

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR APRIL 5, 2016 7:32 PM

Bal Harbour Shops enhancement plan

Last year, the family owned Bal Harbour Shops celebrated its 50th anniversary, going from an industry outsider that made a risky bet on luxury retail to one of the world's most productive shopping centers. We have continued to thrive over the decades, even as South Florida's broader luxury retail market has grown exponentially.

Along the way, the Shops elevated the Bal Harbour brand to a household name across the globe, drawing visitors, investors and new residents to our community.

Bal Harbour Shops opened for business in 1965 on what had been prisoner-of war barracks during World War II. The conventional wisdom then was to build sprawling indoor mega-malls, but we felt that many shoppers were actually looking for an intimate outdoor shopping experience offering hard-to-find premier brands.

The Shops quickly gained a dedicated following among clients and retailers who embraced the indoor/outdoor shopping experience, which highlights South Florida's natural beauty. Today, Bal Harbour Shops features more than 100 of the world's premier luxury brands, plus local favorites like Books & Books and Carpaccio.

Looking to the future, our family business is planning thoughtful enhancements to the Shops that will keep us on the forefront of luxury retail. This privately funded enhancement plan will also provide more than \$127 million in benefits to Bal Harbour Village, including a brand new Village Hall.

However, the plan cannot move forward without action from Bal Harbour's mayor and village council.

My hope is that they will have the foresight — and the fortitude — at their upcoming April 13 meeting to give Bal Harbour residents the right to vote on the Shops' Enhancement Plan and associated sale of the current Village Hall, which is necessary for the plan to move forward.

STANLEY WHITMAN,

FOUNDER/DEVELOPER,

BAL HARBOUR SHOPS



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