

Minister Davis presented a “status report” of the position of certain agencies, initiatives and projects in which the Ministry of Works is presently involved.

He said with the exception of the necessary research to ensure that provisions do not conflict with the Electricity Act as it relates to the licensing of electrical contractors, the draft legislation for the Contractor’s Bill is substantially complete. He expressed hope for the matter to be put on the Agenda of the House of Assembly in a matter of months.

Minister Davis announced that a team of officers has been given responsibility to identify and implement an electronic solution to the inconvenience to clients for the application and approval process for plans and to the shortage of space for drawings at the Buildings Control Division of the Ministry in Nassau.

“Managers and technical personnel from various stakeholder agencies recently travelled to the Miami-Dade, Florida, billing department for a first-hand view of their electronic system,” he said. “As a result, a team at the Buildings Control Division is presently preparing a Request for Proposals, which, is expected to result in a major enhancement of the process for building permit approval.”

The following goals are expected to be achieved as a result of the solution:

- 1) A significant reduction in the time required to process building permit applications;
- 2) A major reduction in the storage needs of the Buildings Control Division;
- 3) The ability to submit Building Permit Applications electronically, including electronic versions of drawings. Concerns about copyright

protection will be addressed by the embedding of appropriate access security levels within the system. Applicants will also be allowed to submit the drawings in PDF format.

4) In the future, applicants will be able to pay building permit fees online.

He provided an overview of projects in the northern Bahamas. Among them were the following:

A solution to the Fishing Hole Road problem is being looked into. “As engineers, you would, I trust, understand that the implementation of the proper, fundamental solution will require a substantial investment in funding, manpower and time,” said Minister Davis.

An investigation into the Water Cay Dock near East Grand Bahama, extensively damaged during Hurricane Sandy in October, 2012 concluded that the existing dock is not structurally sound and poses a hazard to the residents of Water Cay, the Minister said. He explained that in addition to being an eyesore, it is in a state of total disrepair. “There is no decking in place; the exterior supporting joists have been compromised; and, the bolts that hold the interior joist systems in place are extensively corroded,” he added.

Minister Davis told the engineers that it has been concluded that the beach erosion along the shoreline of Smith’s point Seawall is “aggressively” progressive and installation of a seawall is warranted and long overdue. “The erosion to the land is significant at the site. It has been recommended that a 1,500 feet long cantilevered sheet piled wall with capping beam be constructed at the site,” he said. He stated that a six foot wide sidewalk would be constructed at the top of the wall. Three sections of steps to the beach would be provided along the wall length, with an access ramp for disabled persons at the western end of the scheme.

“Initial thoughts are that the wall would be positioned two to three feet inland, away from the high water level. Site constraints may not allow for this positioning. The exact wall position and alignment is to be confirmed at the detailed design stage. It is planned that no highway realignment would be required.”

Mr. Davis said the scheme is estimated to cost between one and one half to two million dollars.