

## LAWMAKERS CONSIDERS ZONING REQUESTS

**Date :** November 23, 2016

ST. THOMAS- Members of the 31<sup>st</sup> Legislature, led by Senate President Neville James, held a meeting at the Capitol Building on Tuesday, to receive testimony on several zoning request applications including Alford S. Richards Sr., - To amend the Official Zoning Map No. SJZ-1 from R-1 (Residential-Low Density) to B-2 (Business-Secondary/Neighborhood) for Parcel No. 29 Estate Susannaberg No. 17A Cruz Bay Quarter, St. John.

According to a memorandum submitted by Yvonne Tharpes, Legal Counsel of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands, it suggested to postpone the hearing in order to allow St. John Residents to express their concerns as it pertains to this zoning request.

However, lawmakers did not want to further delay the meeting.

“The zoning hearing that was scheduled for November 21<sup>st</sup> was cancelled due to inclement weather,” said Sen. James. He continued, “Considering that the 31<sup>st</sup> Legislature is coming to a close, instead of prolonging this zoning request, we should at least receive testimony on it. There will be no voting on any of the zoning requests today.”

Leia Laplace Matthew, Territorial Planner for the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) stated that the purpose of this request is to lease the site for a water delivery business to operate from and store water trucks. She also recommended approval of the petition.

Similarly, Kelly Davis, Planning Technician for DPNR also gave a favorable recommendation. She said, “The current use is that it is vacant land with an abandon tennis court. The property is surrounded by condominiums on the north and there is vacant land on the east and west.

Sen. Marvin Blyden asked, “Once approved, would the project move forward immediately?” In response, Stylish Willis, Law Offices of Willis said, “When this zoning request was originally submitted, we learned that the area was considered residential. Therefore, as soon as it is approved, the Water Companies that the property is leased to, will begin using the land for commercial use.”

“How many water trucks will be using the site?” asked Sen. Blyden. In response, Willis stated that there will be approximately three to four water trucks and four to five heavy equipment that will occupy the land.”

Sen. Clifford Graham asked, “Where is the property located on St. John?” Willis said, “It is located

right off the main road.” Sen. Graham said, “I know that area very well. Although, the property is zoned as residential, it is surrounded by a lot of businesses.” Willis added that the land has been used for commercial use for many years.

“How would maneuvering large vehicles impact the traffic?” inquired Sen. Jean Forde. Willis said, “According to the lease agreement, the property is approximately three acres. Therefore, there will not be an issue for the trucks to access the land. There isn’t a lot of traffic on the main road, so I don’t foresee traffic congestion of any sort.”

Sen. Nereida Rivera O’Reilly asked, “Are all of the taxes current on the property?” Willis stated the property taxes are current.

Separately, lawmakers also received testimony on other zoning requests including:

- Dale LeFebvre- Authorized Agent Stephanie Berry – To amend Official Zoning Map No. STZ-9 – Application No. ZAT-16-3- requesting that a use variance be granted to the R-2 (Residential-Low Density One and Two Family) zoned Parcel Nos. 19-2-101 and 19-2-102 Estate Smith Bay, Nos. 1, 2 & 3 East End Quarter, St. Thomas Purpose: To utilize a portion of his residence as his business’ office space
- Sergio Laplante – To amend Official Zoning Map No. STZ-11, Application No. ZAT-16-6; requesting a use variance be granted to R-4 (Residential-Medium Density) zoned Plot Nos. 52 and 54, First Avenue (combined), First Subdivision of Estate Thomas, St. Thomas Purpose: To operate a restaurant out of a food van
- Development Partners International, LLC – Authorized Agent David A. Bornn, Esq, - To amend the Official Zoning Map No. STZ-10 – Application No. ZAT 16-7 from R-1 (Residential-Low Density) to W-1 9(Waterfront-Pleasure) for Parcel Nos. 6L-remainder and 6L-25 Estate Nazareth, No. 1 Red Hook Quarter, St. Thomas Purpose: To consolidate the lots and subdivide into four residential lots, a utility lot and parking for residences on Parcels No. 6L-30 Estate Nazareth. It will be part of a larger residential and accessory development, to include Parcel Nos. 6L-30 and 6L-24 Estate Nazareth

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