

BILLS HONORING DEANNA ROGERS AND THE RISING STARS STEEL ORCHESTRA FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE VIRGIN ISLANDS MOVES FORWARD

Date : September 9, 2019

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THOMAS- Members of the Committee on Culture, Historic Preservation and Aging, chaired by Sen. Myron Jackson held meeting at the Capitol Building and voted favorably for Bill No. 33-0128 and Bill No. 33-0110 as it relates to honoring the contributions of outstanding Virgin Islanders. Lawmakers also received an update on the Vendors Plaza transfer and proposed improvements. All bills approved will be forwarded to the Committee on Rules and Judiciary for further consideration.

Senators

voted and approved two measures. Firstly, Bill No. 33-0128- A Resolution honoring and commending Deanna Elyse Rogers for her outstanding civic contributions and public service and for being the first Post Auditor of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands. The bill was sponsored by Senator Stedmann Hodge, Jr. Secondly, Bill No. 33-0110- A Resolution honoring and commending the Rising Stars Steel Orchestra for their musical contributions and dedication the youth of our community and for being cultural ambassadors abroad. The bill sponsors are senators Janelle K. Sarauw and Steven D. Payne, Sr.

Former

senators Clarence Payne and Alicia “Chucky” Hansen shared remarks about Rogers. “The recognition of my mother at this time in history could not have been timelier,” said Payne, son of the honoree. “It is a time where women all around the world are forcefully taking their rightful places in history. Lastly, the Virgin Islands has always been cognizant of the role that women play in the administrative functioning and leadership of this society.” Smart, humble, powerful, and compassionate are some of the words Hansen used to describe Rogers. “Deanna Rogers is a model for other women to follow and show that once granted the opportunity, they can handle a job ‘classified’ for men. Women can

perform at a higher level,” Hansen added.

Regarding

Bill No. 33-0110 which honors the Rising Stars Steel Orchestra, Judicial Branch of the Virgin Islands Court Services Administrator Glendia Caines, MBA indicated that the program positively impacts the lives of many young people in the Territory. “This program has played an instrumental role in the lives of more than 2500 Virgin Islands youths Territory-wide; within the program itself as well as various public, private and parochial schools where the Instructors were allowed to extend and cultivate the cultural aspect of playing the steel pan.”

Separately,

policymakers were updated on the status of Vendors Plaza.

Currently,

vendors pay an annual fee of \$200 to secure a spot to sell at the Plaza. Previously, the Department of Tourism partnered with the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA) to purchase uniform tents for the use of vendors; according to DLCA Commissioner Designee Richard Evangelista, Esq. Furthermore, Evangelista noted that although models for the kiosks in Vendors’ Plaza were developed with an estimated cost of \$3 million; securing funds is an extraordinary task. “Procuring the funds for the building of kiosks will always be a difficult task. Moreover, DLCA must take into consideration the Waterfront Expansion Project that contains a relocation of a Vendors’ Plaza in the downtown area,” he said. Despite financial challenges, the Department of Tourism Director of Communications Alani Henneman Todman said, “Vendors Plaza continues to be a positive focal point of our Tourism Product. There are ongoing efforts to ensure the plaza is kept clean and welcoming for locals and visitors alike.”

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