

Nixon's Latest Setback

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Key Biscayne, Fla.

Former President Nixon, for six years the most powerful person in the most powerful nation on earth, was turned down yesterday by the Dade county board of commissioners on a petition to keep tourists off the road in front of his house.

The vote was 5-to-3.

The board rejected a petition bearing the names "Richard M. Nixon and wife Patricia R. Nixon" with more than a dozen other signatories, requesting the con-

version of the little Key Biscayne street known as Bay lane from a public to a private drive.

The reason, submitted by attorneys for Mr. Nixon and his close friend and neighbor on the street, C.G. (Bebe) Rebozo, was that "heavy thoroughfare traffic is anticipated by virtue of the fact that two houses are owned by the former President of the United States and which have become the objects of curiosity to visitors and tourists."

Rebozo attended the hearing but did not speak.

The rejection of the petition was applauded by many of the 200 spectators who, with 40 newsmen, had jammed the commission chamber in the courthouse building in Miami.

The crowd also showed its approval of a remark by Barry Richard, a state representative and attorney representing the Key Biscayne Taxpayers Association, Inc., which opposed

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making the road private.

"Since taxpayer expenditures on the Nixon compound exceeded \$3 million, the public should at least have a right to take a look at it," Richard said.

Moreover, Richard contended, there had not been an adequate showing that the closing — which some noted would enhance the value of the property on the street — was necessary.

Arthur H. Simons, a Key Biscayne resident for 22 years, also argued against private status for the street.

"There are enough people living behind gates and barricades," he said, "and the last thing we need is more gates, barriers and armed guards."

After the hearing, Simons, who said he had been a friend of Rebozo for 20 years, remarked that "one of the things I refrained

from saying was that all citizens are created equal, but some citizens think they are more equal than others."

Harvey Ruvlin, one of the commission members who voted against private status for the road, said, "In all respect for Mr. Rebozo, there was an elitist posture to the request — the appearance that the residents on the road expect treatment a normal citizen doesn't have coming to him."

Toni Reinhardt, president of the Taxpayers Association, expressed suspicion of the motives of the petitioners — who also included another Nixon friend and neighbor, Robert Abplanalp, a wealthy industrialist.

"These people don't go into anything unless they make money on it. Some day they might start charging admission," she said. Earlier this month it was reported that Mr. Nixon was planning to sell his proper-

ties at Key Biscayne, and a buyer has reportedly been found.

Abplanalp has said that he, Rebozo and others were considering the formation of a nonprofit foundation to help to pay Mr. Nixon's mortgages on his holdings, including those at San Clemente, where Mr. Nixon is living.

At the Bay lane site, the Secret Service men remained on duty at the barricaded entrance to the former presidential compound, turning away all visitors.

A spokesman said that as many as 200 persons a day had sought to enter the compound and had to be turned back.

"Most of them are curious," he said, "but lately they seem more insistent — since he's no longer president."

The Secret Service personnel would be removed "sometime this week" and the road opened to the public, he added.

One of the three commissioners voting in favor of closing the lane was Commissioner Harry P. Cain, a former U.S. senator from Washington.

"For the next couple of years," Cain said after the hearing, "this could be an attraction the equal of any in the country — and the road won't take it. "If I were a property owner on Bay lane, I would want it closed."