

# Commission of Inquiry into Historic Losses of Land in Bermuda

## PUBLIC NOTICE Hearing of Evidence

Pursuant to the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1935, this Commission of Inquiry was established on 31st October 2019 by the Premier, the Honourable E. David Burt JP MP. The Commission has been directed to inquire into historic losses of citizens' property in Bermuda, in keeping with the mandate of the House of Assembly as expressed in its Resolution of 4th July 2014.

As part of its mandate, and based on the evidence it will hear, the Commission will make recommendations to the Government of Bermuda that may compensate for historic land losses. The Commission may also refer cases to the Director of Public Prosecutions where appropriate, and/or may make recommendations that might forestall future land losses by any unlawful or irregular means.

As the Commission is not a court of law, it will not issue any orders that will address individual land losses, except as part of a result of a systemic cause, nor will it attempt to provide an individual remedy for any loss.

Given the uncertainty caused by the onset of the current health pandemic, the Commission delayed its initial hearing date of 19th March until such time as the Government of Bermuda deemed it safe for persons to assemble. The Commission also adjusted the date by which persons seeking standing, or who had anecdotal information but who did not wish to seek standing, could submit documentation. The initial deadline in March was tentatively shifted to 30th May 2020. The latter date was adjusted to 8th June 2020 but, in light of reported challenges encountered by members of the community who sought to access relevant documents, the Commission communicated that the deadline would be extended until 30th June 2020. Finally, in order to accommodate further requests for extensions, the Commission determined that the final deadline for submissions would be 23rd July 2020.

Concomitantly, the Commission determined that its public hearings of evidence will be held as follows:

- (1) Expert/independent witnesses will offer testimony at hearings in commencing on Tuesday, 8th September 2020, possibly lasting until Friday, 11th September 2020. A schedule of the dates and times at which expert/independent testimony will be heard will be published on the Commission website.
- (2) The evidentiary hearings for persons who sought standing with the Commission will take place from Monday, 19th October 2020, possibly through Friday, 13th November 2020. Such persons will be notified in writing by the Commission of the specific dates and times set aside to hear their evidence.

All hearings will take place at the Grotto Bay Hotel, Blue Hole Hill, Hamilton Parish. Unless notice to the contrary is given, the daily sessions will last from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., and will resume from 2:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m.

Although the hearings are open to the public, all attendees will be expected to adhere strictly to Government health guidelines. That is, masks must be worn by all attendees, hand-sanitizing directions must be followed and physical distance must be observed. The Commission reserves the right to restrict access to the hearings should the maximum number of persons permitted in the facility be achieved.

To the extent possible, the Commission will ensure that its proceedings are recorded and/or live-streamed.

Information regarding the Commission, including its mandate, its Members, the Rules of the Commission, dates of hearings and other significant Commission documents may be viewed on the Commission's website. The address of the website is [historiclandlosscoi.bm](http://historiclandlosscoi.bm).

Justice Mrs. Norma Wade-Miller OBE JP  
Chair, Commission of Inquiry