

**PORTSMOUTH CITIZENS PLANNING COMMISSION**

**PROPOSALS**

**FOR THE PHYSICAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**OF PORTSMOUTH,**

**COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA**

**FOR PRESENTATION TO**

**THE DEPARTMENT FOR URBAN RENEWAL**

**(DRAFT REPORT)**

**Overall Master Plan Strategy**



## INTRODUCTION

### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PORTSMOUTH CITIZENS PLANNING COMMISSION

For several years there has been growing concern about the unplanned nature of the development of Portsmouth and its environs extending from Bell Hall in the north to Pointe Ronde in the south and extending eastwards into the hills behind.

The rapid development of Picard Estate in response to the establishment and growth of the Ross University School of Medicine on the site has highlighted the need for a proper plan so as to ensure that the whole of the Portsmouth area develops in an organised manner for the benefit of its citizens. Two well attended public meetings were held within the past year at the Arbeedee Cinema and at the Credit Union Hall to address the issue. Those attending felt that a committee should be set up to put together a report dealing with these concerns. In attendance was the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, Hon. Roosevelt Skerrit, who declared his support for the establishment of a committee. In early 2008 the Dominica Labour Party Portsmouth constituency branch convened a meeting at the Cabrits Cruise Ship berth to review the main challenges facing the town and to appoint a committee. The committee has since been endorsed by the **Portsmouth Town Council** and will continue to operate as a sub-committee of the PTC.

The following participants were invited by the gathering to serve on a Commission referred to as the Portsmouth Citizens Planning Commission to help develop the Draft Document:

#### **Portsmouth Citizens Planning Commission**

**Dr. Lennox Honychurch** – Chairman of the Commission/Historian

**Honourable Ian Douglas** – Parliamentary Representative/Minister for Tourism and Legal Affairs

**Mr. Ronald Armour** – Attorney at Law

**Mr. Avon Brudey** – Taxi Operator / Businessman

**Mr. Vernon Daniel** – Agricultural Science Engineer/Councillor

**Mr. Adenauer Douglas** – Electrical Engineer/Councillor

**Ms. Frederica James** – College Lecturer

**Mr. William McLawrence** – Business Consultant/Councillor

The production of this Draft Document is the result of the mandate given by the Prime Minister for the preparation of a Development Plan for the town and its environs. It has involved a series of weekly meetings by the Commission and a number of consultations with individual experts. This process will be taken further by distributing the draft among stakeholders and interested parties and professionals in physical planning with the aim of getting a comprehensive final report which reflects the needs of all citizens.

This document is essentially the citizens' conception of the development of the town. The final development plan will require the input of environmental urban planners, engineers, architects, sociologists, other specialists, and the continued participation of the town's citizenry.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Commission wishes to place on record the support and encouragement given by Hon. Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, towards the establishment of the Commission. It is grateful for the advice given by Mr. Frank Smith an architect and planner introduced to us by Mr. Vincent Ettiene based in Florida, USA, for his input in this report. We would like to thank the acting Chief Physical Planner, Mr. Kelvin Rolle and his colleague Mr. Joseph Fontaine who attended our first meeting and provided useful guidance to the Commission. The intention is that once the final draft is approved at another citizens meeting it will be formally handed over to the Minister responsible for Urban Renewal and to the Prime Minister with the hope that it will be approved by Cabinet as the template for the development of Portsmouth.

At this stage written contributions to the draft document have come from others outside the Commission and we would like to thank Wayne Abraham for contributing to sections on disaster preparedness and Mr. Collins Guiste on waterfront improvements.

## **Project Concept**

As we lay the basic components of the future town, we do so with the clear understanding that the town will be cohesive, vibrant, and sustainable only if it engenders for its residents a peculiar and strong attachment, and a community consciousness that unites its inhabitants with a shared identity and moral code. Cities struggle when they fail to cultivate a sense of community and common identity among their inhabitants.

Cities must first and foremost be safe. Many contemporary urban areas have taken this precept for granted. When a city's ability to guarantee the safety of its citizens and institutions has declined, urbanities have tended to retreat to the hinterland or migrate to a safer location. However, sanctity and safety alone cannot a great city make.

Another important aspect of a vibrant city is the idea of upward mobility. This aspiration is very critical to urban life, it is important to the social order for people to feel that they can progress. Vibrant cities can flourish as administrative, cultural, or artistic centres for only as long as they either create wealth or can extract wealth from other places. Parasitic urban centres are less durable. Cities that generate their own wealth have proven to be more sustainable.

The future town should seek to maintain and foster its tradition of diverse neighbourhoods. Traditionally, the 'la cou' culture engendered an "all for each, and each for all" mentality; i.e. the neighbourhoods served as extended family. Grandma was granny to all, and all grownups were someone's 'tantie'. Future development must encourage this feature which has waned

some. Mix income, mix ages, and mix urban functions neighbourhoods create a balance ambience which promotes togetherness and social diversity while reducing violence and other ills.

Improvement in telecommunications will further flatten economic space in the future. Flex hours and home offices responding to task generated elsewhere, including offshore, could well become commonplace. Similarly, documents and transactions which currently require a trip to the central business district will be available on cyberspace thus eliminating or reducing certain current office functions and downtown traffic.

Any planning and development program for Portsmouth must consider the issue of plagues and infectious diseases. While physical design should mitigate the possibility of diseases and plagues, the role of social, cultural, and economic factors cannot be understated. So in formulating a program, the impact of infectious diseases on the development of cities is quite important, since in 1768 Portsmouth lost its capital status because of the prevalence of malaria and yellow fever. The tropicalization of the West Nile Virus, the occasional outbreak of dengue fever and other tropical diseases, and the persistent high levels of mosquito infestation in the town, the growth of Portsmouth could, once again, be hampered by infectious diseases if effective measures against likely plagues and epidemics are not institutionalized.

A developing town should also cater for structures and spaces that encourage the cultural industries. Therefore provisions should be made for botanical gardens and a multi-section creative arts centre (an indoor and outdoor cross-discipline arts exchange) offering lofts for artists, painters, writers, poets, musicians, dancers, and designers. The town should as much as possible anchor its creative arts in the Creole culture.

While Dominica, and indeed the Caribbean, continue to display and celebrate the historical presence of the Europeans in the region, surprisingly there are no slave museums in the chain of islands. Dominica, the sole country with a historical Kalinago people village, could further enhance its image/position as the centre for 'the people who came' by establishing a slavery museum on parts of 'Sugar' Loaf Estate up the Indian River. Portsmouth with its sheltered harbour, interestingly named after a European colonialist Prince Rupert, could quickly establish itself as the repository of the slavery museum. Collaboration with Goree Island, Senegal and Ouidah, Benin can help and this could also be an attraction for Caribbean people and African Americans seeking the gist of slavery in the Caribbean. The museum would also help give Dominicans of African descent some identity and cultural adhesion.

## **Portsmouth Planning Strategy**

### **An abundance of opportunities**

#### **Attractive Portsmouth Qualities**

- **Tropical bay surrounded by lush mountains**
- **Tranquil, quiet, warm, safe**
- **Friendly residents**
- **Natural reefs - Great diving**
- **Superior anchorage**
- **Sight seeing natural features**
- **Cabrits National Park**
- **Sandy beaches**
- **Tropical forests**
- **Indian River**
- **Picard River and l'eau chaud**
- **Fresh fruits, fish and other delicious foods**

#### **Planning objectives**

- Develop employment opportunities
- Develop tourism potential
- Improve quality of life for residents and visitors
- Preserve natural resources

#### **Immediate and medium term goals**

##### **Immediate**

- Prepare Overall Plan
- Establish development controls
- Sustained anti-litter campaign
- Beautification of existing
- Facelift of the central business district and along the main route through the town
- Implement sewer system plan
- Improve marketing
- Support youth training program
- Establish management mentor program
- Establish information system

##### **Medium**

- Implement Plan
- Improve road system
- Enrich beaches

- Build fishing harbor
- Enlarge Market
- Build boatyard and other marine support facilities
- Establish Hospitality training facility

### **Establish Development Controls**

- Determine allowed land use criteria
- Establish density allowed
- Provide for vehicle access and parking
- Require landscaping
- Provide aesthetic criteria in special areas
- Require adequate sewage handling
- Establish coverage criteria
- Preserve river edges

### **Green City Proposal**

Given the stated goal of establishing Dominica as the “Nature Island” and the survival imperative that the world as a whole reduce greenhouse gases and its carbon footprint, it guides us to develop the town as a ‘Green City’. A green city approach will take into consideration:

- **Good water and air quality:** this will require an institutional approach where the relevant governing authorities set guidelines and policies for water use especially in the catchments areas that serves the town. Additionally, zoning for industrial development which deteriorates the air quality within the residential and business district of the town must be prohibited.
- **Efficient use of resources:** the exploitation of natural resources within the town must be in a manner consistent with a sustainable concept where the results will benefit our immediate needs and at the same time reserve the regenerative potential of these resources.
- **Accessible and reliable public transportation;** improved public transportation on east bound and north bound routes.
- **Jogging paths**
- **Green building practices (including rooftop greening):** the building code should promote green building practices. Natural ventilation, building orientation, natural or eaves shading, natural and efficient lighting, renewable energy, green roofs to keep buildings cool and reduce the ‘heat island effect’.
- **Efficient Energy Consumption:** Use of energy efficient appliances and equipment (Energy Star); user education, etc.
- **Parks, greenbelts, and open spaces within close proximity to every resident**

- **Green hedges should be encouraged over concrete fences**
- **Easy access to, and support for locally grown fresh food:** Backyard gardens have been a tradition of Dominicans and it is important that this concept be facilitated with new infrastructure development.
- **Promotes reduce, reuse, refill, and recycle**
- **Backyard Gardens:** as we move to build an infrastructure that will enhance the physical outlook of the town, it is essential that we adopt a policy that encourages the inhabitants to cultivate backyard gardens, and front lawns and flower gardens as a means in keeping with green spaces.
- **Composting and recycling centres:** garbage collection especially the biodegradable waste (food peels, paper, twigs, dry leaves and grass) which is not accepted at the landfill must be treated in a proper manner. The town has not been able to adequately manage these waste and compost sites must be constructed for that purpose. Mini recycling plant must also be introduced to manage non biodegradable materials (glass bottles, plastic bottles, plastic bags, foam cups and related apparatus).
- **Protection of biodiversity, shoreline areas, and public view plains**
- **Promotes energy efficiency and renewable energy leadership**
- **Affordability** – green features should be available to all the citizens

### **Creole Quarter - Katié Kwéyol (Grand Anse)**

The first Creole Quarter of any city anywhere! Most major cities boast of China towns, Latin Quarters and other specific districts, Portsmouth because of its known Creole name, for having exported some of Dominica's Creole music all over the world and for being one of Dominica's most diversified community in terms of Caribbean input, this town has earned the right to establish the Caribbean's first Creole quarter. This major tourism district would be a live museum where Creole tradition, culture and history meet the constant evolution of daily life.

**The Layout:** A selected section of the town, preferably with historic Creole houses and cobblestone streets will be recreated to include all the specificities of Creole life in the manner of New Orleans, Pointe-à- Pitre, Roseau etc...

This will be a major commercial and cultural district where small Creole guest houses and hotels should be encouraged but also restaurants of World Creole Cuisine, Night Clubs with Creole Music and Dance. A Creole Cultural Centre for the sustainability and development of Creole Art.

The Creole Quarter would synergize with other Creole events in the town like Fete Mwen Grand Anse with voile traditionnelle, DoMarGaw Weekend Carnival, Tout Monde Sports Fest, Creole in The North, Tabou, Bèlè, and Gwo-Ka Drumming, Annual Creole Symposium, and Creole Waltz, Mazouk, Quadrille etc.

Portsmouth should seek to twin/gimlaga with other Creole cities (like New Orleans) while embracing the principles of a green city.

## **MARITIME**

### **PORT:**

Portsmouth is the centre for the movement of Dominican owned vessels transporting agricultural produce mainly to the islands north of Dominica and importing cargo from across the region. The leading sea captains of Dominica have traditionally come from Portsmouth. A sizable percentage of the population of the Portsmouth area are involved in shipping in one form or another. If this is extended to the farmers who are dependent on the huckster trade that emanates from Portsmouth, the percentage of the farming population that are dependent on this port is sizable. This indicates that the development of port facilities at Portsmouth must receive attention.

The Dominica Port Authority is responsible for the administration of the movement of shipping, the use and maintenance of port facilities and general supervision of the entire harbour of Prince Rupert Bay. The two main points of shipping under its control are Longhouse, situated near to the mouth of the Picard River, and the Cabrits Cruise Ship Berth located on the southern side of the Cabrits headland.

Some extensions to Longhouse have been underway during 2007 and 2008 that will provide for the servicing of slightly deeper draughts of ships than at present and a limited landing and offloading of containers.

Stakeholders from Portsmouth involved in shipping cite the need for a container port with necessary space and infrastructure to service and store containers and to provide for dry dock facilities. Optional sites to be considered are:

1. **Longhouse:** This site can be expanded to include land already under the control of the Port Authority as well as land still owned by the Geest banana company. Added to this are lands further inland which has been used to deposit large items of solid waste. By ensuring that all this land is reserved for the port and not used for some other purpose, enough space for container storage could be found.

The problem that remains would be to extend the dock far enough into deeper water so as to accommodate large international vessels. Because Longhouse pier is in a shallow and gently sloping area adjacent to the alluvial deposits of the Picard River, this would require a costly extension of the dock by several hundred feet.

2. **Pointe Ronde:** suggestions were made for a major port at the southern side of Pointe Ronde near to the Syndicate River mouth. This has been used as a dock area before, but like Longhouse would require extensive piling and pier construction to make it viable. A large area of land is available extending into the quarry area of Pointe Ronde Estate.
3. **Cabrits Extension:** A leading ship owner of Portsmouth has repeatedly called for the extension of the Cruise Ship Berth Pier eastwards to create a thousand-foot dock of driven metal sheeting that would be in filled by excavating the side of the Inner Cabrit hill. But given the future tourism potential of this area for a yacht marina and increased use of the National Park as well as tourism related developments planned for the adjacent beach and lands, this proposal does not appear to be feasible in the foreseeable future.

### **WATERFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

As part of the Coastal Infrastructure Programme (CIP) the Government of Dominica should undertake a coastal engineering project, with related environmental and land side development tasks. The project would obviously have its own set of challenges including unique marine environments, exposure to waves and currents, construction access issues and property ownership constraints.

There are two main objectives for the project development and these are:

1. Enhanced beaches where feasible and appropriate and
2. Provide continuous public access along shoreline.

These objectives must be achieved at the same time as avoiding or mitigating any environmental or social impacts.

The second objective will only be achieved for all segments of the public (i.e. for wheelchairs and strollers) if a continuous hard surface walkway is provided for the full length of the project.

**Description of the Design:** The design for the project should consist of main headlands with new beach sand placed between. Public access points will link the boardwalk to Bay Street and the Michael Douglas Boulevard.

**Environmental and Social Assessment:** One of the main factors in selecting a headland –beach approach to enhance and create new beaches will be the need to minimize impact to the marine environment. The headlands will have no negative impact on offshore reefs along this sector.

The enhancement and creation of beaches will expand the turtle habitat within the project area. Restrictions on specific lightings for the boardwalk will be implemented so as not to detract from turtle nesting activities. In areas where the boardwalk crosses existing beaches that are known to be used by turtle, the boardwalk will be elevated above the beach to keep people away from the sensitive habitat and allow turtles to pass under the boardwalk.

Wherever possible native coastal vegetation will be planted to help stabilize the beaches and provide natural habitat conditions.

An interpretive educational component of the project will be planned to convey many of the fascinating findings and related research regarding the physical and biological processes along this reach of shoreline. It is believed this will promote an improved appreciation for the natural environment and a sense of stewardship.

A monitoring programme will be implemented during and following construction to ensure that environmental impacts are minimal and within an accepted range.

In addition to providing improved access to the coast for local residents and tourists alike, new public space will be created. All the beaches created will be fully accessible to everyone. New public parks will be created at each of the headlands.

There will be the need for the development of a management plan for the operation of the boardwalk facility to address such issues as security, enforcing appropriate uses (restricting vendors and any non-pedestrian use), litter collection, cleaning and maintenance, information and programming activities.

### **BAY FRONT DEVELOPMENT**

Portsmouth requires an extension of land along the waterfront of the town from the mouth of the North River to the Indian River for a number of reasons:

1. To protect the main commercial and residential area of the town from sea surges during hurricanes.
2. To relieve traffic congestion in the main streets by providing a wide, double lane thoroughfare with adequate parking.
3. To provide commercial access and new opportunities for businesses facing onto the sea.
4. To accommodate fisheries complex, dinghy dock, ferry terminal arrival/departure, Indian River groin restoration.

## 5. Removal of all the wrecks on the Bay Front.

This major development has hinged on the hope that the Japanese government had the intension of donating funds to Dominica for a Fisheries Complex Project that would include extending a street and parking along the Portsmouth waterfront as outlined above.

### **JAPANESE ISSUE**

Since so much of the development of central Portsmouth hinges on the expectation that the Japanese government was intending to fund a fisheries complex for Portsmouth there was discussion on the state of this project.

There was the view that the powers that be should continue to pressure the Japanese on their offer of a fisheries complex with sea defence and sea front expansion included. It appeared that no headway had been made and that some diplomatic pressure needed to be put on the Japanese to ensure that this project was activated.

### **CABRITS CRUISE SHIP BERTH**

This facility lies largely empty for most of the year and is only used by small cruise ships during the cruise season between October and the end of April each year. Wedding receptions, meetings and other events are also held here occasionally. Alternative uses such as a Northern District Tourism office can be considered for the building. Recent news that regular inter-island ferry services are to begin will provide more activity for the berth.

There is some conflict in relation to access through the port compound to the National Park and with the expected increased use of Fort Shirley and the park services this matter will have to be resolved.

The addition of lateral finger piers to the existing pier will facilitate the mooring of bigger yachts or power cruisers to the pier.

### **TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE**

In spite of the many natural advantages that Portsmouth has to promote as a tourism destination with its beaches, scuba diving, natural and historic trails as well as the Indian River experience, the area is not well served by hotel accommodation. Almost all of the visitors who use Portsmouth tourism sites at present come for the day from hotels in other parts of Dominica.

There is a need to attract investment which will provide at least two good standard hotels in the first instance if the area is going to begin to cater to stay-over visitors in any numbers.

Locations along Picard Beach and at Bell Hall, Douglas Bay, offer prime beach side settings for hotels. Inland, among the hills around Portsmouth there are several locations with spectacular views across

Prince Rupert Bay where elegant eco-lodge style boutique hotels could be placed. Existing hotels need to reassess their infrastructure and upgrade conditions to improve ratings.

### **YACHTING**

Portsmouth harbour is the central yacht destination in Dominica and is the most favoured anchorage on the island for yachts traversing the Eastern Caribbean. Facilities need to be developed to service these yachts which during the height of the season average sixty a day in port. These figures would rise dramatically if services were provided on shore. All encouragement should be given for investment in a marina and related services such as at Rodney Bay in St.Lucia or Jolly Harbour in Antigua. It is understood that a marina has been earmarked for Cabrits swamp funded with investment from Crews Inn of Trinidad although other backers are now being sought due to the withdrawal of some earlier investors.

A dinghy dock should be established on the Portsmouth waterfront so as to entice yachtsmen associated with the anchorage and marina to access the centre of the town.

Possible additional areas for yacht anchorages in the bay such as off Picard and Coconut Beach should be considered, but these would have to be conducive to tidal patterns and desires of yacht captains.

Some members were of the view that the 1980s report on the feasibility of using the Indian River and Glanvillia Swamp as a marina should be revisited. Entry into the swamp could be obtained by excavating a canal from the sea just south of the Texaco petrol station that would bypass the recently constructed cast concrete bridge. This was detailed as one of the options in the 1980s report.

Whatever decisions are taken in relation to the above, it must be noted that the yachting industry has been almost totally neglected in Dominica. But with difficult air access into the island, arrival of visitors by sea, particularly in yachts, can significantly boost the number of arrivals overall and enhance the economic benefits that result from this.

### **CABRITS NATIONAL PARK**

The Cabrits National Park is, along with the Indian River, the most important visitor site in the Portsmouth area and it is the most important historic site in Dominica. It is under the direct administration of the National Parks and Forestry Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment.

This has worked reasonably well in the past but the fact that the Cabrits is a significant heritage site, not only for Dominica but also for the Caribbean region, has made it difficult for the National Parks to rationalise as opposed to the entirely natural sites such as Morne Diablotin

National Park, Trois Pitons National Park and other sites that are entirely natural preserves and which are administered by the Division.

In its present state of administration, the development and maintenance of the heritage component of the Cabrits is hampered by being directly controlled by a government department. For instance, any private donations towards restoration of buildings or other projects has to be deposited into the consolidated fund and the ability of anyone interested in obtaining funds or carrying on commercial activities within the historic area is restricted by regulations that govern a government department.

Considering the potential of the Cabrits to play a greater role in tourism activity, income generation and recreational opportunities for the people of Portsmouth and visitors to Portsmouth it is necessary to place the Cabrits under a new form of management. The recommendation is to establish a trust to administer the area. An outline plan for the establishment of the Cabrits Heritage and Ecology Centre (CHEC) has already been approved by Cabinet and funds are already being disbursed to establish the centre. Government would still have overall jurisdiction of the land and what is done with it, but the day to day workings and financial management of the site would be in the hands of the trust, the details of which must be agreed upon by the relevant parties. The precedent for this exists elsewhere in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in the trusts that run, Brimstone Hill National Park in St. Kitts, Nelson's Dockyard National Park in Antigua and Pigeon Island in St. Lucia.

Studies, reports and meetings have been going on for the last three years in relation to the marine area of the Cabrits National Park to be managed by the OPAL organisation.

### **PUBLICITY AND TOWN PROMOTION**

The Portsmouth Town Council in conjunction with Discover Dominica has to set up a promotional desk aimed at attracting investment and increasing visitor arrivals specifically to the area. Brochures, booklets and posters need to be produced to package Portsmouth. The Publicity machine of Portsmouth must be pro-active and must not sit back expecting that the national promotion arm of Discover Dominica will do this work for them.

### **RIVERS**

One of Portsmouth's main attractions throughout its human settlement has been the fresh water supplied by the three main rivers flowing into the bay, namely the Picard River, Indian River and North River. The commission believes that every effort should be made to preserve the fresh pristine nature of these rivers by enforcing existing legislation, or where necessary passing new legislation or tabling regulations under Standing Rules and Orders as needed.

## INDIAN RIVER

The importance of the nature and economic activity of the Indian River to the well being and tourism activity of Portsmouth is an established fact.

There is urgent need for designating the Indian River as a protected zone with the necessary buffer zone along its banks to protect the flow and cleanliness of the river. This area would have a boundary as follows:

1. From the newly constructed Indian River Bridge along the shores of the Glanvillia swamp and through the lands of Forest Company Ltd and Sugarloaf Estate to the point of the flat concrete bridge on the road to "Mountain". This would run along one side of the proposed Portsmouth By-Pass.
2. Back along a buffer zone protecting the northern banks of the Indian River to the banks of the Barry River.
3. From the Barry River along the main road opposite Zicack and then in a line back to a buffer zone at the new Indian River Bridge. This would pass directly behind the boundary of the proposed bus station and public building complex.

Consideration must be given of the water catchment area higher up and all the effects of waste and run off caused by any developments up stream.

More attractions should be developed to compliment the nature ride along the river. These can include historic links such as Carib presence, centre for trading with Caribs, slavery museum etc. A ruined mill further up the river on Sugarloaf could form the centrepiece for such a museum or botanical garden.

The existing trail must be maintained and should be protected from encroachment by any future motorable roads. This trail area at the head of the river, beyond where the tour boats stop, is an integral part of the experience that is offered to tourists and has to form part of the protected area. Plans for the building of a by-pass around the back of Portsmouth come too close to the end of the river tour and traverses the nature trail. Plans for the bypass should be revised to relocate the route of the highway further away from the river and tourist site.

The possibility of restoring and initiating the railway line up into Brandy Falls area should be considered in the same way that the "Sugar Train" has been such a success in St. Kitts.

## PICARD RIVER

Maintain protection of watershed and catchment related to reservoir intake.

Protection of a corridor along the river.

Secure river pools below intake and restrict building along the river banks.

### **BARRY RIVER**

Action to be taken to mitigate detrimental condition of this river as a dumping place for adjacent settlements and to check on diesel oil and other effluents from the DOMLEC Electric generating plant that are now allowed to flow into the river .

The outflow of drains from Zicack and the Chance area and the drainage associated with this must be taken into account as mentioned in the section on drainage, sewerage and solid waste.

### **POINTE RONDE RIVER**

Same issue of protecting watershed and of banks lower down and preventing the dumping of discarded building materials and other solid waste into the river.

### **NORTH RIVER**

Conditions in this river are as above and should receive similar attention. Additionally, this river (west of the Rodney Street Bridge and, particularly, west of the Bay Street Bridge) has overrun its banks and has flowed through resident's yards on several locations. River bank protection is needed in this area.

### **LAGON RIVER**

Issues of drainage from housing area above must be studied as this ravine empties into a swamp behind the Lagon residential area before pouring out into the sea. This is an area that is seriously affected by flooding and the more houses constructed on the slopes above will increase the amount of water pouring into the area during heavy rains.

### **L'eau Chaud**

L'eau chaud locations, the site of hot springs, should be mapped and protected. A buffer zone area should be deployed around these sites when they are located in forested areas.

### **DRAINAGE, SEWAGE, SOLID WASTE**

Geological studies of the area show that all of central Portsmouth and Lagon is located upon low lying alluvial deposits that were washed down from surrounding hills. Within several hundred yards of the existing shoreline this is mixed with sea sand and pebbles that were deposited when the sea was further in land centuries ago. This is also true of the uninhabited extensive swamp area around the Indian River and eastwards into Sugarloaf estate. The

swampy nature of Portsmouth has been the main drawback to the town during its recorded history. Any future development of these areas must keep this geological condition in mind.

But the present built up area of Portsmouth is of immediate concern. Anyone carrying out excavation within this zone finds holes and foundations immediately swamped with brackish water within three to five feet of the surface. This has made the instalment of septic tanks difficult and from an environmental health point of view, dangerous to health and most unsatisfactory. A case in point is an apartment block on Bay Street with thirteen toilets flowing into a swamped septic tank in a backyard approximately 10' x 8' in size. Some septic tanks are raised above the surface of the water level or are even located partly underneath buildings.

### **SEWERAGE**

These serious issues in the Portsmouth area must be seen as a national project. Consultation with DOWASCO must be initiated to discuss the possibility of a central sewerage project similar to the one undertaken in Roseau.

The shoreline in the centre of the town is heavily polluted with human faeces since outflows from public conveniences and nearby houses is channelled to the bay.

Private companies (F.J. Luke etc.) must also be engaged and encouraged to set up treatment plants in the north of the island. Treatment sites with the industrial zone should be identified for this purpose.

There is only one small public convenience in Portsmouth central available to the public using the town. This is located between Bay Street and the sea. To service people using the town, it is urged that Physical Planning and/or Environmental Health Department should ensure that all commercial buildings used by the public should provide toilets for customer and public use.

### **DRAINAGE**

Because of the low lying nature of the town, effective drainage is very difficult to achieve. The main drain along Rodney Street at the back of the town, for instance, holds stagnant water that sits at the same level as the Indian River nearby. Because of this, it can never drain out properly and when it rains heavily and the river rises, the water backs up to flood the entire south-western end of Benjamin Park and surrounding streets.

The water from the Zicack residential area is directed down the hill to the Rodney Street drain, further exacerbating the situation. The water must be channelled into the Barry River to relieve the amount going into the Rodney Street drain. The construction of cross drains is necessary higher up in Zicack to facilitate this.

Similar considerations of drainage or lack thereof are prevalent in Glanvillia and Picard and must be attended to.

### **PONT GLOU GLOU DRAINAGE**

Pont Glou Glou is located at the entrance to the Cabrits swamp and National Park at the junction with the road to Tan Tan and points further north. It is a key point of drainage for all the land now owned by Dominica Social Security and other stakeholders. There are the remains of a large cross-drain running along the east side of the Tan Tan road which funnels water under Pont Glou Glou and out to sea.

At present this run off water is reasonably unpolluted as there is no construction up hill of it as yet. But there will be increased drainage problems in this area when housing and streets are developed on the slopes going up through Buck to Burnet and other inland areas. These serious issues of drainage must be attended to in relation to the increased housing expected on these slopes where developments are proposed on the Dominica Social Security controlled lands. In the immediate term the drain, or rather canal, from Pont Glou Glou northwards must be opened up and excavated in preparation for the increased flow of water from these developments.

The environmental impact of housing waste water and roof drainage being channelled into the bay at the end of the popular Purple Turtle beach and at the main location of Dominica's major yacht anchorage must be considered by Physical Planning. The effects of such water born household waste on this important tourism site will be serious if it is not taken into consideration and attended to.

### **SOLID WASTE**

Discussion related to the disposal of solid waste included the viability of curb-side garbage collection as opposed to the former system of skips; the concern garbage collection should be at night; the need for a compost site for biodegradable material; the sorting of material. Given the increase in the price of petrol and the distance that garbage trucks had to travel to dispose of waste at Fond Cole, it was felt that consideration should be given to siting a major dump site in the north or northwest that would service Portsmouth. Others considered that the present centralised system of garbage disposal was working and should be maintained.

Because a national system for the disposal of large quantities of solid waste such as office equipment and building scrap does not work effectively in Portsmouth, isolated and bushy areas such as Pointe Ronde, Belle Hall and ravines along feeder roads are littered with piles of this material. A system to stop the private disposal of large scale garbage such as building scrap in these areas must be put in place. The waste metal pile in Georgetown needs to be removed.

Continuous education is required for the greater efficiency of garbage disposal.

### **NOISE**

Indiscriminate noise, the blaring of horns, and unsolicited loud music must be discouraged in the town. Restaurants, clubs, churches, and businesses should be required to contain their sound within their premises. This ordinance can be waived on special occasions with permission from the relevant authorities namely the Portsmouth Town Council and the police.

## **PORTSMOUTH CENTRAL**

### **CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT**

**Government Center – Business - Tourist attraction - Cultural center – Sports – Entertainment – Homes – the water’s edge, relationship with the sea and bay.**

### **TRAFFIC**

There is an immediate need for bus stations and main bus stops at different points around the town because the present unorganised system is causing congestion.

1. A replacement for the Borough’s Square bus station would be placed close by on new bay front extension.
2. A bus stop for Pennville and Capuchin routes should be placed on vacant land at the junction of the road going up to Portsmouth Secondary School that should be acquired.
3. The expansion of facilities for northbound buses to the north coast should be placed near Benjamin Park across the road from the present site on newly acquired land mentioned above.

Because of the congestion caused at the junction of Bay Street and Borough’s Square a new route to bypass this point was proposed. This is to feed traffic off from the Michael Douglas Boulevard at a point just before the Methodist cemetery. This road would go along the side of the cemetery and turn north to join the One Mile Road opposite Benjamin Park. This would take the stress off the Borough’s Square junction.

The Town Council must discuss with owners of vacant lots the possibility of using them as parking spaces while these remain vacant so as to ease parking problems.

The state of roads in central Portsmouth, particularly the side lanes, is an immediate issue and these should be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

The size of any new roads to be constructed must be carefully considered, particularly shoulders, lanes, pavements, culverts, drainage and medians.

The causes for traffic congestion in the Central Business District need to be analyzed and a curative solution should be implemented.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

More reliable eastbound public transportation must be established akin to northbound transportation.

Seek to get the inter-island ferry to dock at Portsmouth at least on Fridays and Sundays to encourage Creole islands economic activity.

### **PEDESTRIANS**

- Handicap needs should be given consideration with pavement edges near street corners and ramps where possible and particularly with new construction. Pavement should be unimpeded to allow the visible impaired to trek unhindered.
- Create scenic path for pedestrians
- Provide pedestrian space
- Create “Events” along path
- Improve vehicle circulation
- Encourage ‘character’ buildings

### **PUBLIC BUILDINGS**

There is a need for all public offices to be gathered in one public building or group of buildings rather than being scattered across town.

1. The proposal is to locate public buildings along the land opposite to the south side of Benjamin Park. The acquisition of lands from Sugar Loaf estate east of the First Caribbean Bank building would provide enough space between the main road and the building for parking.
2. A building on concrete pillars would be constructed so as to provide covered parking and protect the building from flooding.
3. This would be designed to house such government departments that need expansion and to avoid the need to rent space from others.

4. These include the post office, magistrate's court, education and youth affairs and other departments required.
5. The need for a new magistrate's court is particularly pressing because on court days the main thoroughfare through the town, Bay Street, has to be closed in front of the court and traffic has to be diverted. This situation cannot continue for long.

### **PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE FACILITIES**

The conditions under which the councilors and staff of the Portsmouth Town Council work are cramped and out of date. There is a need to expand into the part of the building now occupied by the Public Works Department.

It is recommended the PWD Office for the northern district be allocated an area either by the Longhouse port or in some of the unused houses at the Agricultural Centre at One Mile. Ultimately an office could be provided at the Public Buildings Complex which has been recommended to be constructed south of Benjamin Park.

### **COMMERCIAL**

Firmer control must be taken of the type of activity taking place in the traditional commercial zones of Portsmouth where traffic flow is severely disrupted by the loading and offloading of heavy hardware such as steel, cement blocks, pipes, cement and lumber. The time has reached that such commodities should be stored and distributed at locations outside of central Portsmouth, preferably within the industrial zone. Such activity in the centre is inconsistent with the commission's stated objectives of planning for the future.

In order to keep the central business district vibrant, owners of buildings in this zone should be encouraged to reserve the ground floor of their buildings for retail space or other commercial activity. Indeed the town government should grant incentives to encourage this principle.

### **MARKET AND VENDING**

The Portsmouth Market overflows into the main street on market days. This is exacerbated by the way that vendors tend to ignore the main covered market area and congregate around the Bay Street junction because of greater visibility "where the action is". The option to expand the market should also be viewed as a means of accommodating future population growth both for users and patrons of the market.

1. This situation could be improved by routing the market traffic thru Holland Street and a bay front road to Pembroke Street.

2. The large empty lot directly adjacent to the market area owned by the Dominica Social Security was discussed by the commission. It was agreed that this should be developed as an extension of the market with possible craft market and other booths for rent that offered other services and commodities for sale besides only vegetables. A building with offices for rent upstairs and the market complex on the ground floor was considered.
3. In effect, the market should be developed for more than just the vending of vegetables on specific market days such as Fridays and Saturdays. There should be a greater variety of stalls apart from just vegetables and it should be developed as a food court.

### **SMALL BUSINESS**

The case of the market area leads to the need to ensure that places for the housing of small businesses and vendors of all kinds are available in the town. Infrastructure development along the Bay Street, Harbour Lane and Rodney Street should be encouraged in a manner that allows for business and office space on the ground floors and apartment complexes on the top floors. This will result in activities in the town during the day as a business centre and activities during the night by inhabitants of these complexes by both stay over tourist and locals.

1. There is a danger that investors who develop large spaces for high monthly rentals will force out small, one-person businesses onto the streets and cause economic and social tensions in the area.
2. Small business is a very important component to Portsmouth's development and it must be encouraged and must be provided with space at reasonable rates of rent to enable them to be viable.
3. Units and booths at a rate of not more than EC \$500 a month must be provided. This is a viable option for private investment to build groups of small units which may well ensure a more assured monthly turn over than waiting for one large commercial rental.
4. The sidewalks are for pedestrian traffic. Sidewalk vendors with stalls and umbrellas must be discouraged.

### **ROADS**

The expansion of the road network around Portsmouth is the key to the expansion of Portsmouth and its suburbs. This would stimulate private land sales and construction.

**PORTSMOUTH BY-PASS:** Plans already exist for a proposed highway by pass from Picard via the back of Glanvillia to One Mile on the main Portsmouth to Melville Hall road. The route would roughly follow a line from the end of Dr. Robert Ross Boulevard along the back of Glanvillia and

along the base of the hill through lands of Forest Ltd. and Sugar Loaf Estate to join the main road near One Mile.

This bypass would continue northwards to join the Portsmouth to Tan Tan road at Cabrits. The route will be as follows: Through Upper Chance and passing the base of the hill of Les Heritiers and behind the hospital, across Mount Eolus Estate to the Portsmouth Secondary School and through Gutter and Lower Cotton Hill to join the Tan Tan Road and access to the Cabrits and proposed marina.

An intersection must be located near One Mile where four roads meet:

1. The bypass Road from Picard.
2. The road from central Portsmouth.
3. The road from Melville Hall and the North Coast.
4. The road from Tan Tan and Cabrits

In the vicinity of the Indian River it is proposed that the bypass must be routed further back than it is planned at present. It must be routed away from the river even if this means cutting through an adjacent low ridge. This is because the road as proposed would run too close to the end of the Indian River boat tour and affect the nature trail which also forms part of the tour. A tree buffer and noise reduction scheme should be established to maintain the visual and acoustic remoteness of the boat ride tour.

### **ACCESS ROADS SURROUNDING PORTSMOUTH**

As mentioned above the development and expansion of Portsmouth is being hampered by the fact that the access roads extending outwards from the town that lead to farms and properties within a two mile radius of the centre are in a terrible condition.

In the worst cases the surface is just bare clay. In others it is a worn road surface laid down in the 1980s and unmaintained since then. Many are washed out and impassable by vehicles and overgrown with tall grass. These roads must be cleared, surfaced, and provided with adequate drainage. This is the key to residential and farm extension around the town. The roads which need immediate attention in this regard are:

1. The road from Glanvillia up through an area called Bellot to the vicinity of the Cable and Wireless mast.
2. The road to Mountain, through Sugar Loaf Estate. This can be joined to the road through Bellot mentioned above to form a loop road.

3. The road past Portsmouth Armour Hospital through Chance and up to the hills of Les Heritiers behind. This can be joined to the Les Heritiers road that comes out at One Mile to form another loop.
4. The road from Lagon, past Grange to Bonnet and Souce. This can be joined to a road leading back down through Buck to Cotton Hill to join the by-pass near Purple Turtle.
5. The old road that passes One Mile and goes in an almost straight line to the junction at Borne.

**BY-PASS LINK:** All of these roads will feed into the main Portsmouth bypass thus providing a network of access roads that extend from Picard to Cabrits. With this in place effective development of housing, farm and tourism related activities can proceed.

### **Town Roadway**

Many roads and sidewalks in the town need to be resurfaced. Holland Street, Sandwich Street, and Middle Lane in Zicack, Labour Street, Williams Street, and Lovers Lane in Glanvillia, and the streets and sidewalks of the Central Business District are among those which require most urgent attention. For the safety of pedestrians, sidewalks and lighting must be established along all town roads.

Green hedges should be encouraged over concrete fences.

### **INDUSTRIAL**

Pointe Ronde is the area best dedicated to industrial and shed rental zone. It is far to the west of all settlements and there is no habitation down-wind of the area as this runs along the sea coast. The vegetation is scrub woodland and the soil is shallow. It has no good beach and tides around the point are usually turbulent and unsuited to tourism activity apart from some scuba diving sites on the outside of the adjacent reefs.

DOMLEC has already planned the establishment of its main northern power plant on 15 acres of this area.

The siting of industrial developments should be related to the overall intent of Portsmouth as a tourism centre and a university town. Zoning will have to be closely watched both on health, noise and environmental grounds. It must be related to effluents and air quality. Impact on river pollution is one of the most urgent considerations because of the present conditions of the rivers in the Portsmouth area. The eco-impact of any proposal must be carefully considered.

In line with this no industrial park or single major industrial investment must be located east of Portsmouth which is upwind of the areas extending from Belle Hall to Picard. No instalments of

this kind must be located in any zone which lies in the watershed of the main three rivers, those being the North River, Indian River and Picard River as well as the ravine emptying into the stagnant water behind Lagon or the Pont Glou Glou area.

This stipulation therefore determines that the Point Ronde area which is at present away from residential areas and has recently been used as a quarry and garbage dump and which is to the west of all habitation, must be the site of any future industrial investments. This would answer the need for zoning of such activities as welding workshops in relation to a small business industrial park.

### **PICARD INDUSTRIAL SITE – GLANVILLIA AND AREA NEAR THE PORT**

Although originally earmarked for industrial use adjacent to the port, this area has now seen other uses intervene. This was discussed and it was felt that involved parties such as the Port Authority, AID Bank and Planning must be contacted to resolve the issue. It must be noted that any future development of the Port at Longhouse will require a large area for the storage of containers. It is recommended that all available land in this area be dedicated to future port use.

### **DOMLEC Generating Plant Location**

The location of the generating plant of the electricity provider DOMLEC is located just over one mile directly to the east of the town of Portsmouth. This is not an ideal area for a number of reasons:

1. The noise pollution caused by the generators affects a wide area around the valley. This is already limiting the potential for expanding the residential zone of Portsmouth into this area because the constant noise of the generators causes potential buyers of residential land in the area to go elsewhere. Vendors of land in a wide arc from behind Chance, Les Heritiers, Sugarloaf and Mountain around to Bellot report that potential purchasers are turned off from buying because of the noise.
2. Water and land pollution. Reports have reached the commission describing the outflow of diesel and other pollutants from the generators into the upper section of the Barry River, which then flows down stream into the Indian River. Land behind the plant s also affected by a variety of oil pollutants.
3. As mentioned above, it has been understood that DOMLEC is planning to move its operation to 15 acres of land purchased at Point Ronde which has already been declared an industrial zone. This would be away from residential town expansion and, being close to the sea shore would in future facilitate the landing of fuel direct from tankers.

The commission commends DOMLEC for taking the initiative in this matter.

### **RESIDENTIAL**

The development of residential areas should be carefully planned to ensure adequate services are available and road access is of a required standard. These would follow national Physical Planning regulations.

1. The upgrading of roads to outlying areas of Portsmouth, as mentioned above, and the development of a road network linked to a town by-pass would provide immediate incentive to develop new residential areas within two miles of central Portsmouth.
2. Silent Zones: Housing areas should be free of loud man-made sound due to the proximity of discos, church public address systems that are purposely placed outside of churches. Noise caused by permanent small industrial units in residential areas such as carpentry workshops using electric drills, sanders and saws as well as welding work sheds and body repair shops must be dealt with.
3. The establishment of small industrial units in designated areas would help to solve this problem.
4. Water services should be connected to existing old and lower income housing.

### **Low Cost Housing Strategies**

- Research possible locations
- Develop solutions for each development site
- Design dwelling unit models
- Design different community design models to include, land characteristics, infrastructure, community amenities.

### **Low Cost Housing community density concepts**

- Farmlets, providing for subsistence farming
- Low Density, providing comfortable spacing
- Medium Density, compact communities
- High Density, allowing for urban infill.

### **LAGON**

Government should give a clear timescale and plan for the proposed relocation of those houses on the sea side of the road between Purple Turtle and the Lagon Bridge so as to inform the public on the status of the project. In addition, having reviewed the proposal from the planning

division it is imperative that the necessary legal procedures be instituted to accommodate this development.

### **RECREATION AND HEALTHY LIVING**

The importance of green spaces within residential areas and the extended urban and suburban areas was noted.

1. The lack of a playing field for recreation in the Chance development and at Picard was noted.
2. Playing fields are vital for all residential areas as they provide places for the community to meet, exercise, engage in sports and relieve excess energy which may otherwise be channelled towards aggression.
3. **BENJAMIN PARK:** This should remain open common ground accessible to all. Its multi purpose use must be maintained. It should NOT be fenced in. Drainage must be improved.
4. If there is ever any intension to build a stadium to serve Portsmouth, this must be constructed in an entirely new site and Benjamin Park should be dedicated to the free open use of citizens at all times.
5. There is a need for a Botanic Garden, not necessarily of the same type as Roseau and perhaps linked to the Indian River protected area. There was consideration of an Indian River Park incorporating protection of the river banks and buffer zone for trails and tree cover and wildlife maintenance. The Botanic Garden need not be a public venture but could be developed by private enterprise as in the case of Diamond Falls Gardens in Soufriere, St. Lucia and elsewhere in the Eastern Caribbean.

Portsmouth Development Plan must reserve a site other than Benjamin Park for a training stadium with residential quarters that would attract overseas sports teams for pre-season / off season tropical training.

### **BEAUTIFICATION**

- Provide technical assistance for building face lift
- Remove trash
- Repair
- Plant trees, flowers and other plantings
- Plant palms adjacent to all water
- Establish Beautification Committee

## **EDUCATION**

Being the regional centre for the north and northeast, and given the small populations of the feeder villages, Portsmouth most likely will remain the post primary educational hub for these areas. The existing Portsmouth Secondary School and Seventh Day Adventist High School are already bigger than the recommended optimum size of high schools. Therefore there is the need for a new high school in Portsmouth probably with special emphasis on science. There is a need for a vocational school in the town. Consideration should be given to expanding and fortifying CALLS to meet that need.

At the same time, the physical conditions of the Portsmouth Secondary School are still sub standard in some areas and the present renovation programme must be continued.

Serious attention should also be given to establishing a branch of the Dominica State College in Portsmouth.

All new schools should be built in tsunami safe zones.

## **HEALTH**

The development of health facilities in Portsmouth must continue. The present hospital suffers from several design defects dating from the time it was built and these should be remedied. These include wasted space with defunct fountain in the main lobby; difficult casualty department access with stretchers; lack of protection of women's ward from driving rain and afternoon heat in men's ward. These and other inconveniences must be listed in consultation with hospital staff. The development of the Diagnostic Centre and ensuring the maintenance of medical supplies is important.

## **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

There should be publicity and public education on building codes for construction for earthquakes and hurricane damage. Consideration should be given of the geology and soil type of each of the zones of Portsmouth. A disaster preparedness office should be considered as an important part of the government administrative building to include a warehouse in a separate location on order to respond expeditiously to the needs of the town's inhabitants in time of danger.

Dominica is prone to natural disasters, namely hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides, tsunamis and floods. Preparation and education can save lives. A proposed Portsmouth Disaster Coordinating Authority with direct communication links to Dominica's central disaster mitigation center should manage a comprehensive disaster preparedness and mitigation plan.

Portsmouth is in the vicinity of two volcanoes - Morne Au Diables and Mt. Diablotins, earthquakes on nearby faults and subduction zone and tsunamis. The areas of Rodney Street, Sugar Loaf, and the banks of the North River west of the Rodney Street Bridge and its northern banks in the areas of the Anglican Church and the Picard River are all prone to seasonal flooding. Plans are necessary to mitigate the effects of any or several of these occurring at any given time.

Most of Portsmouth is located on waterlogged alluvial deposits of sand and light soil. It is one of the areas of greatest risk because it is largely at or below sea level and large amount of urban development is along its coastline.

An independent emergency system for Portsmouth should also be developed in collaboration with the National Disaster Office and met office, to include drills, signs in dangerous areas, street signs depicting evacuation routes, alert/ warning systems, education and evacuation plans for schools in coastal areas..

### **RELIGIOUS**

There is a need for zoning as to where churches can be opened in relation to noise in residential areas and traffic flow and parking.

The community and family element of the church was discussed and the fact that the core of every society is the family but that there is the problem of “parentless children” that affects the social cohesion of the society.

### **CEMETRY**

The public cemetery boundaries must be clearly demarcated and if possible fenced or walled and maintained and the area must be constantly monitored to avoid squatting.

There is the need to insure that present cemeteries are adequate for future town expansion.

### **LANDHOLDERS IN AND AROUND PORTSMOUTH**

Information of the work of the commission must be communicated to the major landowners in the Portsmouth area: Dominica social Security, Aid Bank, F.A. Baron, Cylma Dupigny, the Garraway family, Forest Estate Ltd.

### **SUGAR LOAF ESTATE**

Action should be taken at the highest level to approach the owner of Sugar Loaf estate for purchase and acquisition by government. Discussions must be launched to come to terms for sale since the development of Portsmouth hinges on the inclusion of Sugar Loaf.

Residential, recreation, possibly clean small industry can be considered on this land with careful zoning and prime concern for Indian River protection with the required protected areas and buffer zones.

The commission is concerned that government should be especially aware that the problems now faced at Picard must not be repeated.

There was a concern that if or when Sugar Loaf was acquired and became public land, the political pressure to turn a blind eye to squatters would cause the whole area to be over run and all planning safe-guards would be abused. This would lead to a more deplorable situation than at present as illegal occupation of the land would get out of control.

There was a view that it would be better that the status quo remained and market forces determined the future use of the land except for specific areas such as the Indian River Park and the land required for the establishment of public buildings and bus station.

### **UNIVERSITY TOWN**

The Picard settlement bounding the Picard River Southwards to Ti Bay should be further developed into a University Town. Lands around this zone should be demarcated to accommodate other universities or colleges (not a medical school) and related industries akin to Raleigh, North Carolina, Silicon Valley, San Jose, or other such areas in India and other locations around the world. This university town concept should accommodate both the expansion of the present Ross University, Housing, and the new institutions. Such concept would increase synergies and create new opportunities for local business initiatives. The town should also seek to enact appropriate regulations to support this concept.

### **Medical-tourism**

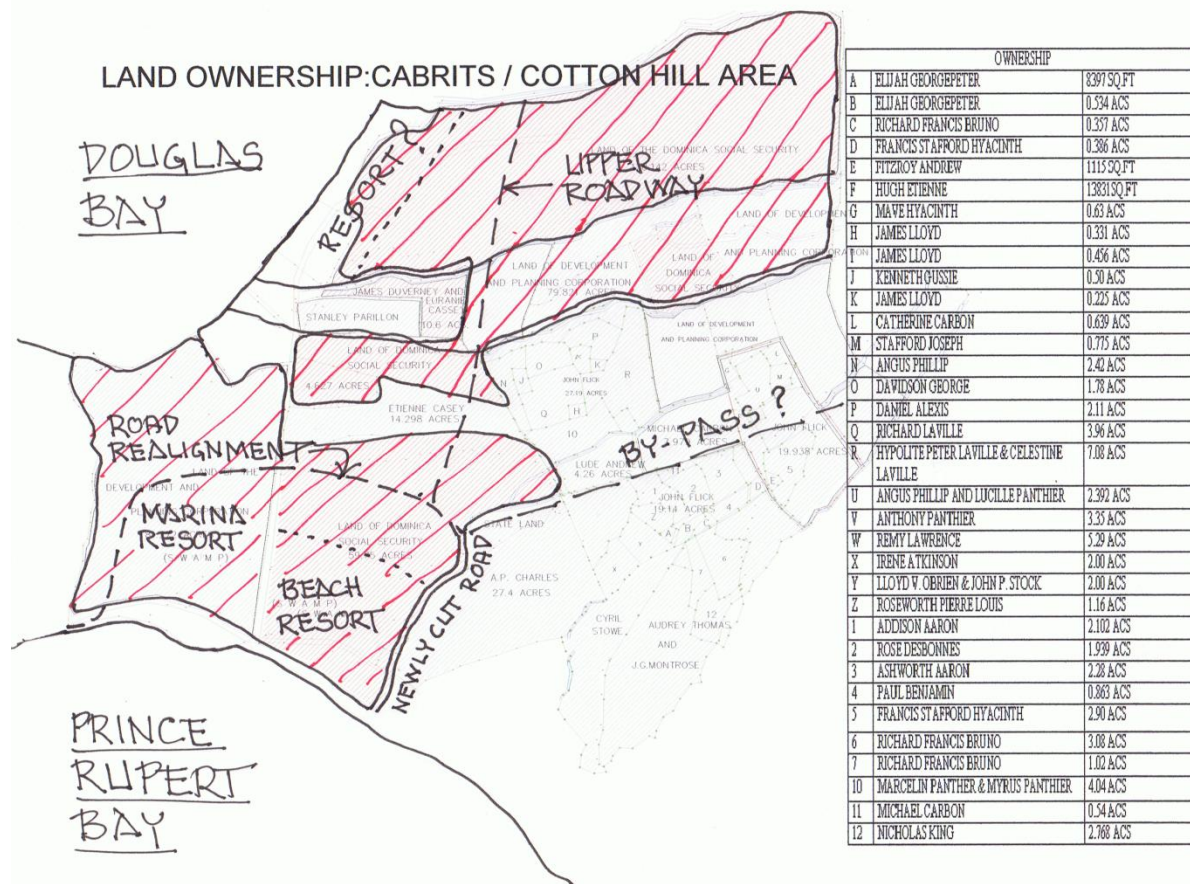
The town should prod into establishing the necessary elements needed for a medical tourism program in the area. Tropical medicine, high blood pressure, diabetes, plastic surgery, geriatrics, and ethno-botany are likely areas with economic possibilities.

### **ROSS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

Because of the importance of the continued presence of the Ross University School of Medicine at Portsmouth and its development as a university town, physical improvements must be considered that would provide better services for staff and students: improved security, sidewalks, lighting, garbage disposal etc.

The input of the staff of Ross University in this regard was important and draft copies of the report will be distributed to senior members.

**Government Lands Development Strategy**



**COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION**

The development of Portsmouth should be a strategic well planned initiative that must begin with the government's intervention in the overall zoning of the town and setting up of the necessary framework for major physical structures needed for a controlled implementation of this development.

The final report must be accompanied by a concept design and zoning plan that will remain as a guideline for the development for generations to come.

The Portsmouth Town Council as administrator of these developments must be a critical partner in these undertakings in order to facilitate and sustain the integrity and longevity of the developments.

## **ANNEX 1**

# **DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR PORTSMOUTH**

**Contribution by Councilor William McLawrence**

## **INTRODUCTION**

During the Thirteenth Inaugural Meeting of the Portsmouth Town Council which was held at the Portsmouth Cooperative Credit Union Convention Center on Wednesday 26 October 2005, the Head of Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica, Prime Minister, the Honorable Roosevelt Skerrit, mandated the new Council to produce a Development Plan for the Town. According to the Honorable Prime Minister such a plan was needed to access critical financing for developing capital projects within the Town.

The new Council recognizing the importance of this mandate sought to look at the development of the Town not only within the context of pursuing capital projects but also within a holistic and integrated development context and responded by hosting a Municipal Symposium in March 2006. A number of resource persons delivered presentations on various areas impacting the socio-economic development of the Town and sought to present solutions to improving the outlook of Town and the health and wellbeing of its residents and visitors alike. As a result of this Symposium, two (2) recommendations were made:

- (i) The establishment of a Steering Committee to advance the initiative of producing a Development Plan; and
- (ii) Due to the lack of adequate technical expertise and finance to pursue this exercise to the fullest extent, the Commonwealth Secretariat in the United Kingdom was been identified as a possible source for assisting with producing such a development plan.

The following outlines the contributions of the speakers and participants of that Symposium and the contributions of the many persons, since that Symposium was held, with whom I have had discussions about the need for a Development plan for Portsmouth.

**The development plan for Portsmouth must consider the following for inclusion in the body of that plan:**

## **ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL**

- Promotion good, transparent and accountable government (at the Council level).
- Promotion of prudent management of scarce financial resources which is important for future growth, prosperity and sustainability of the Town.
- Institutional strengthening and capacity building among Staff and Councilors to help create a forward thinking and progressive Council
- Institute programs to effectively collect land and house taxes which are a critical source of revenue to enable the Council and to engage in other activities to help generate additional sources revenues for the Council.
- Continue to work as a important partner of Central Government through the Local Government and Community Development Department
- Establish collaborative and bilateral social, economical and political partnerships with regional and extra-regional municipal governments including all municipalities named Portsmouth e.g. Portsmouth in the United Kingdom and Portsmouth in Virginia, United States of America.
- Encourage more people, particularly the youth, to participate in Council in order to bring new ideas and for continuity for the sustainable development of the Town.
- **Please note that next Council elections are due September/October 2008.**
- The promotion of moral and Christian values is important since a people without GOD at the helm are lost.
- Promote a safe and secure environment through Community Policing and Neighborhood Watch networks
- Collaborate with all stakeholders including business and civic leaders and the all residents generally to foster greater communication and trust between Council and the local population
- Expansion of the Portsmouth Town Council's Office by returning the entire building to the Council and relocating the Public Works Office to another location in the Town. Also take over all property belonging to the Council like the Old Fish Market and Old Library buildings
- Continue to collaborate with Ross University School of Medicine on areas of mutual interest such as the Picard Vendors Food Court, and creating Picard as a University Town.

## **ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION**

- Develop the economic climate of the Town by encouraging the establishment of employment creating businesses e.g. construction, marine services and shipping, yachting, information

technology, light manufacturing, heavy industries, hospitality and tourism, business and commercial services, agriculture and fishing.

- Re-establish Portsmouth as the centre for commerce for the north and northeast of the island, and in the future the economic and commercial capital of Dominica.
- Create commercial centers within the new development areas of the Town to include Chance, Picard, Pointe Ronde, and Cotton Hill, and elsewhere.
- Convert use of the Picard Industrial Estate into an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Park, and to establish industrial/commercial parks at One Mile for light manufacturing such as garment making, food and beverage production etc and services such as metal smiting, mechanic and body work, building supplies sales, offshore businesses services including ICT etc, and, Pointe Ronde for heavy industries such as boat building, dry docking, oil refining, manufacturing, etc.
- Encourage business community to establish a Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Council in Portsmouth.
- Encourage Government to establish an Investment and Tourism Information and Promotions Office in Portsmouth.
- Work closely with the hotel and tourism sector in the Town including stakeholders servicing the Ross University School of Medicine and yachting sector respectively to improve their services and facilities in order to benefit more from these dynamic economic activities.
- Development and expansion of the Portsmouth market to include
  1. Section for Craft and Souvenir Vendors. This would include acquisition of the vacant lot next to the market for the expansion of the market. This lot belongs to the Dominica Social Security and the expansion of the market to include craft vending and cultural centre similar to Old Market in Roseau is incumbent on its acquisition.
  2. Renovation of the Abattoir to include a cold storage facility. This could done through the Office of the Prime Minister by approaching either the Cubans, Venezuelans, Chinese or other friendly governments for assistance with this project
  3. Upgrading the vendors booth by installing electricity and pipe borne water
  4. Construction of a drop shed around the market to protect vendors from the weather
  5. Development of the courtyard between the abattoir and main building for use by vendors
  6. Clean up of the western side of the market and plant palms and possible place park benches in that area

7. Clean up of the northern side of the market facing the river and construction of a river defense wall to protect the market during river flooding and ground swells. This wall could extend to the Para Bridge thus providing protection for residents living along the river as well.
  8. Revise Market regulations for greater use of the market not only Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays but throughout the entire week.
- Develop the ICT sector to help create at least 1,000 sustainable jobs in the North in the short term by building the requisite infrastructure, providing an attractive investment package and providing the necessary training for persons interesting in careers in ICT and Call Centers.
  - Develop the Fishing industry by constructing a state of the art Fisheries Complex to European Union standards in order to export excess fish catch to the French West Indies and other regional and extra regional markets.
  - Develop the local tourism sector in order to benefit more from socio-economic benefits tourism brings with it. Tourism can make a significant contribution to employment and foreign exchange earnings. Opportunities are available in the supply of accommodation, food and beverage, adventure and recreation, transportation, attractions, travel trade, events and conferences, and tourism services
  - Develop the offshore services sector in areas of banking and finance, insurance, trusts, and Internet gaming among others

### **EDUCATION, HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & SPORTS**

Assist youngsters to find employment in the various sectors such as the Cruise Industry, Hospitality and Tourism, Agriculture, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) among others.

Develop an after school and youth development program to include sports and extra curricular activities such as remedial education, career and guidance counseling, family life education, drug awareness education, leadership skills development, youth skills development, participation in school clubs, promotion of hobbies, and development of various other skills

- Promote a strong foundation for children in Language, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies including good study and testing skills. Promote a buddy system among children for study support and an adult/child mentor program to help foster positive growth and development among youngsters. Also develop strong partnerships between parents, teachers and students through the establishment of Parent-Teachers-Students-Associations (PTSA) within schools

- Promote and enforce a Zero Tolerance approach to drug and alcohol abuse and promote abstinence from pre marital sexual activity among youngsters
- Establish a scholarship fund to assist needy as well as academically inclined children and to promote academic achievement among pre, primary, secondary and college school students
- Establish a college education program to source financial assistance and scholarships for students attending college both in Dominica and overseas in both academic and sports
- Pursue a sports program to promote various sporting disciplines including track and field, football/soccer, cricket, basketball, volleyball, scuba and sailing and new sports like base ball, lawn tennis and golf among others, and to develop the various existing sporting facilities, namely, Geest park, Benjamin's park, PSS playing field and new playing fields and hard courts
- Continue working with the various interest groups on the development of the Benjamin's Park. (NOTE: It must be noted that while some individuals are of the view that the Council is hostile to interest groups that is engaged in the development of pavilions and other facilities on the Park, this is not the case. The Council being the Local Government of the Town wishes to see more collaboration on these developments so that Councilors can make more informed statements on these developments if questioned by higher authorities, the media or residents of the Town.)
- Equip all schools with computer technology in keeping with developments in information and communication technology so that every child has the opportunity to become computer literate.
- Develop agricultural, entrepreneurial and tourism programs alongside ICT to cater to the new economic order and to create a workforce that is prepared to fit into the many jobs that has the potential to be created in these areas

### **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

- Establish an effective preventative health care program in collaboration with the Diagnostic Centre, the Portsmouth Hospital and Ross University School of Medicine (RUSM), and establish sustainable programs to create greater awareness of HIV AIDS and other STDS, and chronic non communicable diseases like diabetes, stress, hypertension etc
- Develop a management partnership of the Portsmouth Health District between RUSM and the Portsmouth Hospital
- Expand the Community Health Care program by reactivating the work of people like Dr. Makouke from Guadeloupe to include cooperation with other countries like Cuba for instance

- A housing development program for Chance, Georgetown and elsewhere in the Town to be undertaken in collaboration with the Parliamentary Representative and the Ministry responsible for Housing. Such houses to include low to middle income houses with bathroom and toilet and yard for playing and small vegetable plot to promote backyard gardening
- Promote and develop community festivals and events, in collaboration with the Northern District Community Base Organizations and Local Councils such as Carnival, Christmas Festival of Lights, St. Peter's feast, Fete Marine, Creole in the North among others. **This year the North Northeastern Tourism and Environmental Development Committee (NNETEDC) with the support of Honorable Ian Douglas is organizing Creole in the North (CITN) on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2008 in Portsmouth**
- Collaborate with existing programs on care for the elderly, feeding programs for the under privileged, work with the physically challenged etc
- Work with the Police and Fire and Ambulance to increase police patrols and to promote neighborhood watches to promote safety and security among neighborhoods and fight crime and to promote fire safety in the Town.
- Work with DOWASCO to improve water distribution in Portsmouth including increasing the number of fire hydrants around the municipality
- Work with DOMLEC to install additional street lights throughout the Town
- Construction of a Community Center to serve as a center for recreation and as a Hurricane Shelter
- Increase street patrols by the Police and activate the Community Policing Program and Neighborhood Watch network
- Develop a program to deal with the growing incidence of drug trafficking, drug abuse and associated/related crimes, as well as the increasing crime problem plaguing the community including juvenile delinquencies, child abuse and gender abuse
- Continued development of the Portsmouth Hospital to respond effectively to medical and health needs of the town
- Continue the Chance housing development:
  1. Development of roads, sidewalks, pipe borne water, electricity, fire hydrants
  2. Allocation of housing lots to low and middle income
  3. Complete construction of the houses started by Super Woods Products
  4. Develop of Park/Playground in the area

5. Continue to develop the Public Cemetery
6. Rehabilitate the Public Convenience
7. Continue road and other infrastructural developments

### **ENVIRONMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- Clean Up and Beautification program for the Town including waterways and forested areas
- Removal derelict vehicles and other white goods in the Town
- Landlords and households to improve the disposal of household generated waste and to clean empty lots
- Community to undertake a massive tree planting program in the Town
- Establish a Botanical Gardens in Portsmouth
- Source funding for the purchase a Tipper Truck for Council's use during projects undertaken in the Town
- Improve collection of garbage by Council Sanitary workers/engineers
- Removal of ship wrecks along Portsmouth's waterfront
- Plans for the development of compost sites in Portsmouth
- Status of the OPAAL Project – Site Implementation Entity (SIE)
- Seek to source and place litter bins around the Town

### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Roads, Sidewalks and Drainage Improvement Works for Portsmouth
- Establishment of One Way Traffic Lanes for Portsmouth Central Street
- The upgrading of the road from Cabrits Cruise Ship Berth/Cabrits National Park to Portsmouth central with appropriate sidewalks and street night lights
- The proposed bypass from Picard to One Mile (and possible impact on the Indian River)
- Roads, Sidewalks and Drainage Improvement Works for Portsmouth
- Establishment of One Way Traffic Lanes for Portsmouth Central Street
- Plans for the upgrading of the road from Cabrits Cruise Ship Berth/Cabrits National Park to Portsmouth central with appropriate sidewalks and street night lights
- Status on proposal submitted for the construction of a dinghy dock at Purple Turtle beach to complement the yacht mooring buoys recently installed. This is important to encourage increased disembarkation by yacht crew and passengers

- Plans for the development of Borough's Square to include the construction of a vendors building in the area occupied by Ma Hosie, and upgrading of the building currently used by the Northern District Progressive Women's Club (NDPWC) as a restaurant. Placement of park benches and redevelopment of the Portsmouth jetty as a dinghy dock
- Plans for the Japanese financed Fisheries Complex and Bay front development for Portsmouth
- Plans for proposed bypass from Picard to One Mile (and possible impact on the Indian River)
- The implementation of one way roads in Portsmouth – Bay Street, Harbour Lane and Rodney Street
- Plans for developing a Sewerage system for Portsmouth

### **TOURISM**

- working with the Portsmouth Indian River Tour Guides Association – Environmental Action Group (PIRTGA-EAG) on the development of the Indian River Tour Dispatch Area
- Strengthen ties between Council and stakeholders including local groups like North North-Eastern Tourism & Environment Development Committee (NNETEDC), Portsmouth Indian River Tour Guides Association – Environmental Action Group (PIRTGA-EAG), Central Government and local, regional and international Municipal Councils such as Councils in Guadeloupe and Martinique and Councils with the name Portsmouth as well as institutions and organizations like Ross University School of Medicine(which is of paramount importance to the economy of the Town) , the private sector and rest of civil society
- Efforts by the Dominica Port Authority Special committee on the rehabilitation of the Groins at the Indian River.
- Implementation of a marine programme including placement of yacht mooring buoys and provision of marine management support of yacht patrols at night, collection of fees for use of mooring buoys by the Portsmouth Association of Yacht Security (PAYS), and provision of support for providers of yacht services in the harbor
- Work in collaboration with both Dominican and Guadeloupian interests in hosting the following two marine events the Triangle D'Emeraude and La Route De La Dissidence
- Explore feasibility of building a single mega cruise ship dock at Borough's Square
- Development of a boardwalk up the River to the Indian River Bush Bar
- Plans for upgrading visitor center/tour guides building at Indian River to include parking lot and expansion of the Tourist reception facility

- Plans for greater dialogue and involvement with Portsmouth Indian River Tour Guides Association – Environmental Group (PIRTGA-EAG) and Portsmouth Association for Yacht Security (PAYS) and other stakeholders on the yachting business in the harbour
- Plans for dealing with visitor harassment and other crimes and community policing
- Status on the Coconut Beach Hotel
- Status of the Crews Inn (Trinidad) Hotel and Marina project for Cabrits
- Plans for the upgrading of the Cabrits Cruise Ship Berth and Terminal Facilities to either facilitate larger cruise ships or accommodate mega yachts
- Status on the rehabilitation of the Officer's quarters and other historical facilities at the Cabrits National Park and proposed heritage theme park
- Plans for refurbishing the Cabrits Interpretive Centre at the entrance to Fort Shirley at the Cabrits National Park
- **Need for the collection and publishing of yacht statistics by the Central Statistics Office of the Ministry Of Finance in collaboration with the Immigration Department of the Commonwealth of Dominica Police Force. Such data to include: number of yachts arriving, number of crew, number of passengers, number of coastwise permits issued, length of time in port, number of crimes reported, number of crimes resolved**
- Plans for Reunion celebrations in Portsmouth. There is a plan for a 2010 Reunion for Portsmouth:
  1. Planning Fete Mawen Gwan T'anse in Portsmouth/ Fete La Saint Pierre
  2. Planning a Portsmouth Reunion in 2010 inviting Portsmouth people living around Dominica and in the Diaspora to return to Portsmouth to celebrate
  3. Possibility of Portsmouth being chosen as the venue for Heritage Day 2010
  4. Planning of Creole In The North (CITN) by NNETEDC in collaboration with the Parliamentary Representative, Portsmouth Town Council, Dominica Hotel & Tourism Association (DHTA) and Society for Heritage and Architectural Preservation and Enhancement (SHAPE)
  5. Planning the Tout Moun Sports Festival
  6. Planning the Portsmouth Town Council Christmas Carol Festival
  7. Northern Youth Rally

#### **LAND REFORM**

- Plans for the acquiring of lands belonging Cylma Dupigny, Frank Baron, Forest Estates, the Garraways and any other idle lands for the expansion of the town in terms of creating additional

space for housing lots, and for commercial and manufacturing development and for Government's proposed Administrative building in Portsmouth to house the Police Station, Court House, Sub Treasury, Post Office, Social Security office, Parliamentary Representative Office, Ministry of Education Portsmouth office, and a parking lot

- Plans for the purchase of lands around the Indian River to make the Indian River a nature preserve and development of a boardwalk trail from Glanvillia along the river
- Land for housing, recreation, tourism development etc

### **MARINE CONSIDERATIONS**

- Redevelopment of the groin at Indian River and slipway where boats have traditionally careened for boat repairs
- Work with Fishermen operating on the Bay to organize in a Fisheries Cooperative
- Follow up with the relevant authorities on the status of the proposed Japanese Bay front Development Project which includes a Fisheries Complex and a Bay front Promenade from the Market to the Indian River, which should also include the rehabilitation of the Portsmouth jetty
- Work with the relevant authorities to source assistance for the removal of the wrecks on the Bay front
- Continue working with the Portsmouth Indian River Tour Guides in providing good services to charters and cruisers
- Greater collaboration with Port, Customs and Coast Guard, possibly set up a Coast Guard base in Portsmouth
- Possible use of Cabrits for Ferry Service between Guadeloupe and Dominica
- Marina development
- Youth sailing program and Annual Sailing Regatta example Independence Sailing Regatta to include traditional canoe races, and small boat races as was done in the past. This could be sponsored by Kubuli Beer
- Establish Yacht Club in Portsmouth
- Strengthen Dominica Boat Owners and Operators Association to market and ship products competitively overseas and to improve their fleet and crew

### **OTHERS**

- Establish a green city policy along Green Globe lines and seek to get benchmark from Green Globe and similar accrediting agencies.

- Promote use of renewable energy such as solar energy
- Establish green spaces
- Encourage construction of energy efficient and adaptable buildings etc
- Encourage development of pedestrian promenades etc
- Establish enforce strict litter laws

## **CONCLUSION**

Residents and the public and private sectors must work at all times in collaboration with Portsmouth Town Council, to engage in meaningful and ongoing dialogue on issues affecting the Town. This participatory approach will certainly augur well for the Town's future and will improve relations and TRUST among all concerned. While all the ideas that have been presented are important, there is the need to prioritize the more important and realistic ones for the development of the Town aimed at improving the wealth, health and well being of its residents. The need to identify what is priority and consulting everyone will also provide an all inclusive platform that will give residents an opportunity to contribute to the development of the plan for the future of the Town that we all seek to achieve for the Town.