



Monday, May 12, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Just prior to 4am this morning an agreement was made between the Police Department, the Health Department and the legal representative for the Cannonier Watson family to take a recess and resume conversations about how best to proceed, with what we understand to be an unprecedented situation, later today. Once that agreement was made all attending media and supporters left the property outside of the Cannonier Watson residence and, after a long and taxing exercise, the police officers on duty were allowed to go home. It was also agreed that two fresh police officers were set to remain overnight to ensure that no one came in or out of the residence, since the family had yet to receive the results of their arrival tests. Assurances were given by the Deputy Commissioner of the Police Department that no further efforts would be made, at this juncture, to enter the home of the Cannonier Watson family or to arrest any of the family members once the media and supporters left.

What was determined during the numerous conversations that took place between the legal representative, the family, the Health Department and the Police Department is that there is discretion in the legal framework created for matters of this nature.

In the Quarantine Act under the section titled Police Powers it states the following:

Where a Health Officer gives an order, instruction or condition to a traveller or conveyance operator in connection with the exercise of his functions under this Act and the traveller or conveyance operator fails or refuses to comply with such order, instruction or condition, the Health Officer **may**, with the assistance of a police officer, arrest a traveller or conveyance operator and charge with an offence...

Further down in that same section the following is stated:

A traveller or conveyance operator who is arrested under this section **may** be placed in isolation until such time as a Government Medical Officer acting on the instructions of the Chief Medical Officer has determined that the travellers state of health is such as not to pose a risk of **significant** harm to public health.

While also supporting the fact that there is discretion, this statement clearly reflects the legal test which is to prove that the family poses a risk of significant harm to public health.



At the moment, no one knows the health status of the family members, because they have yet to reveal that information to anyone officially. What we do know is that, in accordance with current travel regulations, they all took tests before travelling home and each of them received negative results. We also know that, upon arrival to the island, they complied and took arrival tests and those results are all negative as well.

Because their arrival test results were negative, as anticipated, that, in and of itself, would appear to be sufficient evidence, at this point, to suggest that the family is far from posing any risk of significant harm to the community. Particularly any harm that warrants the Health Department exercising discretion in the manner we saw last night when they arrived at the Cannonier Watson residence unannounced with the support of 13 police officers, a number that grew considerably as time elapsed, in an effort to arrest the family, including their young children who were all in bed and obviously fatigued after a day of travelling, in an effort to forcibly put them in a hotel facility, that they would ultimately be responsible for paying for. Based on the act, both reasonableness and appropriate discretion is required prior to engaging in such a heavy handed response.

We also know that the family have, in their possession, documents from K.E.M.H. to prove that they have antibodies for the coronavirus based on multiple tests that they all took earlier this year. As a family they have a history of maintaining extremely healthy lifestyles. Both Michael and Sophia (parents) are movement and holistic health practitioners, and their children actively participate in all the modalities they teach.

Although there was aggression in the initial approach, we are very thankful for the Health Department personnel and the Police Officers who were all respectful and amicable throughout the proceedings. We also appreciate the fact that they worked together with Marc Daniels, who represented the Cannonier Watson family legally, to bring about a fair and rational resolution that allowed the family, the officers, the health department personnel and the numerous people who showed up in support of the family, to get some much needed rest at home.

