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Key voice silent in Epstein testimony

State attorney brokered non-prosecution deal

Hannah Phillips
Palm Beach Post
USA TODAY NETWORK

House Democrats spearheading the Jeffrey Epstein hearing in West Palm Beach on May 12 won't say who they've asked to testify, but a lawyer who made the cut says one name should have topped their list.

"Barry Krischer," said attorney Spencer Kurvin, who represented three of Epstein's earliest victims. "Barry Krischer is the number one, first person I would call."



Krischer

Krischer, who did not respond to requests for comment, was the Palm Beach County State Attorney who helped broker the non-prosecution agreement that let Epstein escape federal charges.

"He has avoided scrutiny, he has avoided interviews, he has avoided testimony from all sources," Kurvin said. "He needs to speak on the record, under oath, regarding the decisions he made 20 years ago."

Krischer, equipped with the accounts of more than a dozen teenage girls, made the unusual decision to send the case to a grand jury instead of charging Epstein himself. His team of attorneys then alerted that proceeding toward a single prostitution charge.

Displeased by Krischer's failure to charge Epstein with child sex crimes, Palm Beach Police Chief Michael Ritter referred the case to the FBI. Two years later, then-South Florida U.S. Attorney Alex Acosta negotiated the much-maligned secret deal that let Epstein avoid federal prosecution.

The agreement hinged on Krischer adding a second charge: soliciting a minor for prostitution. Epstein pleaded guilty to both state charges, for

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Records: Epstein tips reported in PBC in 2001



The mansion owned by the late Palm Beach financier and sex offender Jeffrey Epstein was torn down in April 2021. But what happened there will be a focus of a congressional hearing in West Palm Beach on May 12. GREG LOVETT/PALM BEACH POST

As House Democrats prepare to hear from witnesses today, files show police probes began 3 years earlier than known

Hannah Phillips
Palm Beach Post
USA TODAY NETWORK

Democratic members of Congress are descending on West Palm Beach to hear testimony about Jeffrey Epstein's abuse and the failures that allowed him to continue.

Organizers behind the 10 a.m. May 12 hearing inside City Hall say they chose West Palm Beach for its proximity to Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago club, where some of Epstein's teenage victims were recruited.

However, records released early this year established the city as a hunting ground in its own right. The documents

Inside

House Oversight Committee faces gravity of Epstein case. [BA](#)

showed city police were tipped off to and probed into suspicious dealings at Epstein's now notorious mansion starting a quarter century ago.

The initial looks by police from two agencies, West Palm Beach and Palm Beach, predated investigations that led to a so-called sweetheart deal for Epstein. The wrist-slap prosecution remains a national and global scandal, and one that lured a select group of U.S. House Oversight Committee members

to West Palm Beach today.

In 2001, three years before what was previously believed to be the first tip to law enforcement, three students at Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach told city police that convicted Epstein cohort Ghislaine Maxwell had approached them on campus in search of "young, beautiful unmarried women" to work at Epstein's mansion.

The students — college roommates whose ages are not listed in the documents, but who were referred to as "girls" — said they went to Epstein's house in Palm Beach on several

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Trump: Ceasefire deal with Iran is 'on life support'

Stalemate in conflict sends oil prices higher

Nayera Abdallah, Elwely Elwely,
Laila Bassam and Idrees Ali
REPORTERS

President Donald Trump said May 11 that a ceasefire with Iran was "on life support" after he rejected Tehran's response to a U.S. peace proposal, fueling concerns of a resumption of hostilities in the 10-week-old conflict that has killed thousands and halted vital energy flows.

Days after Washington floated a proposal aimed at reopening negotiations, Iran on May 10 released a response focused on ending the war on all fronts, including Lebanon, where U.S. ally Israel is fighting Iran-backed Hezbollah militants. The response had been swiftly rejected by Trump and highlights how

the two sides are still far apart on a number of issues.

Asked May 11 where the ceasefire stands, Trump said "I would call it the weakest right now, after reading that piece of garbage they sent us. I didn't even finish reading it."

In its response, Tehran also demanded compensation for war damage, emphasized its sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, and called on the United States to end its naval blockade, guarantee no further attacks, lift sanctions and remove a ban on Iranian oil sales. The U.S. had proposed an end to fighting before starting talks on more contentious issues, including Iran's nuclear program.

Tehran defended its stance May 11.

"Our demand is legitimate: demanding an end to the war, lifting the [U.S.] blockade and piracy, and releasing

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An armored vehicle with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon patrols the southern Lebanese border area of Marjayoun on May 11. AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

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LOCAL

+ BUSINESS

Residents cite leaf blower noise

Gas-powered units remain top complaint in Delray Beach

John Pacenti
Palm Beach Post
USA TODAY NETWORK

The lure along Delray Beach's barrier island is the serenity of living next to the water, whether it be the Intracoastal or the Atlantic Ocean. Yet, too often, that

peace is interrupted by the roar of the gas-powered leaf blower.

For Hal Stern, president of the Delray Beach Property Owners' Association, leaf blowers remain a top complaint of residents.

"They're ubiquitous," he said. "There's not a day that goes by that you

don't hear them in every neighborhood on the barrier island."

The noise may have seemed louder in the past five years as more Florida residents have switched to remote working, spurred by the pandemic. Those loud engines in the background can disrupt on-line company meetings.

Yet, just as Delray Beach Mayor Tom Carney said he would look into curtailing the use of gas-powered leaf blowers, the Florida Legislature put a stop to any dreams of sweet silence. Delray Beach and other municipalities that have already banned leaf blowers are now considering using the noise ordinance to address not just leaf blowers but mowers

See LEAF BLOWERS, Page 5C



The new Nora District in West Palm Beach currently features a restaurant roster with strong ties to the northeast.

1.2K apartments set for Phase 2 of Nora District

Retail booming at mixed-use project

Valentina Palm
Palm Beach Post
USA TODAY NETWORK

West Palm Beach's newest dining and retail district is attracting big-name restaurants and companies from New York and Boston as developers plan to build over 1,200 apartments in the neighborhood rising north of the city's downtown.

The Nora District is already booming with Northeastern diners and shops, such as IHOP Bagels, Warby Parker and Loco Taqueria & Oyster Bar. It will also be home to the second Florida location of Nami Nori, a New York City-based Japanese restaurant backed by the singer Pharrell Williams.

The mixed-use development is part of West Palm Beach's largest redevelopment project, aiming to transform 40 acres in a blighted, industrial area into a hip, high-density community.

The \$1 billion project will feature 150,000 square feet of retail space and a 205-room Nora Hotel, and eventually it will add five high-rise towers expected to bring over 1,200 apartments and condos to the area.

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The original Sunday Motor Co. is located in Madison, New Jersey. The new location at Nora District recently opened and is very popular for breakfast and with car enthusiasts. PHOTOS BY EDDIE BITZ/PALM BEACH POST

Publix sets date for Avenir opening

Julius Whigham II
Palm Beach Post
USA TODAY NETWORK

Nearly two years after a tornado destroyed a Publix supermarket on the verge of opening in Avenir, residents of the growing western Palm Beach Gardens community will soon finally have a new store to call their own.

Florida's signature grocer will open the new store May 21 in the Avenir Town Center at 2355 Northlake Blvd., west of Florida's Turnpike, the company announced in an online listing.

It will be one of the larger new Publix stores at 48,388 square feet and will feature traditional amenities such as a bakery, a deli, a pharmacy and a liquor store. It will join several other newer stores across Palm Beach County.

Publix planned to open a location in Avenir in the fall of 2024, but an EF3 tornado spawned by Hurricane Milton that October caused significant damage to the nearly completed structure, as well as to several nearby homes.

EF3 tornadoes carry winds of 136 to 165 mph. This one formed near Wellington and traveled to the northeast through The Acreage to Jupiter Farms, damaging scores of homes and businesses. It was one of several Milton spawned across Florida, killing at least six people.

The Publix building's roof caved in and the building sustained cracks along its outside walls.

The new Publix will be one of two major grocery chains opening in the next few months in or near Avenir, which will have more than 4,000 homes once it is built out.

A 22,000 square-foot Aldi store is under construction at the Coconut Crossing development at the southwest corner of Northlake Boulevard and Coconut Boulevard, across from an entrance to Avenir. The store is scheduled to open in the summer, an Aldi spokesperson said.



The Publix at the Avenir development was damaged by a tornado spawned by Hurricane Milton on Oct. 10, 2024. GREG LOVETT/PALM BEACH POST

Nora District

Continued from Page 1C

Here is what you need to know about the Nora District, the newest mixed-use development in West Palm Beach:

What is the Nora District? West Palm Beach's newest neighborhood

The Nora District, which opened in August 2025, is West Palm Beach's newest dining, shopping and retail district, located along North Railroad Avenue.

The mixed-use district is led by a small group of real estate investors who have sought to revive an overlooked part of the city by building a walkable neighborhood featuring high-end restaurants, shops and residences.

Developers envisioned a dense, downtown community that caters to the city's housing needs and offers a place to live, work and play to the thousands of people who have moved to Palm Beach County since 2020.

The Nora District is part of a larger effort by the city to revive 40 acres along North Railroad Avenue, stretching from Seventh Street to Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard.

Who are the developers behind the Nora district?

The Nora District is a joint venture between three real-estate investment companies: NDT Development, Place Projects and Wheelock Street Capital.

NDT Development, based in West Palm Beach, owns local bars and restaurants including Lola 41, Cove Club and Lamarina.

Place Projects is a Miami builder that has participated in mixed-use projects in Wynwood, Doral and Tampa. Wheelock Street Capital is a Connecticut-based private real-estate investment firm.

Back in 2018, these investors began buying up old warehouses, aging properties and vacant sites just north of the city's downtown. These were the properties in and around North Railroad Avenue facing the Florida East Coast Railway, built by industrialist Henry Flagler in the late 1880s.

How much money has West Palm Beach given to Nora District developers?

The city has given at least \$27 million to the group of developers behind the Nora District for improvements to fund infrastructure and redevelopment of the blighted area.

Developers have invested over \$1 billion in the project and argue it will bring the city tax revenue far beyond what they have invested on the project.

"I feel like it's more than development," said Commissioner Christy Fox, whose district includes the Nora District. "I don't even know what the word should be because you've created an entire new neighborhood that people are so excited about, and we do want to be a good partner to you because you've done so much."

Developers have said they plan to

ask the city for more subsidies to help cover the costs of building parking garages to accommodate the hundreds of apartments planned in the district as well as visitors to the restaurants and shops.

What is open at the Nora District in West Palm Beach?

There are nearly 20 retailers open at the Nora District in West Palm Beach.

- **Restaurants:** Sunday Motors Co., Del Mar, Julianna's, Celis Juice Bar, Van Leeuwen Ice Cream, Loco Taqueria and Oyster Bar and H&H bagels.

- **Retailers:** Warby Parker, Pompanos, Le Labo Fragrances, IGK Salon hair care, Mint, Carrousel Fine Art, The Spot Barbershop, Sana Skin Studio.

- **Lifestyle:** Sweat 440, Solidcore and ZenHippo, which specializes in early childhood activities.

What is set to open in the Nora District?

Below is a list of restaurants and retailers expected to open in the Nora District.

- **Pastis:** a Parisian-style brasserie based in Manhattan. It would open inside the Nora Hotel.

- **Luce:** A fine jewelry brand from New York tied to the Long Island company Kravit Jewelers.

- **Indaco:** A rustic Italian restaurant by the Indigo Road Hospitality Group, founded in Charleston, South Carolina.

- **Sports & Rec:** A modern sports bar brought by The Garret Group, a New York city group that owns The Garret and the original Rocco's Sports & Rec.

- **Nami Nori:** A temaki bar that specializes in open-style Japanese hand rolls from Manhattan backed by musician Pharell Williams.

Next for the Nora District: A hotel and 1,200 apartments

The second phase of the Nora District will feature a 201-room hotel by Richard Born and Ira Drukier of BD Hotels and hotelier Sean MacPherson.

Developers are also planning to build five residential buildings in a two-block span between Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard and 10th Street. They would include more than 1,200 apartments and condos and office spaces.

The first residential building, a 12-story, 350-apartment building along 10th at North Railroad, will begin construction this summer. The project will contain 52 rent-controlled workforce residences.

Next to it, a 277-apartment building with 47 workforce residences would rise. It is still in the planning stage, but builders estimate that they will break ground next year.

An 11-story tower nearby with 117 for-sale condos is also set to start construction next year. All three buildings are expected to be completed in 2029.

Developers are already planning two large-scale projects along the two-block stretch: a condo building and another tower with for-sale and rental apartments.

The developer's initial housing plans includes 99 workforce and affordable apartments, but the group has indicated more would be included.