

BAL HARBOUR

- V I L L A G E -

OFFICE OF THE VILLAGE MANAGER

LETTER TO COUNCIL

NO. 093-2021

TO: Mayor Gabriel Groisman and Members of the Village Council

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, Village Manager

DATE: June 29, 2021

SUBJECT: **Updates Regarding the Champlain Tower South Condominium Partial Building Collapse in the Town of Surfside**

The purpose of this Letter to Council (LTC) is to provide you with an update to several items resulting from the partial building collapse of the Champlain Tower South Condominium located in the Town of Surfside. The tragic collapse of this building has required many communities, especially those in coastal areas such as ours, to revisit their building development and review processes.

Safety is one of the pillars of *The Bal Harbour Experience*, and our vision rests on a foundation based on ensuring that both the perception and reality of safety in our community remains uncompromised. As such, I have tasked our Building Official to develop a strategic approach for reviewing our current inventory of buildings, which are covered under Miami-Dade County Section 8-11 (f) Recertification of Buildings and Components. This County code section requires that any building (other than single family, duplex or minor structures) that is greater than 2,000 square feet conduct a recertification process 40 years from the original Certificate of Occupancy (CO) date, and every 10 years thereafter.

In Bal Harbour Village, there are a total of 52 buildings which meet this criterion, and of these, 17 are oceanfront high-rise buildings along Collins Avenue. The remaining 35 properties include 27 smaller multi-family buildings along the west side of Collins Avenue and inside the Gated Residential Section. Finally, the Bal Harbour Shops, including Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus, Bal Harbour Village Hall and the SunTrust Bank property are also included within the inventory of buildings covered by Miami-Dade County Code Section 8-11(f).

A cursory review of all these buildings indicates that several of these buildings either do not meet the required age threshold, and therefore, are not yet required to conduct their first recertification or they have already complied with the required recertification process. However, in light of the recent events, our Building Department will immediately take the following actions:

**Updates Regarding the Champlain Tower South
Condominium Partial Building Collapse
in the Town of Surfside**

1. Conduct a site visit to access of all 52 buildings covered under Miami-Dade County Section 8-11(f). This assessment will focus on determining whether there are any immediate risks to life safety.
2. Deliver a notice to all 52 buildings confirming that they are subject to Section 8-11(f) of the Miami Dade County Code and advising them of their requirements and responsibilities under that section.
3. Immediately issue a Notice of Required Inspection to those buildings which have not yet completed their recertification process. This notice sets in motion a timeline for satisfactory completion of this process, with an initial report due no later than 90 days from the receipt of the notice and full remediation due within 150 days of the notice.

We will work closely with each of the buildings in our community and their representatives to ensure timely compliance and provide assistance where possible. As we have received inquiries from several parties, a press release will be issued to advise of the Village's actions and address any questions the media or other stakeholders may have.

In addition to the Building Department actions, there are several other efforts that we have undertaken in light of the tragic events that transpired in Surfside, including:

- **Establishment of Family Assistance Center in Bal Harbour** - Under the leadership of Bal Harbour Village and Hotel General Manager Raj Singh, the Sea View Hotel will be utilized by federal, state and local service organizations as a "Family Assistance Center" to provide aide for any displaced residents, as well as support services for family members awaiting news of their loved ones. This center will serve as a one-stop location with a number of service agencies available to assist in a number of areas, such as, housing assistance, transportation, spiritual support and crisis counseling.
- **Traffic impacts to our community** - Under the incident command system (ICS) model, Miami-Dade County has jurisdiction over traffic management. Due to on-site operations, several street closures in and around Surfside have impacted traffic in our community. The Bal Harbour Police Department continues to work with Miami-Dade County Police to mitigate impacts to our community, but patience will be required, as traffic will continue to be impacted over the next several days. As this is a fluid situation, changes are constantly being made. However, as of today, any resident in the 33154 zip code will be allowed access into Surfside through 96th and Abbott and Harding Avenues upon showing a photo ID indicating proof of their residential address. All other vehicles will be required to utilize alternate routes north to 163rd Street or west to Biscayne Boulevard.

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- **Special Events** – As a sign of respect to the 33154 community, we have cancelled all scheduled special events, including the recent Symphony by the Seas Concert Series on Sunday, June 27, as well as the Independence Day Fireworks scheduled for July 4, 2021. We join other communities who have also cancelled their 4th of July events and fireworks, including the Cities of Surfside, Miami Beach and North Bay Village. Sunny Isles Beach and Key Biscayne had no planned events or fireworks so it appears as if there will not be any fireworks on the beaches of any coastal community in Miami-Dade County.
- **Declaration of a Local State of Emergency** – Given the active role our community is playing in the response to this unfortunate tragedy, I have issued a Local State of Emergency effective June 28, 2021, which will allow us to access state and federal resources and reimbursements. A copy of the Declaration is attached for your information and reference.

Due to the very fluid nature of this situation, every effort is being made to provide residents with information that impacts the Village as soon as it is available via the Village’s communications channels. We remain committed to working alongside our local law enforcement, municipal and County partners to ensure an effective and efficient response to this unfortunate tragedy.

We continue to offer the Surfside community our support and prayers during this very difficult time. Should you have any questions or need any additional information, please feel free to contact me directly.

BAL HARBOUR

- V I L L A G E -

BAL HARBOUR VILLAGE DECLARATION OF A LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, at approximately 1:30 AM on Thursday, June 24, 2021, the Champlain Towers South, a multi-story beachfront condominium located at 8777 Collins Avenue, Surfside, Florida partially collapsed;

WHEREAS, the structural collapse of the building has resulted in fatalities, and in excess of a hundred individuals are currently unaccounted for; and

WHEREAS, a substantial portion of the structure has been destroyed and the remainder of the structure has been rendered uninhabitable; and

WHEREAS, the Bal Harbour Police Department, in addition to the Miami-Dade Police Department and Miami-Dade Fire Department first responders, immediately deployed to the scene of the collapse to assist Surfside Police Department in lifesaving efforts to residents; and

WHEREAS, search and rescue of the victims, efforts to locate people still unaccounted for, and family reunification operations are still ongoing;

WHEREAS, the Bal Harbour Police Department personnel are playing a major ongoing role in providing 24-hour traffic control, and providing support for the family reunification center and logistical support; and it is anticipated that this support will continue to allow on-scene first responders to complete their mission; and

WHEREAS, a portion of the response operation is imminently relocating to a hotel in the Village, further involving the Village and impacting the community; and

WHEREAS, because of the foregoing conditions, Governor DeSantis declared a State of Emergency, and Miami-Dade Mayor Cava declared a Miami-Dade County Declaration of Local State of Emergency on June 24, 2021 effective in both incorporated and unincorporated areas; and

WHEREAS, as the Bal Harbour Village Manager, I am responsible to support the public safety challenges presented to the Village and its people by this emergency;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JORGE M. GONZALEZ, as the Bal Harbour Village Manager, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Chapter 252.38(3)(a) Florida Statutes and Bal Harbour Village Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2 Administration, Article VIII. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (as detailed therein).

Section 1: I declare a state of emergency exists for Bal Harbour Village.

Section 2: Pursuant to this Declaration, further orders may be issued to protect the

health, safety, and welfare of Bal Harbour Village which are authorized by the above-referenced provisions of Florida Statutes and Village Code.

Section 4: A written notice of this declaration shall be posted upon the main bulletin board in Village Hall as promptly as practical. A notice of a State of Emergency, or emergency measure declared or ordered and promulgated by virtue of Florida Statutes shall be filed with the Office of the Village Clerk. In addition, representatives of the Village shall notify the local media and residents as soon as possible and, in the manner, most practical and expeditious of the emergency and any measures established pursuant to it.

Section 5: This Declaration of Emergency will continue in effect from day to day until (i) declared to be terminated by the Village Council if practicable, or (ii) certified by the Village Manager that the conditions leading to or causing the emergency no longer exist and the Village's agencies and departments are able to manage the situation without extraordinary assistance, in accordance with Bal Harbour Village Code Section 2-355.

Enacted:

Signed:


Village Manager

Date: June 28, 2021 Time: 12:00 PM

WITNESS:

