



Statement to the LA – Scranton Park

By Premier Hon. Alden McLaughlin, MBE, JP, MLA

14 November, 2018

Mr. Speaker, during the last Administration, the Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts, then Minister for Lands, received approval from Cabinet to purchase property behind the Government Administration Building when that property came on the market. That property, Mr. Speaker, is titled as GTC 14C J21.

At the time we also sought to purchase a piece adjacent to J21, which is titled GTC 14C J22, or Scranton Central Park as it is better known; but regrettably this property was not for sale at that time.

This was not the first time that the Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts, as well as myself, had attempted to buy the Scranton Central Park property; in fact as representatives for the District of George Town we had sought to acquire this property for well over a decade because of its value to the surrounding community.

Although the property was privately owned, the owners graciously allowed the community to use the land for many years as a park. And so over the years it has been used for many things

– everything from community gatherings to basketball games and more. It was, in many respects, an oasis for the neighboring community in an area that was becoming more and more commercial.

The Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts and I understood that should the Scranton Central park property ever come on the market it was important for Government to buy it to preserve it for use as a community park. And so the family did promise that should they decide to sell that they would let us know. Earlier this year the family advised that the land was for sale; should Government be interested. And we were interested.

I immediately contacted the Minister responsible for Lands and had the process started to negotiate the purchase. Two independent valuations were obtained, as well as a valuation by Lands & Survey, to determine the value of the property. The negotiations between Government, as managed by Lands & Survey, and the owners were a bit protracted Mr. Speaker, but happily last month the deal was concluded with the property being bought by Government for C\$272,500. This purchase price was based on the valuation done by Lands & Survey and considered fair value for the property.

My Government, Mr. Speaker, places a premium on ensuring that open spaces are available to the public, including access to neighborhood parks and play areas. These are not mere words Mr. Speaker. The purchase and planned enhancement of Smith Barcadere, as well as the South Sound Boardwalk are two recent examples, as is property purchased in the Prospect area that will eventually serve as a public park for the huge Red Bay & Prospect communities.

And Mr. Speaker, we still plan to utilise the old Government Administration building site as a public park. God willing we will get this done over the next budget cycle.

But this administration also believes, and indeed the Progressives campaigned in part, on making our communities stronger – including through the creation of Community Youth Centres that can provide social, recreational, and counselling services, especially for children after school.

So Mr. Speaker, the purchase of this property by Government ensures that it continues to be available for use by the community and can serve other community purposes in the future. The ability to improve the condition of the park as well as to expand the current ¼ acre site using the adjacent Crown land creates exciting possibilities.

This Government, Mr. Speaker, will continue to pursue these types of opportunities to improve the quality of life for the people of George Town Central and indeed for all of our people across these Islands.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

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