

# Govt Throws Support Behind Major Project | CARIBARENA ANTIGUA

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Antigua St John's - The turning of the soil on Harbour Island at Jolly Harbour on Thursday afternoon heralded the start of a major economic boost for Antigua & Barbuda. So said Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer as he addressed the ground-breaking ceremony.

In dismissing the notion that the government would take any project that comes along, Spencer said when the idea was conceived for the project, it generated much discussion and debate.

"We examined the pros and cons," the PM said. "We asked questions. We drilled those involved. We did not take anything for granted, and we see that those involved are serious individuals with a burning desire to get things going to drive the economy. We did not just do this because we were looking for a project. The economy and our tourism plant need it at this time, and the government is fully on board to make this a workable project. The project will inject some life, some blood into the economy and we

saw it made sense at this time to go forward."

Parliamentary Representative Hilson Baptiste, encouraging future projects, assured investors that Antigua & Barbuda's crime rate is the lowest in the region, and the country is one of the safest places to invest in.

He however cautioned about the importance about having sound sustainable resource management procedures in place going forward. He also urged the investors to engage the skills of locals as much as possible, especially those from St Mary's South.

"These workers will be the greatest watchmen/women of your business," he said. "Get these hardworking men and women and put them to work so that they will be able to feed their families. This is very important."

Adam Barrett, chief executive officer of Stanhope Shepard Limited, said the government's support for the project has been tremendous, and paves the way for a sound partnership that will continue to bear fruits.

The project is the largest to be mounted in Jolly Harbour since the property was built 20 years ago.

The ground-breaking ceremony was attended by the strategic partners of the project, including Brian D'Ornellas –partner in OBM, and Bruce Ramsey of Heirloom Caribbean Real Estate Fund (HCRES).



Ramsey, meanwhile, said he was proud to say that the Harbour Island Development is the first project to be funded by the HCRES, following its formation two years ago, with the objective to invest across the Caribbean in a diverse range of properties.

D'Ornellas said the project will comprise some 300 apartments and villas, with access to all the



amenities including swimming pools and boat moorings.

He said they have been informed of all the environmental prerequisites, which they will honour, and he is confident with the sound financial backing

for a project of this magnitude.

Albert Hartog, of Caribbean Developments Antigua Limited, said this project demonstrates the investors` belief in the potential of the country, and urged other investors to follow their example.

He noted that Jolly Harbour is not just a collection of houses, but a community of people who have made a decision to call it home. He urged the Harbour Island development project developers/investors to listen to the people and address any issue of concern in a professional manner.

