

# BAL HARBOUR

- V I L L A G E -

OFFICE OF THE VILLAGE MANAGER

LETTER TO COUNCIL

NO. 078-2021

To: Mayor Gabriel Groisman and Members of the Village Council

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez, Village Manager

Date: June 2, 2021

Subject: **Follow Up - Open Carry Incident**

The purpose of this Letter to Council (LTC) is to provide you with follow up information relating to the recent open carry incident that transpired in our community.

On January 11, 2021, Bal Harbour Police Department arrested Michael David Taylor for openly carrying firearms while walking on Collins Avenue. Mr. Taylor was carrying an AR-15 rifle, Glock pistol, and tactical backpack with several high-capacity magazines as well as an inoperable fishing pole. Mr. Taylor claimed to be traveling to a "lawful" fishing expedition which allows for openly carrying firearms under Florida statute [790.25(3)(h)]. However, at the time, pursuant to the Village's Emergency Order, fishing was prohibited.

On May 23, 2021, Mr. Taylor posted a YouTube video encouraging his followers to join him on June 5 or June 6, 2021 in Bal Harbour for a fishing expedition while openly carrying a firearm or rifle. Mr. Taylor instructs some of his followers to meet in a parking lot in the Town of Surfside and the others to meet in Haulover. At some point, the group will merge and convene at the Bal Harbour Jetty. As a result of the expiration of the Emergency Order, there is no legal provision or statute that would restrict anyone from fishing or openly carry while fishing.

As always, the safety of our community is paramount. The Bal Harbour Police Department, in conjunction with Surfside, Bay Harbor Islands, Indian Creek and Miami-Dade Police Department have devised an action plan for this upcoming weekend which ensures the integrity and safety of our communities. Additionally, we have consulted with the Miami-Dade State Attorneys' Office to equip our officers with the appropriate legal guidance.

The Bal Harbour Police Department and our law enforcement partners will have enhanced police staffing to respond to any issues that may arise. At this time, there is no indication that would suggest Mr. Taylor is affiliated with any anti-Semitic or any other hate groups.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me or Chief Flowers directly.

JMG/RF/ME/DM