

Tiki Bar—NOT open for business

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From happier times...The much-anticipated Tiki Bar late April opening won't be happening in 2018.

Solomons, MD - For the first time since the early 1980s there will be no huge party on Solomons Island to mark the seasonal opening of the world-famous Tiki Bar. The watering hole's opening day meant hordes of happy revelers headed the Southern Calvert community, long lines of thirsty people waiting for the bar's signature Mai Tai, loud bands, the arrival of King Neptune and a heavy police presence. Unless the date was Good Friday, the Tiki Bar's opening was always the third Friday in April. With April 20 looming, the bar which is currently up for sale, is not ready to reopen.

"There's a good chance it could open this summer," real estate broker Dennis Murphy told TheBayNet.com., adding that the seasonal opening was most unlikely to occur within the April 20 time-frame.

The bar's future became clouded last Sept. 19 when sole owner Terry A. Clarke passed away suddenly at the age of 54. For several years, the Tiki Bar had generated annual revenue estimated between \$1.2 to \$1.4 million during its seven months of operation.

Murphy, whose Anne Arundel County-based firm Murphy Commercial Real Estate is handling the sale of the bar on behalf of Clarke's estate and Clarke's widow, Lisa, said that when the sale was first made public there was considerable interest from certain parties who wanted to lease the bar for the purpose of opening it for the late April event. However, Murphy stated that the current ownership is not interested in leasing the property.

"Obviously, there's going to be disappointment," said Murphy, who added he has detected a lot of interest in the Solomons Island landmark since it went up for sale.

A spokesman for the Calvert County Sheriff's Office has confirmed that employment of the agency's annual strategy for the third Friday in April for Solomons and the surrounding area is a no-go this year. In addition to assigning several deputies to the island and the vicinity of the bar plus conducting patrols, the local sheriff's office had participated in a designated driver promotion in connection with the opening weekend.

Calvert County Department of Economic Development (DED) Director Kelly Robertson-Slagle said that local government officials have been in touch with Murphy about the progress made in finding a buyer for the Tiki Bar. Department officials have also discussed the matter with the Solomons Business Association. "There has been feedback on both sides," Robertson-Slagle told TheBayNet.com. Noting that a significant number of out-of-county and out-of-state residents had booked rooms in area hotels in anticipation of the late-April Tiki Bar opening, Robertson-Slagle said local businesses were encouraged to inform visitors via web sites and Facebook that the bar's traditional opening would not be happening this year but that there would still be plenty to do in Solomons that weekend. "We certainly want them to have a good turnout," said Robertson-Slagle. "We are looking at this as a positive thing."

If and when a new owner for the Tiki Bar property is found, Robertson-Slagle said the DED will be ready to work with them to arrange a memorable grand opening.

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