

Carl:

Mike Bass

Mike Bass:

We are going to be talking with/ and he is going to tell us about his project here in Freeport, and how he got to the Bahamas. I first came here in 1969. I played professional football for some ten years, and during my first year or so, between ballgames, I took a short trip here and the ^{international} atmosphere and people were very nice, and of course the weather was fantastic in comparison to where I was raised - Lansing, Michigan, where it gets awfully, awfully cold. However, because of the ease in getting here, and the weather and the people, etc., all of these things were factors that encouraged my looking for potential investments here in Freeport, and I was fortunate to meet nice people, and of course, people who were enthused about football; and so we had something in common. I was interested in the area and the opportunities that appear to be available here, and I purchased some land here just as so many other people did; however, as I continued in football my expertise in the area of real estate got better and better and I became more interested in improved property; apartment buildings, office buildings, etc., which I did have in Washington, and so I began to look in Freeport for those types of opportunities and I was fortunate enough to find the Channel House here, across from Holiday Inn, and I acquired this building in 1974, with the idea of selling the units as condominiums. I liked the building so much I wanted to find some way to retain it, and so I developed a club - a club type approach, which is a form of resort-time sharing. Being a black in Freeport, and understanding some of the plights we have the opportunity to travelers is something new to a lot of us, so if there was a way to afford not only blacks, but just about everybody, that opportunity through a program that reduced accommodation costs - of course, more and more people would travel. I have kinda settled here in Freeport, even though I am sort of a tourist, and at this point I call Freeport my home. I retired from ^{professional} football with the Washington Red Skins in 1976, and I was in a hustle and bustle for a couple of years and finally I said, well, this is where I want to be so why don't I do something about it. I actually made the move, lock, stock and barrel with the idea of concentrating on the promotion of the Channel House Resort Club. It is going very well, as a matter of fact, and we have been able to save our members fifty to sixty percent on their accommodations costs, and as you are well aware with the inflations factor, that savings is going to be greater as time goes by. ~~It was~~ There are three important things ^{people in} ~~about~~ real estate have to say about ~~values and~~ property and its value, and those three things are - location, location and location. I am fortunate in being in a very good location especially with the increased interest by the government and the development that is going on in the area - the proximity to the beach, the golf course being across the street; the fact that our members have free green fees at the Bahama Reef Golf Country Club, the Bourbon Street entertainment shopping area that is being planned right now is just 30 or 40 yds. from our property, so I feel that the Channel House has an awful lot to offer, mainly, a home atmosphere away from home for our vacationers. Being a small

(interview with Mike Bass of the Channel House Resort)

resort, we of course don't have the many problems that the larger resorts have, and our guests feel just like guests, instead of being packed in like sardines, and that has proved to be a great boom for us with people who come to the resort itself. It's a little difficult to pass this on to people who haven't seen the resort so we hope with proper marketing and worrying of brochures, we can actually put down in words those things we feel inside about the resort and maybe get across ^{some of} those things that the people who have stayed here feel about the resort.

Carl:

Where did you go to school, Mike?

Mike:

University of Michigan. I graduated in 1967, and quit playing football in 1976.

Carl:

So you are really in the market to go in for real estate in a big way.

Mike:

Well, I came here to relax so I try to keep away from a lot of things that are going to cause a lot of tension, you might say. This project is my baby, and I can feel very, very comfortable being able to provide the vacation opportunities that I want to provide, and at the same time, not getting myself tied into that hustle and bustle world that I was tied into before.

Carl:

You certainly are ideally situated here, as you say, to the beach and to the forth-coming Bourbon Street Shopping Center, and the new Casino, so the action will be moving back down this way.

Mike:

I was here when the old Casino was here, and I've weathered the storm of the bad times, etc., and I obviously am very interested in this area and Freeport. As a matter of fact, I coach a local football team. It is the Eight Mile Rock Crushers, who for the first time in its history in 1979 we won the championship ^{of} for the Bahamas, as well as the All Star game, played a few weeks later, and it was the first time that any Freeport or Grand Bahama team has won any kind of championship in football.