without seeking local input and without adequately realizing or caring about the consequences of their projects. This started earlier this year when FDOT installed a \$20,000 pedestrian crosswalk at mile marker 100 in Key Largo in April. Sheriff Rick Ramsay blasted the move. He said building a crosswalk there puts both pedestrians and drivers at risk of injury and death.

Then last week, giving one day notice, FDOT crews came to Harriette's and began ripping up her concrete front parking lot. The job is part of the agency's policy of taking back rights of way that it hasn't wanted in decades. Well-known Upper Keys businesses including Tower of Pizza, Keys Kritters pet store and D-Hooker Sports Bar and Grill have already been impacted, albeit not as severely as Harriette's. The policy switch came as a surprise to many property owners up and down the Keys who never knew parts of their land belong to FDOT.

Mattson, however, knew her front lot was FDOT's since she bought the business in 1982. But the agency never wanted it back for nearly 30 years - until in 2012, when FDOT crews blocked off the spaces with plastic delineators. An outraged community, including business owners from Islamorada, rallied to her defense and the delineators were soon gone and the spaces back. For the past six months, Mattson was leasing the spaces from FDOT for \$129 a month. But last Tuesday, FDOT Right of Way Manager Maria A. Llanes let Mattson know in an e-mailed "courtesy notification" that the deal was off.

Wrecking crews showed up last Wednesday afternoon, and by the next day, the curb to the

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Charles “Ted” Blackburn

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

median was up. The move was a wakeup call throughout the Keys, and was a topic of discussion at the Islamorada Village Council's meeting last Thursday night. Mike Forster, a councilman and owner of Mangrove Mike's Cafe, was most concerned even though his mile marker 82 eatery will not be impacted by the FDOT policy. He told his colleagues that removing just one parking space from a restaurant is the equivalent of "taking a hotel room off line each day." Forster is planning a meeting that includes business owners, Keys elected officials and FDOT. "Let's be stakeholders instead of being told [by FDOT] that this is what we're going to do, and it's in your best interest," he said.

Mayor **Ted Blackburn** said he worries the rights of way reclamation is a way FDOT can justify making U.S. 1 four lanes through Islamorada. Councilman David Purdo said FDOT has become a rogue agency that is "out of touch with reality." "They just don't care," Purdo said. "They don't care if we lose business." Thursday, Raschein urged business owners to contact her if they are concerned about FDOT reclaiming right of way near their properties. "I encourage everyone else out there, don't wait until there's an impasse," Raschein said. "Reach out to me. I'll be happy to intercede on anyone's behalf."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Charles “Ted” Blackburn
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
June 16, 2014

Coral dust causes dust-up – ISLAMORADA

Author: ROBERT SILK

Residents and village officials alike say coral dust from the Islamorada sewer project is causing respiratory problems and allergy-like symptoms. However, Mariners Hospital officials say they haven't seen a spike in respiratory-related ailments as the 18-month-old project has been underway. "Trends have been stable," said David Guardino, a senior respiratory therapist at Mariners.

Concerns over dust along large swaths of Upper Matecumbe Key made their way into Village Council discussions twice in May. The more protracted of the two discussions took place on May 22 after Upper Matecumbe resident Barbara Knowles blamed the sewer work for a scratchy throat. "It's the dust that's in the air," she said. "They're still digging in my community, and I've had this frog in my throat for two weeks. I'll be so glad when it is over." Responded Mayor **Ted Blackburn**, "You're not the only one."

Indeed, excessive amounts of airborne coral dust can trigger respiratory problems, especially for people who suffer from asthma, both Guardino and the Monroe County Health Department say. But Health Department Administrator Bob Eadie is quick to point out that coral dust isn't any worse than any other form of construction dust.

Meanwhile, Guardino said there's no way to determine if an attack of asthma, bronchitis or another respiratory ailment is caused by sewer project dust, normal seasonal allergies or some other cause. "They'll blame it on that, but you can't prove that is the cause," he said in an interview last week.

Still, Guardino himself expressed concern at a Village Council meeting in early May. "We've had quite a few people that have had increased difficulties, and they say it is ever since they dug up the street and the coral dust," Guardino said that night. "There is some real evidence to support that." Guardino also urged the council to pave the construction area near Treasure Village Montessori School. "I think it's bad for the kids," he said.

Whether or not the sewer construction-related dust has had an impact on public health in Islamorada, council members have called on sewer contractor Layne to do what it can to minimize it. Specifically, they asked for the company, also known as Reynolds Water Islamorada, to move faster on paving over the sewer cuts. "You can't leave these neighborhoods exposed to the elements," Councilman Ken Philipson said.

Speaking before the council on May 22, Layne local manager Wes Self apologized for how long it took to close up a trench line along the Old Highway, near Philipson's Tropical Optical shop. He blamed the situation on a subcontractor that did the trenching too early. "We're going to try to

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Charles “Ted” Blackburn

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

limit that in the future," Self said. In an interview last week, Layne spokeswoman Jennifer Miller said the company also takes steps to limit the dust. For example, the company waters down construction areas daily.

Still, Miller acknowledged that there is no getting around the fact that laying a sewer line causes a temporary inconvenience. While Layne has completed work in some neighborhoods in as little as three months, work in more complicated areas has taken as long as six months. In the Venetian Shores neighborhood, where trenching began last week, paving is expected in December, she said. Residents there, though, should get some added dust control from Mother Nature now that the rainy season has begun. "This will be like an extra watering every day," Miller said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Charles “Ted” Blackburn
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
May 22, 2014

AROUND THE KEYS

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Charles “Ted” Blackburn** is listed below.]

IN THE PUBLIC'S INTEREST: was dedicated in 1937 to honor the veterans and civilians killed in the Labor Day hurricane of 1935. The ceremony will begin with an introductory presentation, followed by the invocation by Pastor Tony Hammon of Island Community Church, Guest Speaker Mayor **Ted Blackburn**, Presentation of Colors by Boy Scout Troop 914, the "National Anthem" sung by Leah Sutter, a brief history of the hurricane monument, the laying of the memorial wreath, and a benediction. The service is open to the public. For information, call Barbara Edgar at 305-393-0940.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Charles “Ted” Blackburn
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
March 23, 2014

Village to share sewer funds - ISLAMORADA First-time funds trickle to town
Author: ROBERT SILK

For the first time since 2010, Islamorada is about to receive federal funding assistance for its wastewater project. The town was informed that it would receive a \$1.32 million grant in a March 7 email from Shelly Trulock of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In addition, Key West will receive \$678, 000 for stormwater work. Islamorada's money will go toward the estimated \$120 million ongoing sewer project, which must be complete by the end of 2015.

The federal grant comes out of the \$100 million Florida Keys Water Quality Improvement Program, which Congress authorized in 2000. This year's \$2 million distribution to the Keys still leaves \$53 million to be funded through the act. The Corps selected Islamorada for funds because the village in 2010 turned over a combined \$5 million out of a \$6.1 million federal disbursement to the city of Marathon and the Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District. City officials at the time made the move because Islamorada had not yet begun its main sewer project and would have been unable to spend the money during that fiscal year, as was required.

Rather than allow the Corps to redistribute the funding to other parts of the country, Marathon, Islamorada, the Key Largo district and the Jacksonville Corps office struck a deal. Islamorada gave Marathon and Key Largo the unused \$5 million with the understanding that the village would be made whole during future federal disbursements. The pay-me-back is beginning with this disbursement. But should the Corps award grants in future years, the village has decided to split monies with Marathon and Key Largo - even though it hasn't yet gotten most of that \$5 million back.

The move, said Mayor **Ted Blackburn**, would help secure the lobbying alliance of the three entities. "We will get zero if we don't keep this coalition together," **Blackburn** told his colleagues at the March 13 council meeting. Under the plan the council approved, the village would get 50 percent of future grants while Marathon and Key Largo would get 25 percent each.

In an interview last week, Marathon Interim Manager Mike Puto said the Middle Keys city appreciates the village's generosity. "Very fair without a doubt," he said. However, the plan did raise some concern on the Village Council. "I don't mind sharing, but on the other hand, when do we get made whole?" Councilman Ken Philipson asked last Thursday.

Officials throughout the Keys are hoping for state wastewater assistance this year as well. Gov. Rick Scott's budget proposal for 2014-15 allocates \$17 million each to Key Largo and Marathon and \$7 million to Islamorada. The formal budget, though, must be approved by the Florida Legislature during its ongoing spring session. rsilk@keysnews.com

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Charles “Ted” Blackburn
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
January 13, 2014

Deadliest place in the Florida Keys? It's East Islamorada. But what's killing the people?

Author: DAVID GOODHUE

Not too many people are aware of a place called East Islamorada, but according to the Florida Department of Health, it is the deadliest place in the Keys. East Islamorada is what the U.S. Census Bureau calls an area from about mile marker 86 to around mile marker 91 in the four-island village of Islamorada. There are more deaths on average in that area than in any of the other 24 Census tracts in Monroe County, said Alison Morales, health education director for the Florida Department of Health in Monroe County.

The Department of Health is seeking up to \$53,000 from Islamorada to fund a study to find out what makes the area so dangerous to the public health. Part of the study will be to interview 351 Islamorada residents to get their opinion of the health department assessment. The department conducted a similar study in Bahama Village in Key West in 2012. As a result, the low-income neighborhood was able to obtain more than \$1 million in grants to renovate playgrounds and a gym in an effort to improve the health of its children.

East Islamorada has an older, more affluent population than Bahama Village, so the health issues identified are likely to be quite different. Morales told the five-member Village Council last week that between 2006 and 2010, 247 people died of various causes in East Islamorada. The death rate is 12.2 per 1,000 people, Morales said.

Mayor **Ted Blackburn** is concerned about the rate since about 4,000 of the roughly 6,200 people in the village live in East Islamorada. Although the study will determine more specific reasons for the high death rate, Morales said the Health Department already knows there is a high instance of liver, heart and lung disease in the area.

Mary Vanden Brook, administrative services director for the Department of Health in Monroe County, said there is a strong possibility the disease rate is at least partially related to the 700 liquor licenses in the Keys. Drinking "is part of our heritage and our mystique and all that, but we're paying the cost," she said.

The Village Council didn't vote to approve the money but it will likely do so at its Jan. 23 meeting. So far, it's expected to get approval. At least \$10,000 will likely come from a grant the village is likely to soon receive, said Village Manager Ed Koconis.

Councilman David Purdo wants the Department of Health to look into whether the high death rate has anything to do with ground pollution on certain lots in the village. After ticking off a list of names of charter boat captains who have been diagnosed with cancer, Purdo said he fully supports the study. "I don't mind spending that kind of money to save someone's like if we can," he said.

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Charles “Ted” Blackburn
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
November 6, 2013

Islamorada makes late request for funding - \$3.8 million in canal restoration projects at risk; meeting set for Friday
Author: TIMOTHY O'HARA

The Village of Islamorada is asking a local committee - responsible for making funding recommendations on millions of dollars in environmental projects - to reopen its application period because the municipality missed the filing deadline. The Local Restore Act Committee will decide Friday whether to accept Islamorada's application for \$3.8 million in canal restoration projects.

Key Colony Beach, Key West and Marathon all submitted Gulf of Mexico Restore Act funding applications on time. Key Colony Beach requested \$6.7 million for canal restoration and stormwater projects. Key West asked for \$8.6 million for the revitalization of the Truman Waterfront, said county Legislative Affairs Director Lisa Tennyson, who oversees the Local Restore Act Advisory Committee. Marathon requested \$14 million for canal and tidal restoration projects, and for the redevelopment of Sunset Park, which leads to the Old Seven Mile Bridge, Tennyson said.

Monroe County requested \$6 million for stormwater, canal restoration and mooring field projections. Islamorada city leaders assumed that Monroe County included its canal restoration projects in the county's application, Village Manager Ed Koconis said. However, Islamorada never coordinated its application with the county.

Islamorada is now asking that its request be considered along with the 33 applications that were filed on time. The Village is asking for \$3.8 million in funding. "The canal restoration project, for which Islamorada has now submitted a Restore Act local pot funding application, will have an ecological benefit not only in Islamorada, but all of Monroe County," Islamorada Vice Mayor **Ted Blackburn** wrote to County Mayor George Neugent. "If there are further actions that would be helpful to garner support for the Islamorada canal restoration project proposal to be considered among the other projects submitted to the committee, please let me know. Its environmental impacts would benefit everyone."

The Monroe County Commission selected the Local Advisory Committee earlier this year to make recommendations on how to spend \$11 million in money from federal Cleanwater Act fines levied on BP and Transocean for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The funds are part of the Gulf of Mexico Restore Act.

The committee will make recommendations to the Monroe County Commission. Friday's meeting at 9 a.m. at the Marathon Government Center will be the first time the committee has met since 33 local government agencies and private groups submitted \$48 million worth of applications for funding.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Charles “Ted” Blackburn
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
October 12, 2013

New mayor voted in at last minute; item not on agenda ISLAMORADA
Author: ROBERT SILK

Councilman **Ted Blackburn** is now the mayor of Islamorada. The change happened at the very end of Thursday's Village Council meeting, when Ken Philipson announced he was stepping down from the post two months early. He immediately nominated **Blackburn** to replace him, and the remaining members of the council quickly voted their approval. In stepping down early, Philipson followed in the footsteps of his predecessor, Michael Reckwerdt, who essentially handed the gavel over to Philipson last September.

Under the village charter, the mayor is selected by his peers at the first meeting after November elections, or on off years at the beginning of December. The position is largely honorary. The mayor has one vote on the council, like other council members, and is not an executive. Mayors chair council meetings, however, and the title provides prestige in dealings with Tallahassee, as well as with officials in other parts of the Florida Keys. As he stepped down, Philipson said he'd like to see the schedule for selecting a mayor changed so the position rotates in accord with the start of the October fiscal year. Such timing, however, has a downside. In election years, the new mayor could be voted out of office a month later.

Still, the remainder of the council signaled its agreement with Philipson's proposal. To make the change official, however, the council will have to pass an ordinance approving it. Otherwise, council members would have to reaffirm **Blackburn**, or pick another mayor, at its Dec. 12 meeting.

Immediately after his appointment, **Blackburn** said his primary goal will be to get the \$99 million Islamorada wastewater project completed smoothly. He also said he'd like to maintain what he said was the continuity that Philipson brought to the council. Philipson never made his plan to step down at the Oct. 10 meeting public. He made the move shortly before 10 p.m., when most of the meeting hall was empty. The item was not on the prepublished agenda, and Philipson did not announce it as an add-on when the meeting began, as is the typical Village Council protocol.

The move didn't come as a surprise to his four colleagues, though. Philipson explained after the meeting that he had told the other council members he would resign. However, he said he didn't discuss with them his plan to nominate **Blackburn** as a replacement, a move that would have violated Florida's open meeting laws. Asked why he kept the matter so quiet, Philipson's answer was unrevealing. "I just felt that it was in the best interest to do it that way," he said. Councilman Mike Forster praised Philipson during the council's brief discussion about the mayorship last week. "I just want to tell you, you did a wonderful job," he said. The council selected Deb Gillis as vice mayor.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Charles “Ted” Blackburn
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Reporter, The (Tavernier, FL)
October 10, 2013

Village leans toward subsidizing grinder pumps - Also agrees it should repave private roads

Author: DAVID GOODHUE

Islamorada will provide and maintain sewer grinder pumps to more than 500 village properties and likely hire the same engineering firm building its \$98 million wastewater system to install them. This will probably add another \$3.2 million to the project’s cost, said Greg Tindle, Islamorada’s wastewater program manager. But that equates to about \$3.20 to ratepayers’ monthly utility bills, he said at a Village Council workshop meeting Wednesday.

Operating the grinder pump system will cost about \$60,000 a year, Tindle said. This adds about another 85 cents to a customer’s monthly bill, he said. The village is subsidizing the grinder pumps because they cost significantly more to install than the gravity systems that most Islamorada homes and businesses have or will have.

Paying a contractor to install a gravity connection to a vacuum pit costs a homeowner about \$3,500. But the average cost to install a grinder pump and connect to a low-pressure system is about \$10,000. The village is essentially agreeing to split the difference for the properties that will use grinder pumps. Grinder pumps take sewage to low-pressure wastewater systems, as opposed to most village properties that have or will have gravity pumps that flow a home or business’ sewage directly to a main vacuum pit.

The proposed grinder pump properties have larger, more out-of-the-way lots and are further away from the main pipe, which will be located on U.S. 1. Serving these lots with a vacuum system is costly to the village. But installing grinder pumps is expensive to the property owners. While the council is trying to put more projects out to competitive bidding, the five council members are leaning toward giving the grinder pump contract to Reynolds Water Islamorada. Known nationally as Layne Christensen, the company is building Islamorada’s pipeline system to the Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District’s wastewater plant at mile marker 100.5.

Vice Mayor **Ted Blackburn** said awarding Reynolds the work saves time, given the December 2015 state deadline to complete the project. And **Blackburn** and other council members said it makes sense to give the contract to a company that is obligated to maintain the system for the next 20 years. Reynolds will also likely get another \$2 million from the village to repave private roads after all the sewage pipes are buried. The Village Council voted earlier this year to award Reynolds a \$6 million contract to repave Islamorada public roads. The contract goes to \$8 million if the council decides the village should also be responsible for repaving private streets.

The issue was expected to come up again at the Village Council’s regular meeting Thursday, which was after The Reporter’s deadline. The Village Council also discussed Councilman David Purdo’s frustration with Wade Trim, the engineering company hired to oversee the wastewater

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Charles “Ted” Blackburn

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

system’s construction phase. The Michigan-based firm, along with Keys engineering company Weiler Engineering, has charged the village more than \$3 million this year.

By contrast, Purdo said the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority agreed to charge Monroe County a total of \$7 million to supervise the \$147 million Cudjoe Regional wastewater system. Purdo fears the village could owe Wade Trim and Weiler up to \$11 million before the project is done. He wants to fire the two firms and seek bids from other companies, and the FKAA to take over. He said it could save the village up to \$5 million. But there is no appetite on the rest of the council to re-bid the project. Purdo’s colleagues accused him of “micromanaging” Wade Trim, and said Key Largo, Marathon and the county have all paid similar amounts or more money to the firms supervising their wastewater projects.

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Charles “Ted” Blackburn
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
July 22, 2013

Stepped up patrols for party spot – ISLAMORADA

Author: ROBERT SILK

The Monroe County Sheriff's Office plans to beef up its presence at a popular raft-up party spot located just yards off the private beach of three Lower Matecumbe Key neighborhoods. Speaking to the Village Council last week, Sheriff's Office Capt. Corey Bryan announced he would have both of the marine officers assigned to the village on the water on alternating Saturdays through the rest of the summer. Typically, only one marine officer patrols village waters at a time. The increase, while minimal, is one part of a newly announced village strategy to discourage revelers from congregating at the approximately half-mile stretch of sandy bay bottom just off the Port Antigua, Sandy Point and White Marlin Beach neighborhoods.

The new attention aside, Bryan informed the council that the revelers generally haven't been involved in significant infractions. "The officers are not telling me that there are lots of violations or anything," he said. But supported by the council, Bryan said his officers will now be instructed to be proactive in enforcing boater safety laws, including requirements to carry life vests and flares, as well as boating under the influence. "Enforce things that make people realize that this is no fun being here," Vice Mayor **Ted Blackburn** said. ". I hate to use the word harassment, but you know, it might be an easier way to go."

The measures to be implemented at the Lower Matecumbe party zone come after an aggressive push by the residents of the three adjacent neighborhoods. The president of each of the neighborhood's associations, as well as the president of the Lower Matecumbe Key Association, signed a letter asking for increased restrictions that was sent to the Village Council, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The area in question has long been a spot where partiers have congregated, but residents say the crowd has increased rapidly since two years ago, when maybe 30 or 40 boats would descend upon the sand flat just a couple hundred feet off their beach on holiday weekends. In contrast, White Marlin resident Martin Moe counted 187 boats during the Saturday of the recent July 4 weekend. He estimated that some 1, 000 people manned the boats. The result, residents say, is lots of trash, anchor damage to the bay bottom, and presumably, plenty of people doing what beer drinkers who don't have access to a bathroom do.

Noise, too, is a major concern. "You haven't lived until you hear rap, reggae and country music all blended together in one ear-splitting decibel level on your porch," said Mike McLoad, who lives along the Port Antigua portion of the beach. In their letter, the neighborhood associations said they'd like to see no-motor and no-anchor zones implemented inside 300 feet for most of the Lower Matecumbe bayside. But those issues didn't gain significant traction at the Village Council and the Sanctuary Advisory Council. At the village meeting, Councilman Mike Forster

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Charles “Ted” Blackburn

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

said the matter needs to be addressed, but only as a formal agenda item in which all stakeholders would have fair warning. On days when the partiers aren't present, the flats off White Marlin, Sandy Point and Port Antigua are a renowned bonefishing ground, he added. "With me, it's all about enforcement first before we make new regulations," Forster said.

At the sanctuary meeting, a shallow water working group created to help develop a new general management plan has already submitted recommendations for sandbar closures off Rodriguez Key in Key Largo and off Tavernier Creek. But the group's work is done, unless the Sanctuary Advisory Council re-tasks it. At the Advisory Council's meeting on July 9, members discussed the Lower Matecumbe issue but took no action. The council could still revise the working group's recommendation to include a closure off the bayside of Lower Matecumbe, however.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Charles “Ted” Blackburn
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Reporter, The (Tavernier, FL)
June 6, 2013

Village chooses to hire own legal counsel - Vote diminishes roll of long-serving Miami law firm

Author: DAVID GOODHUE

The village of Islamorada will advertise for an in-house attorney later this month, ending its reliance on Miami law firm Weiss Serota as its main legal counsel. The five-member council voted 4-1 Tuesday to hire a lawyer who would answer to the local lawmakers. The vote officially kicked off the process of minimizing the village’s longstanding relationship with Weiss Serota.

The attorney would begin work on Oct. 1. Several council members said they want to continue using Weiss Serota to help whoever is hired with land use and utilities issues, litigation and other legal matters. But Mayor Ken Philipson, Vice Mayor **Ted Blackburn** and councilmen Mike Forster and Dave Purdo said they want their main attorney to be a village employee who is always available to answer questions. Weiss Serota’s Nina Boniske has served as village attorney since Islamorada incorporated in 1997.

The council in February tasked Councilwoman Deb Gillis’s; the one “no” vote’s; to review and evaluate the requirements for village attorney. She did so and came back with a detailed report she presented Tuesday that showed staying with Weiss Serota would likely save village taxpayers around \$33,000 a year, plus about \$40 an hour in litigation costs.

Islamorada pays Weiss Serota \$250,000 a year and the firm charges \$185 an hour to litigate cases. Based on Gillis’ research, she said in an in-house attorney, including support staff, would likely cost the village about \$283,000 a year. An outside attorney would probably have to be hired at around \$225 an hour to handle litigating lawsuits against the village, Gillis said.

Weiss Serota’s primary duties are legal issues relating to sewers and other utilities, litigation, the marina at Founders Park and special projects. At least two other attorneys from the firm help represent the village. The village also uses attorneys from four other firms for various matters.

One of Forster’s biggest complaints about Weiss Serota is the cost of litigation. But Gillis said in her report the number of lawsuits the village is fighting has decreased significantly over the years’s; from around 17 to seven. Two of the lawsuits are being handled by the Florida League of Cities on the village’s behalf. The council will discuss language it wants to put in the help-wanted ad for the new attorney at a 4 p.m. workshop before its regularly scheduled 5:30 p.m. meeting on June 27 at Founders Park.

Ron Levy, Islamorada’s first mayor, blasted the current council’s vote. “My question is why. On everything we’ve heard tonight, it’s not about value or quality of work,” said Levy, “You’re all unanimous in that. It is about money you say, yet the report clearly states that what we have now is a better value financially than going in-house. So it just brings me back to why.”

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Charles “Ted” Blackburn
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

https://www.hotel-online.com/News/2013_May_30/k.UKG.1370026784.html
The Reporter (Tavernier, Fla.)
May 30, 2013

First-of-its-kind 'ecolodge' proposed

By David Goodhue

May 30--An international architecture firm specializing in environmentally themed projects hopes to build an ambitious "ecolodge" on four acres of oceanfront land in Islamorada. But completing the upscale 70-unit development could be a challenge. The land the developer wants to build on contains wetlands and the project must pass state and village of Islamorada scrutiny.

The project was designed by the firm EDSA, which has offices in Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, Los Angeles, Beijing and Baltimore. The land, at mile marker 83 on the Old Highway, is owned by a Coral Springs investment company known as Bonefish Holdings LLC.

For two years, the land's assessed value plummeted more than \$130,000 -- from \$139,000 in 2010 to \$8,900 in 2012. County Property Appraiser Scott Russell said that's because his office determined most of the property is low-lying wetlands. But after checking with his records Thursday, Russell said the value shot up to almost \$300,000 this year. At press time, Russell said he's not sure what made the value rise so high.

EDSA has designed and built "ecolodges" across the globe -- in countries like China, Kenya and Brazil -- but the Islamorada project would be the first in the United States, said George Hertel, former owner of the Islamorada Fish Co. and EDSA's local representative.

In promotional material, the firm says the property's "hardwood hammock will be cleaned, expanded with native species to provide shade values and property line buffer. It will be drained and irrigated with on-site reuse and conditioned storm water to maintain hammock health."

The EDSA booklet goes on to say that the wetland system "will be restored to functionality by correcting historic damage, creating upland and transitional filtration beds leading to a consistently maintained water basin with replanted native filtration plant species and mosquito control fish populations."

Nonnative invasive plants would be removed from the property and replaced with native species, according to EDSA. The buildings would be "clustered" to protect the surrounding natural settings "while immersing the guest to enhance appreciation of the environment."

An artist's rendering shows a long beach and several swimming pools. Hertel is lobbying Islamorada council members to gain support for the project. He said when completed, it would be akin to the tony Little Palm Island Resort & Spa off Summerland Key. Randall Gentry, an EDSA representative, did not return phone calls or e-mails to discuss how much the proposed project would cost.

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Charles “Ted” Blackburn
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The project will be reviewed by the village's Local Planning Agency on June 10. The LPA will discuss necessary text amendments to the village's comprehensive plan and land development regulations. The matter would then go before the five-member Village Council. If the council passes the text amendments twice, the state Department of Economic Opportunity would have to review and approve them.

Village Manager Ed Koconis said the developers would also have to get the Village Council to pass a future-land-use map amendment and rezoning, which would also require DOE review. The village would also have to grant the developer transient development rights, Koconis said.

So far, it looks like the proposal has initial support on the council. "I think theoretically, the concept sounds really intriguing and something the village could really use," said council Vice Chairman **Ted Blackburn**. "Whether it fits on that site perfectly with wetlands mitigation, we'll see."

Mayor Ken Philipson supports the project, but admits "it's a hard sell." "This is a good thing for Islamorada; a first of its kind," Philipson said. "We haven't had any new hotels built here in years."

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Keys Keynoter (Marathon, FL)
March 9, 2013

Mosquito Control holds 2-day sustainability confab

Author: RYAN

The Florida Keys Mosquito Control District will cull the minds of employees and outside "stakeholders" Tuesday and Wednesday during a two-day sustainability summit in Marathon. Director Michael Doyle said roughly 100 people -- 70 employees and 30 invited guests -- are scheduled to be on hand for the summit that aims to make Mosquito Control a more efficient and environmentally friendly operation. But don't look to the program agenda for clues on what exactly will be discussed. It's purposefully vague, Doyle said. "They don't want to tell people, 'Here's what we're going to do.' It's more about what the employees and stakeholders find important, and take it from there," he said.

Doyle said the idea came from a similar summit he attended last year for a private mosquito control company in Chicago. They spoke about green initiatives and efficiency improvements. "I thought, 'I wonder if that would work for us,'" he said. "We have people stretched up and down the Keys and people moving a lot of places. People on the ground know better how time is spent and the little things that add up. A big part of this is going to be giving people the opportunity to talk about these kinds of things."

Those scheduled to participate include Islamorada Vice Mayor **Ted Blackburn**, Marathon City Manager Roger Hernstadt, county commissioners David Rice and Heather Carruthers, Monroe County Health Department spokesman Christopher Tittel, Keys Energy Services spokesman Julio Barroso and School Board members Robin Smith-Martin and John Dick.

Doyle said they would be asked to provide outside perspectives on how the public feels about Mosquito Control. He said they'd help gauge the district's "connection to the rest of the community." "That's a big reason we're inviting people from all over. Our experience is limited to" mosquito control, Doyle said. Doyle will make a brief opening statement Tuesday before turning the proceedings over to David Cooperrider from the Weatherford School of Management at Case Western Reserve University. Cooperrider will conduct "appreciative inquiry" interviews with participants and later narrow the list of ideas they come up with.

Alison Higgins, sustainability coordinator for the city of Key West, will address the group to open Wednesday's session. Groups will then move into "design studios" and identify the ideas they most want to discuss. Both sessions run from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. and are open to the public. The summit is at the district office on 107th Street in Marathon.

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Reporter, The (Tavernier, FL)
February 14, 2013

Village Council rejects separate wastewater commission

Author: DAVID GOODHUE

Islamorada won't have a separate board of commissioners overseeing the village's wastewater operations. Three of the five Village Council members made clear last week that they reject the proposal recommended by Islamorada's Water Quality Improvement Advisory Committee.

Councilman Mike Forster and Vice Chairman **Ted Blackburn** supported the move. But Mayor Ken Philipson and council members Deb Gillis and David Purdo had several reasons why they don't, they said at a special workshop last Wednesday morning at Founders Park. The dissenting council members said a separate wastewater commission may have made sense when the village was looking for engineering firms to construct the \$91 million sewer system, but not now while construction is already under way.

“This should have been done four or five years ago, and you guys [the committee] should have selected the engineer and done everything and not come in at the tail end,” Philipson said. “We've made a lot of difficult decisions already as a council.” Philipson does favor creating a village utilities department to oversee the more than 900 sewer connections that will be taking place between now and 2015; the deadline the state imposed on the Keys to connect to centralized wastewater systems.

Gillis said a separate wastewater board would create an unneeded “layer of government on the books.” Purdo said the commission would cost too much and take too much power away from the Village Council and village staff. “I just don't like it,” he said.

Forster supports the proposal because he said wastewater issues take up too much of the Village Council's time that could be spent on more important matters. “I'm in favor of this board because the more eyes, the better,” Forster said. **Blackburn** agreed and said creating the board would end up saving the village money in the long run by preventing the hiring of more staff when the project moves from the construction phase and becomes a utility. “This is a relatively minor investment in an overall picture that is huge,” he said.

David Makepeace, chairman of the advisory committee, recommended a dependent wastewater district whose commissioners would be appointed by the Village Council. The five members would be paid anywhere from \$800 to \$900 a month. Village Council members are paid \$1,000 monthly. The board's main responsibilities would be communicating with the Village Council, supervising the sewer project's enterprise fund, managing the village's joint wastewater agreement with Key Largo and hiring a wastewater manager.

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Charles “Ted” Blackburn
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Reporter, The (Tavernier, FL)
December 18, 2012

Panel recommends creating Islamorada sewer board

Author: DAVID GOODHUE

Islamorada officials will consider forming an elected or appointed board of commissioners that would oversee the village's wastewater operations. The move is supported by councilmen Mike Forster and **Ted Blackburn**, but Mayor Ken Philipson, Councilwoman Deb Gillis and Councilman Dave Purdo aren't convinced.

Philipson and Gillis said such a board could have served more of a purpose before the \$91 million project's engineering firm was hired. But now that work on the project to build a sewer system has begun, they call the idea one whose time has come and gone. The five-member council agreed Dec. 13 to hold a workshop to discuss the matter in February.

Forster said a separate board that only deals with wastewater issues would free up the Village Council to handle other issues that he feels are not receiving enough attention. "I go to a hockey match and a fight breaks out," he said. "Every time I go to a Village Council meeting, a wastewater meeting breaks out." The issue was raised during a presentation by David Makepeace, chairman of the Water Quality Improvement Advisory Committee, during the council's regular meeting.

Makepeace presented two scenarios: A dependent wastewater board where members would be appointed by the Village Council; and an independent board, whose members would be elected by the residents of Islamorada. For a dependent district, Makepeace said, each council member would nominate two candidates, and the entire council would decide on the best five.

Makepeace said his committee doesn't recommend an elected board, but he and his fellow members did study the option. Under the scenario presented by Makepeace, board members would serve staggered terms starting in 2014. The top three vote getters would serve until 2018. The final two seats would be open again in 2016. Some of the board's top responsibilities would be communicating with the Village Council, supervising the sewer project's enterprise fund, managing the village's joint wastewater agreement with Key Largo and hiring a wastewater manager.

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Key West Citizen, The (FL)
November 7, 2012

In Middle Keys, some old, some new, seats were won
Author: ROBERT SILK

Voters in Islamorada gave a thumbs-up to the status quo on Tuesday, while Key Largo voters apparently wanted change. Meanwhile in Marathon, voters looked ready to return two incumbents to the City Council, with one precinct yet to report at press time. In Islamorada, incumbents Dave Purdo, Ken Philipson and **Ted Blackburn** each won a second council term.

Purdo faced the stiffest challenge, taking down his hard campaigning challenger Travis Yednak by a margin of 52 to 48 percent. "All the work I did paid off," Purdo said moments after the results were announced. "I wish Travis the best of luck." Sitting Mayor Philipson had an easier time of it, defeating hotelier Philipson and staunch village critic Paul Bates by a 57 to 43 percent margin.

Blackburn swamped challenger Todd Chandler by a margin of 64 to 36 percent in a race that featured very little campaigning. With four of the five Marathon precincts reporting, two-term incumbents Dick Ramsay and Ginger Snead were poised to win another two-year board term, while former councilman Chris Bull, who served from 2004 to 2008, appeared headed back to the dais. "I'm always humbled by everybody and the outcome of this process," Bull said. "I've always been a man of action. This will not be a caretaker council."

Ramsay led the Marathon vote in the at-large race, with 27 percent of the vote. Next was Bull with 25 percent, followed by Snead with 23 percent. On the outside looking in were former Deputy City Manager C.J. Geotis, Ramsay with 17 percent and Florida Keys Journal publisher Larry Shaffer with 8 percent. In the at-large race for two seats on the Key Largo Wastewater Board, voters selected former Free Press writer Steve Gibbs and incumbent Robby Majeska, who will serve a second four-year term. However, incumbent Charlie Brooks, was turned out of office.

With 250 absentee ballots from Key Largo uncounted, Gibbs led the vote count with 40 percent while Majeska had secured 31 percent. Brooks was 1,021 votes behind Majeska with 18 percent. Challenger Mike Black was bringing up the rear with 11 percent. "I've pounded the pavement and I'm delighted that people have faith in me," Gibbs said. He added that he is ready to focus on the \$81 million debt Key Largo ratepayers are facing. "I am going to do everything I can **Blackburn** to pay down our debt," Gibbs said. Key Largo voters also turned out incumbent Tom Tharp in the race for Seat 4 on the Key Largo Fire-EMS Board. Volunteer fireman George Mirabella led Tharp by 405 votes with the 250 absentee ballots uncounted. Mirabella had 55 percent of the vote.

Funeral home director Tony Allen had an easier time in the election for Seat 1 on the Fire-EMS Board, garnering 60 percent of the vote against retired airline pilot Kent Van Winkle. In the

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small Middle Keys town of Layton, voters gave the thumbs-up to Mayor Norman Anderson, who won a fourth two-year term. He defeated challenger John Cromartie by a margin 78 to 46 votes. With the Key Largo absentee ballots and the Marathon precinct uncounted, favorites were on the verge of winning in numerous Keyswide elections as well Tuesday.

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Charles “Ted” Blackburn
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Key West Citizen, The (FL)
August 9, 2012

Records reveal council was misled on \$94M deal – ISLAMORADA

Author: ROBERT SILK

On June 5, when the Islamorada administration put forward a \$94.5 million wastewater contract with Veolia Water North America and AECOM, it was presented to the Village Council as if negotiations were complete. However, emails obtained through a public records request reveal that Veolia/AECOM had not signed off on the deal ahead of that crucial meeting. Further, a Veolia attorney had made the situation clear to Village Manager Ed Koconis and the town's negotiating team.

In a June 2 email sent to Koconis, village attorneys Lily Arango and Nina Boniske, Wastewater Program Manager Greg Tindle and the village's lead engineering consultant Tom Brzezinski, Veolia Water North America Assistant General Counsel Van Cates lamented that the company had not even seen a completed version of the contract yet.

Cates added that even if negotiations could be completed ahead of that June 5 meeting, the Veolia/AECOM team would need until the end of that week to get final approval from company management. "The bottom line is that if you present the contract to the Village Council for approval on Tuesday, you should understand that Veolia and AECOM will not have approved the final form of the contract at that time and there may be additional changes to the contract after that point," Cates wrote.

Pressure for contract

Still, with pressure for a final contract coming from the council, and the village in a crunch to sign on the contractor in order to lock up a \$20 million low-interest loan from the state, the administration pushed forward with the June 5 meeting. Unaware of Cates' words, the council passed the contract by the required 4-1 supermajority that night. The resolution allowed only for "non-material" changes to be made between the meeting and the signing of the document, leaving little wiggle room for Veolia/AECOM to forge ahead with negotiations over two disputed appendices.

When the contractors substituted pages in those appendices after Mayor Michael Reckwerdt had signed the document, the deal imploded, prompting Reckwerdt to declare, "Hell will freeze over before I will sign a contract with you," as he held the two different contracts aloft at a June 28 Village Council meeting. The village's subsequent decision to negotiate instead with Reynolds Water Islamorada has left Veolia/AECOM with only two clear options: Go home quietly or go to court.

In an interview last week, Vice Mayor Ken Philipson said he was unaware at the time of the council's June 5 vote that Veolia/AECOM had not accepted the contract. But he expressed little

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desire to look back, stressing that Reynolds has since offered a deal that is \$3.2 million cheaper than the \$94.5 million Veolia/AECOM contract. Philipson further said it wasn't just Koconis and his staff, but Veolia and AECOM as well, who could have made it clear during the meeting that negotiations had not been completed. The companies were at fault, he said, for not having their final decision-makers at the meeting. "We were willing to negotiate as much as they wanted to negotiate," he said.

Councilman **Ted Blackburn** also sought to move past the Veolia/AECOM situation. "It's always good to look back and see where the communications could have been better or whatever," he said last week. "But right now, we've got to move forward." But at the emergency meeting the council called the day after learning about the changes Veolia/AECOM had made to the contract, **Blackburn** was more circumspect. "We should be talking about things like, is our staff serving us well that gets us into these type of situations?" he said.

Koconis' response

In an emailed response last week to a request to interview him and others on the negotiating team, Koconis said the decision to go ahead with the June 5 contract approval was based in part on Cates' June 2 email, as well as on an all-day negotiation meeting that Cates attended on June 4 "to finalize the agreement." "The agreement was sent to all parties on the fifth and the item was then heard by the Village Council," Koconis wrote. But in his June 2 email, as cited above, Cates had written that company management would need three days to review the contract once negotiators reached a deal.

A month later, Cates appeared before the Village Council on the day the council officially decided to open talks with Reynolds. Cates emphasized then that not even the preliminary deal had been fully worked out by the June 5 meeting. Veolia, he said, only sent a draft of proposed changes to Appendix 13, dealing with insurance, to village attorney Arango at 2 p.m. on June 5, the day the council approved the contract. "We never got a response," Cates said. "It was totally understood that we were going to negotiate that after June 5." What happened

Records back up Cates' assertion.

Cates sent Appendix 13 to the various negotiating parties at 2:15 p.m. June 5. At 2:55 p.m., less than three hours before the meeting, Tindle sent a copy of Appendix 13, absent the proposed changes, to the village clerk's office for inclusion in the contract to be presented that evening. A similar scenario transpired with Appendix 14, which dealt with guarantor commitments. At 2:54 p.m. June 5, Tindle sent an email to Village Clerk Debra Eastman containing two versions of the appendix, one with the proposed Veolia language, the other with language that Eastman was to include in the contract package.

Three weeks later, when Veolia/AECOM changed pages in the signed contract, leading to the village's decision to terminate the deal, the changes were made in Appendices 13 and 14. In fact, many of the changes inserted were negotiating positions the village ignored in those last hours

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before the June 5 meeting, records show.

Philipson said he became aware a couple of days after the June 5 meeting that Veolia/AECOM wasn't fully satisfied with the contract. Shortly thereafter, he met with AECOM's Norm Anderson, to whom he explained AECOM and Veolia's options.

Their team could either sign the contract as it was or negotiate changes. But negotiated changes would have required a new vote before the council, where they again would have needed a 4-1 supermajority. "They wouldn't have gotten a 4-1 vote," said Philipson, who had supported the contract on June 5 and, therefore, had the ability to flip the outcome with a change of heart.

Ultimately, Veolia/AECOM had no excuse for changing out pages in the signed contract, said former Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District attorney Tom Dillon, who has followed Islamorada's effort to secure a sewer contractor but has no stake in the matter. "I think it is unacceptable to do something like that," he said last week. But Dillon also said there is plenty of blame to go around. "Staff, if they got this email suggesting changes, they should have put the council on notice and not brought it forward," he said.

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Key West Citizen, The (FL)
June 30, 2012

Village to kill \$94M sewer deal – ISLAMORADA
Author: ROBERT SILK

In abrupt and dramatic fashion, Islamorada Mayor Michael Reckwerdt on Thursday proclaimed invalid a \$94.5 million sewer contract with Veolia Water North America and the engineering firm AECOM.

Differences between the contract signed by Reckwerdt on June 19 and the one the village received from Veolia/ AECOM six days later with the signature of their representative, David Herer, was the reason cited by Reckwerdt and other council members for the rapid change of heart. "Hell will freeze over before I will contract with you," Reckwerdt said at the meeting, addressing a Veolia/ AECOM representative in the crowd. "Never. Ever. Ever." Moments later, AECOM's Norm Anderson, who was expecting to be his company's manager of the Islamorada sewer project, said he neither knew what was coming nor what had precipitated the blow-up.

Other council members, however, stood behind Reckwerdt in interviews Thursday. "They were told not to change the content," said Councilman Don Achenberg, who had been a consistent supporter of contracting with Veolia/ AECOM. The council's move throws into limbo the status of that contract just two months before a state mandated deadline for the village to have a sewer deal locked up. Failure to do so will cost Islamorada the \$20 million grant the Legislature awarded the town this year.

So far the Village Council has not formally revoked its June 5 resolution approving the terms of the Veolia/ AECOM contract, though the matter is likely to be taken up at a special meeting the council has called for Thursday. Even if they do, Veolia and AECOM could argue, potentially in court, that the parties have an executed contract. Company representatives did not respond to Citizen inquiries Friday. Meanwhile, confusion over the village's abrupt departure in plans is more than just procedural.

For example, during a break in the meeting Thursday, Councilman **Ted Blackburn** called the news that there were changes made to the contract "unbelievable." "I'm shell-shocked. It's a trust thing," he said. But by midday Friday, **Blackburn** had joined Councilman Dave Purdo in asking for an emergency meeting to vet the matter more thoroughly.

In an angry exchange with Reckwerdt at that meeting just a few hours later, both he and Purdo said they didn't know the specifics of what had led Reckwerdt to take such a strong position against Veolia/ AECOM. Neither village staff members nor village attorney Nina Boniske, they said, had made them privy to all the information Reckwerdt appeared to have. "I still don't know what was done, what was said," Purdo said. "I don't even know. I want answers." But no answer, other than the most general, was forthcoming at the meeting from either the mayor or anyone on

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the village staff. "I made it painfully clear. Two big stacks of paper, the one I signed. The one they returned. That they're different," Reckwerdt lectured testily.

Saying any more, he explained repeatedly, could work against the village should Veolia/AECOM file a breach-of-contract lawsuit. The village's relative silence aside, at least some of the discrepancies between the June 19 and June 25 contracts had to do with an appendix dealing with insurance requirements. In several cases, the language or terms of the appendix in the contract signed only by Reckwerdt differed from the language or terms in the contract that also has Herer's signature.

In one case, for example, the earlier version of the contract called for an insurance policy requiring that the village be notified within 45 days in case of a cancellation of the policy, which would be held by Veolia/ AECOM. If the policy were to be canceled due to nonpayment by the contractor, the village would receive 30 days'notice. The later version of the contract, signed by both parties, extends the general notification requirement to 60 days, but reduces the required notice to the village to just 10 days in case of the policy being canceled due to nonpayment.

In another discrepancy, the June 19 version of the appendix calls for the contractor, its financial guarantors and any of company's affiliates to be included in the insurance policies. The June 25 version, however, removes reference to the affiliates. In addition to deciding whether it will formally revoke its support of the Veolia/ AECOM contract, the council plans to discuss other alternate routes to push ahead with the sewer system when it meets on Thursday.

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Reporter, The (Tavernier, FL)
November 17, 2011

Potential for lawsuit threatens workforce housing plan

Author: David Goodhue

The five-member Islamorada Village Council wants better protection from potential lawsuits before it agrees to grant a developer a 99-year lease for a proposed workforce housing project on Upper Matecumbe Key. The village approved a site plan for Wisconsin-based Gorman and Co. to build a 36-unit stilted duplex project on the former WetNet property on the Old Highway, but the project is likely to face a lawsuit from its wealthy neighbors if renters instead of homeowners live there.

Developer Michael Swerdlow was among litigants in a 2006 lawsuit over turning the property into affordable housing and, through his attorneys at the Miami law firm Shubin & Bass, said recently that he remains against having rental units at the site. The original lawsuit was settled in 2009. The site plan used by Gorman actually comes from the settlement. Islamorada village attorney Lillian Arango told council members at their Nov. 10 meeting that Gorman is against offering the village unlimited indemnification should Swerdlow or any of the other WetNet neighbors sue. Instead, she said Gorman would set aside \$150,000 for the village to use for legal fees.

Councilman Don Achenberg said he is certain Swerdlow will sue as soon as the housing on the 4-acre property is constructed, and said \$150,000 over a five-year period - after the certificate of occupancy is issued - is "totally insufficient." The council instructed Arango to continue negotiations on the lease with Gorman staff. The issue will come up for a vote at the council's Dec. 1 meeting. Gorman hopes the agreement will be approved so it can submit its application for about \$9 million in federal workforce housing construction money by a Dec. 6 deadline, Arango said. Mayor Michael Reckwerdt said he would prefer to get an assurance from Swerdlow that he will not sue before approving the lease with Gorman. "I don't believe in doing anything until things are worked out with Swerdlow," he said. "I want to move forward, but where are we moving forward to?" Arango said there is a clause in the draft agreement that gives the village the option of backing out of the deal by 2013. But Achenberg remained wary. He said the letter by Shubin & Bass did not specifically threaten legal action over the project, but was a "shot across the bow."

Gorman is developing a track record for building workforce housing in the Upper Keys. It is almost finished building the 36-unit, \$8.1-million Blue Water Carpet Cottages complex at U.S. 1 and Burton Drive in Tavernier. As part of the draft agreement for the Wetnet site, Gorman would pay the village an original down payment of \$200,000 no later than Aug. 31, 2013. For the next 15 years, the company would pay the village an annual rent of \$20,000. Residents of the complex would likely pay about \$1,000 a month in rent. Although the council members remained worried about possible legal action against the project, they remain supportive. "This is a great project," said Councilman **Ted Blackburn**.

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Florida Keys Keynoter (Marathon, FL)
September 16, 2011

Village cuts budget, avoids tax hike

Author: David Goodhue

Fearful of being the only municipality in the Keys to raise taxes, the Islamorada Village Council voted Wednesday to slash \$100,000 from the coming fiscal year’s operating budget. Because of items like reinstating employee raises and retirement plans, converting village records electronically and allocating \$100,000 to pay for an audit, Islamorada taxpayers collectively were looking at paying almost \$103,000 more in property taxes than they did this fiscal year, an increase of about 1.7 percent. The village council voted 4-1 to reduce the \$9.44-million operating budget by \$100,000, though council members aren’t sure what will be cut.

In the meantime, the village will use money from its \$12 million contingency fund and the council will have to OK a budget amendment at a future meeting, finance director Maria Aguilar told commissioners. Councilman Don Achenberg was the lone dissenter, arguing the small increase was not unreasonable if taxpayers want to maintain their level of service. He also said increases in items like paying for electronically updating village records should be viewed as investments, because residents will be able to access files online instead of having village employees take time tracking down physical copies.

At the approved tax rate, village property owners will pay \$2.52 per \$1,000 of taxable property. The owner of a house assessed at \$300,000 will pay about \$756 in village taxes, for example, about \$12 less than the rate would be without the \$100,000 budget cut.

Paying for audit

The village budgeted \$100,000 for the audit because state rules require local governments to pay for audits done by the state Auditor General. The audit began in June after Islamorada residents Jay and Sue Miller gathered signatures from 20 percent of the village’s registered voters, required by the Legislature’s joint auditing committee before it will authorize the Auditor General to begin an investigation into a municipality’s finances.

It’s not clear yet how much the audit will cost. The last two performed by the Auditor General cost the town of Cedar Grove in Bay County about \$78,000 and the city of Mexico Beach, also in Bay County, about \$80,000.

Mayor Michael Reckwerdt, who has criticized the signing of the audit petition, took a jab at people who pushed for the audit during the Wednesday night budget hearing, blaming them for possibly increasing village taxes. “Please send thank you notes to those who thought this was a great idea,” he said. Among those who signed the petition was his colleague on the dais, Councilman **Ted Blackburn**, who has since written a \$100 check to the village to help pay for the audit.

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Charles “Ted” Blackburn
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Key West Citizen, The (FL)
December 12, 2010

Former bonds trader tapped for council – ISLAMORADA
Author: ROBERT SILK

Siding with a fresh face over local experience, the Village Council on Thursday appointed former Prudential Securities bonds trader and Long Island politico **Ted Blackburn** to join them on the board. **Blackburn**, 62, beat out Upper Matecumbe Key hotelier Deb Gillis, a former councilwoman and longtime Islamorada Chamber of Commerce board member, in the second round of voting.

The third candidate for the seat, hotelier Paul Bates, didn't officially withdraw, but he also didn't show up for the Dec. 9 council deliberations. "It's a harrowing responsibility and Debbie is just a magnificent resident of the Village of Isles," **Blackburn** said moments after winning the seat vacated by Bob Johnson in early November. "Difficult choices are always just difficult. I just hope I can live up to the expectations of the board and the community." The selection of **Blackburn** came after the council had deadlocked 2-2 during the first round of voting. Vice Mayor Don Achenberg and Councilman Ken Philipson went with Gillis. Mayor Michael Reckwerdt and Councilman Dave Purdo supported **Blackburn**.

Philipson broke the deadlock on the second round of voting, saying that **Blackburn**, with his experience on Wall Street, could bring innovative ideas to village finances. "If this were my business and I were looking for a candidate to fill, I would look at the background and education of that person," Philipson said.

Prior to the second vote, Achenberg made a final appeal for Gillis, saying her experience with village issues, and her diligence in paying attention to them made her the best choice. "She has paid her dues," he said. "She has been here meeting after meeting when there was not a seat available, [when] there was no indication that there was going to be a seat." Neither Reckwerdt nor Purdo made any comments about why they were supporting **Blackburn** as the vote was taken, but sewer politics almost certainly played a role in each councilman's decision.

Sewer opponents haven't forgotten the summer of 2009, when Gillis cast the tie-breaking vote in favor of controversial \$21.8 million assessment. This past spring Purdo and Reckwerdt helped lead the charge to repeal that assessment. And Philipson, while far less enthusiastic, ultimately went along with the repeal. Only Achenberg voted no.

During questioning by the council ahead of the vote last week, both Gillis and **Blackburn** said they would be willing to support a new assessment under the right circumstances. But when Purdo asked whether they'd forge ahead with the estimated \$100-million-plus sewer project without a guarantee of 50 percent funding from the state, Gillis was more resolute. She said the village should use \$29 million in available federal grants to move forward and show the state that Islamorada is serious about meeting its 2015 deadline for advanced wastewater treatment.

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Charles “Ted” Blackburn

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

"We can't drudge ahead 100 percent," she said. "But if we use that, go slowly." **Blackburn**, in contrast, gave Purdo a less conclusive response, saying the key is to find money wherever it might be available. "We've got to figure out what's coming and we've got to figure out how we get more coming," he said. Emotions flared at times during the approximately 1½-hour selection process.

Twelve public speakers weighed in on the choice during the public comment portion of the debate, with eight siding with Gillis. But after the first voted showed that those voices failed to sway at least Reckwerdt and Purdo, Islamorada backcountry fishing legend Hank Brown couldn't restrain himself. "Mr. Mayor, you have heard the will of the people," he yelled while rising from his seat in the audience.

When Reckwerdt told him to stop, Brown reacted immediately. "Kiss my ass," he told the mayor, whose troubled personal life has made headlines in recent months. "We should be taking two people tonight. You should be out of here, too." After losing the vote, Gillis was magnanimous in defeat, exchanging a hug with **Blackburn**. "I wish **Ted** the best of luck," she said.

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Charles “Ted” Blackburn
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Brattleboro Reformer (VT)
February 8, 2006

Twin Valley budget to be reconsidered

Author: DARRY MADDEN

WHITINGHAM -- The \$5.1 million Twin Valley school budget will come to a revote after a petition for reconsideration gathered nearly 250 signatures. School officials have 15 days to schedule a special meeting, according to Secretary of State Deb Markowitz. A separate petition asking voters to change the school voting mechanism to Australian ballot garnered more than 250 signatures. Both issues will likely be voted at the same time.

The petitioner, Barker Willard, presented the lists to the Twin Valley School Board Tuesday night. Willard said that he was seeking reconsideration of the budget because of an issue that came up during the initial voting process. "They were saying they could not cut anything from the budget," said Willard. "But they had set a cap of \$2,200 per month to possibly extend the purchase and sale agreement. That's \$26,000 for the year."

On Dec. 14, the Twin Valley Board voted to extend for two months the purchase and sale agreement on the Ballan-tine/Rader property slated for a new school. "That's just a week after the bond failed," said Willard. The school board will decide whether or not to extend the purchase and sale agreement for the rest of the year at its meeting. The cost of the land is \$450,000.

Willard hopes that changing to Australian ballot will drum up as much as three times more participation, though the revote on the budget will be from the floor, even if the Australian ballot initiative passes.

Two hundred twenty-nine voters turned out on Jan. 18, the night the budget was approved, less than the number of signatures collected on each petition; 138 were in favor of the budget; 91 were opposed. "The Australian ballot initiative is just because we would like to get more participation. An awful lot of people can't get there. Lots of elderly people don't want to go out in the middle of January at 7 o'clock at night," said Willard.

Willard said that only 10 to 11 percent of the Vermont public participates in town meeting. "That's awful. Something is wrong here. This is the people's day to get up and throw rocks or give accolades, and I think it's one of the greatest forms of democracy ever created. But it's broke and something has got to be done to fix it. That's why I'm a firm believer now in Australian ballot."

Wilmington Town Clerk Susan Haughwout said that voters were not yet "in the groove" of the annual Twin Valley budget vote, as this was only the third year of the collaboration between Wilmington and Whitingham. Part of the turnout problem, from her perspective, is that unlike town meeting, the school meeting does not fall on the same day every year. "Essentially, you need to think of us as having two town meetings," said Haughwout.

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Twin Valley board member **Ted Blackburn** said, "Fundamentally, I have a very difficult time with reconsideration. I feel as though, in some ways, the will of the majority is being usurped." "When 5 or 10 percent of the people can change a vote, that's not democracy, that's anarchy," said **Blackburn**. The rest of the board and administration did not comment about the reconsideration petition.

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New York Daily News (NY)
May 14, 1995

NEW UPRISING OVER SABBETH'S 2 ROLES

Author: MICHAEL S.C. CLAFFEY

It could be deja vu all over again for the Nassau Democrats and their Board of Elections Commissioner. Oyster Bay Supervisor Lew Yevoli said last week that the Dems on the Board of Supervisors have the authority to replace Steve Sabbeth, who doubles as party chairman.

Yevoli, who asked Sabbeth to voluntarily step down last week, said he has a memo from the county attorney's office that says the supervisors can appoint a new commissioner "right now" if they want. Sabbeth and his backers say they have their own memo from the State Board of Elections that says he's in the middle of a two-year term.

If Yevoli tries to dump Sabbeth, the dispute could wind up in court and would look like a replay of the long-running judicial saga that embroiled the last guy who tried to wear two hats, John Matthews. Why would Yevoli want to bounce his former close ally from the elections job?

For one, Yevoli was angered that Sabbeth broke his promise not to wear two hats. Secondly, Yevoli said it would be hypocritical not to call for Sabbeth to step down, in light of the demands Democrats are making for the resignation of the GOP Elections Commissioner Joe Cairo. Ethical questions surround both commissioners.

Referring to allegations made in court documents that Sabbeth attempted to conceal about \$1 million from creditors, Yevoli said: "I don't think there is any question as to the impropriety of it." Sabbeth has said the allegation was withdrawn.

Cairo has come under fire in recent weeks over allegations that while working as a private attorney he diverted more than \$900,000 in client funds for his own use before returning the money. He stepped down from the Hempstead Town Council and resigned from the bar in the wake of an inquiry into the allegations. "You have an issue here where you can't apply two different standards," said Yevoli. "The public has every right to expect both individuals to step down."

Yevoli adds that if Sabbeth did take the plunge it would increase the heat on Cairo. "It would set a standard that would be very difficult for Mr. Cairo not to follow," said Yevoli. Yevoli also contends that Sabbeth's position as party chairman would be strengthened if he gave up the board of elections job. "That would show a mark of leadership and character, that he was putting his own personal interest aside in favor of what's good for the party," said Yevoli. Other Democrats scoff at that idea and say Sabbeth would be easy pickings for his enemies if he lost the clout of the commissioner's job.

Primary Fight Looms

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Charles “Ted” Blackburn

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Nassau GOP could be faced with a stiff primary challenge in the 1st Legislative District, one of two minority seats in the new 19-member legislature. Last week's minority convention rejected Darlene Harris, a Hempstead Town deputy attorney who was slated as the Republican's choice by the party's executive committee. Harris lost support because she declined to sign a pledge authored by planners of the minority convention to put the needs of constituents above those of her party.

The minority convention backed two other Republicans in the 1st District, Andrew Hardwick and John Abrams. John L. Kears, a co-chairman of the convention, said he hopes the GOP convention later this month rejects Harris and instead backs one of the two candidates tapped at the minority convention.

Kears and others contend that either one of their candidates would beat Harris in a primary. "I think it would be in the best interest of everyone to avert a primary situation," said Kears. But a GOP executive committee member said there's little chance of the party convention dumping a candidate hand-picked by GOP Boss Joe Mondello.

Dems Have Hopes

Nassau Democrats have high hopes of putting up a strong contender in the North Shore's 18th Legislative District, where past election results give the Republican designee John Canning an edge. Party insiders are talking to Sea Cliff Mayor **Ted Blackburn** about running against Canning, who unsuccessfully challenged Democratic Assemblyman David Sidikman last year. Democrats believe **Blackburn's** base in Sea Cliff and visibility on North Shore environmental issues would give him a shot at taking a seat that leans Republican.

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The New York Times
November 24, 1991

Landlords Ask Sea Cliff To Change Zoning Law

Author: Lisa Beth Pulitzer

SEA CLIFF has been described by residents as a "time capsule," a "Beaver Cleaver" village where youngsters meet at the beach and ride their bikes in the street. The town, which covers one square mile, is home to more than 5,000 people. Sea Cliff Avenue, the main street, is dotted with bright Victorian homes and storefronts. But many are empty. Two landlords have had problems keeping tenants and have asked the Zoning Board for a variance to convert five stores into ground-floor studio apartments.

The landlords are James Dunne, a lawyer, and Jim Ryan, an entrepreneur, who purchased the building in 1984 from the estate of Louise Eckland, a longtime resident who ran an antiques shop in one of the stores. Loss Put at \$100,000 After unsuccessful attempts to rent the stores, Mr. Ryan proposed the apartments. He said he and Mr. Dunne had lost more than \$100,000 in their seven years and were hoping the residential income would help to pay the mortgage and maintenance. The building has six apartments.

But Mr. Dunne and Mr. Ryan have temporarily withdrawn their request and say they have decided to file their application with the state, enabling them to meet the state's fire requirements and building codes before reapplying to the village. "If it turns out to be a beautiful project, with town-house-looking architecture, it really is an interesting idea," Mayor **Ted Blackburn** said. "But if it's just filling storefronts with curtains and people living inside, then it's not too interesting an idea." 'With Our Pants Down'

The president of the Sea Cliff Business Association, John C. Packard, said: "We have no master plan. The plan we have in the village is over 20 years old. Not having a plan, we are caught with our pants down, because there is nothing to specify what vision we want in this town and nothing to use as a guideline for this application."

Mr. Packard said that lacking such a plan, the application will be decided on legal grounds and neglect to focus on what is best for the community. He called for a professional study. "We've been asking for one for years," he said. "Hopefully, the mayor will see ahead and initiate the study. "We are going to revisit the master plan and attempt to build one that is going to go forward," Mayor **Blackburn** said. "The one that was done in the 70's was a nice plan, but 50 to 75 percent of it was never enacted."

Officials are meeting with graduate professors at C. W. Post and the New York Institute of Technology to explore using students in creating a plan. Reactions of Store Owners Many shop owners voice skepticism. "I've seen a lot of those plans not work," the owner of the Sea Cliff Photo Gallery, Don Maestretta, said. "The best intentions are there, but the only people that are going to make it work are the people that own the stores. "It takes a certain type of

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business to make it in this town. We have a service that we offer, and customers come from all over. Probably 80 percent come from outside of Sea Cliff."

The owner of the Levines stationery store, Sal Rainone, asked: "What is the master plan for three blocks? I open the same hours every day. Some businesses operate only Thursday, Friday and Saturday. They don't have regular hours. "How do you expect business to be here? You can't close and expect people to come back to you. Shoppers go to neighborhoods where stores are open seven days a week."

Most people agree that Sea Cliff has to add something unusual to attract shoppers. "It's a dead-end town," a partner in Levines, John Tanghitella, said. "There's nothing to attract people here unless you can get something in the town that's not around anywhere else, something novel. Maybe something like Northport has, an old-type village around the water with restaurants, and a pier that people can walk out on, like in Port Jefferson. "But that will generate business and attract crowds. That means there will be more traffic and a need for parking. The roads aren't big enough to handle it." 'We Are Very Pro-Business'

Douglas Barnaby, a Village Trustee who was on the Zoning Board for eight years, said: "We are very pro-business. The main street is not a road where you travel to get to someplace else. You don't get a lot of people going through here. For retail it's one of the biggest factors. That's why service-related businesses make out best." Mr. Barnaby said residents wanted the retailers to remain. "It's like having a Macy's and a Gimbels," he said. "One store complements another. If there are apartments, there will be less need for people to come to Sea Cliff."

The village grew in popularity in the late 1960's because of its antiques shops. The building owned by Mr. Dunne and Mr. Ryan was referred to as Antiques Row. "That spurred other shops to open," said Mr. Maestretta.

After Mr. Dunne and Mr. Ryan bought their building, they increased rents, in some case doubling and tripling the amounts. Shopkeepers paying \$150 to \$200 a month were asked to pay up \$600. "It's not the same anymore," a part owner of Arata's Delicatessen, Pete Gillis, said. "The streets used to be filled with people on the weekends. You don't see the people with their cameras anymore."

The owner of Harmonious Homes, Wayne McCann, was drawn to Sea Cliff because of his fascination with the antiques shops. "Now that they've been priced out of the market, we've lost that draw." he said. If the shops are converted, Mr. McCann said, "they will get filled immediately, because there is a need for clean low-priced rentals."

Mr. McCann said that the proposed conversions would not have major effects on the real-estate market, but that the part of the village's charm may be lost. "The people that come to me want to escape the city and come to small-town America," he said. "The business district needs to reflect that flavor. Once we lose the commerce, it will be nothing but a bedroom town."

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Peter Speranza, another Village Trustee and businessman, said:

"The people who would be opposed to the conversion are people who feel that we need more businesses to draw more people. On the other hand, there are those who say that filling that space with residential units may actually improve the quality of the businesses we have."

Mr. Speranza, who also owns a building in Sea Cliff, said landlords had to market their properties to to rent retail space. "Only certain types of businesses will come here," he added. "To make it fly, you still depend on people coming in from outside Sea Cliff. That's why the antiques stores were successful. For antiques, people would come to Sea Cliff. It wasn't the kind of thing you could find in a mall. That's who landlords should really reach out to." Offices Taking Over

Several stores are being rented as office space. If the shops cannot be rented for retail uses, Raynor Rogers, president of the Sea Cliff Landmark Association, said he would rather see them as residential dwellings. "My major concern is what the conversions will look like, and will they be compatible with the rest of Sea Cliff? If the conversion is done right, it could be very interesting."

Mr. **Blackburn** said parking would be a problem, adding, "One of the constant sources of complaints in the downtown area is the parking situation, particularly the overnight parking situation." If the conversion is approved, it was pointed out, parking for the apartment tenants would be needed. "Double- and multifamily dwellings in the area also intensify the parking problem," the Mayor said.

Mr. Dunne and Mr. Ryan are now trying to seek by offering empty stores rent free and dividing them into stalls for weekend antiques dealers. Mr. Ryan's wife, Joan, and a partner, Joann LaPierre, have opened Cliff House Antiques. "This town is so Victorian," she said. "It's filled with wonderful houses. When we were children, it was different. There was a little variety store where we could buy everything, even our slippers and underwear, and the drug store had a soda fountain. "And, of course, the antiques shops. There was a loss when these shops had to leave. They were just a future extension of the past. We hope people will look again fondly in that direction."

Research Compiled by: Cara Slade
 Colin Baenziger & Associates