

## **LAWMAKERS HONOR THE LATE LEE VANTERPOOL, RECEIVE UPDATES ON MAIN STREET AND VETERANS DRIVE REVITALIZATION, & ADVANCE FLAG DAY BILL**

**Date :** October 8, 2019

ST. THOMAS- Members of the Committee on Culture, Historic Preservation and Aging chaired by Sen. Myron Jackson convened in a meeting at the Capitol Building on Tuesday, and voted favorably for Bill No. 33-0113- A Resolution posthumously honoring and recognizing Lee “Lee Vee” Vanterpool for his outstanding contributions to the Virgin Islands as a media professional. Lawmakers also received an update on the Main Street Revitalization and Veterans Drive Highway Project. Lastly, senators voted and approved Bill No. 33-0117 to establish the Virgin Islands Flag Day. All items approved will be forwarded to the Committee of Rules and Judiciary for further consideration.

Firstly, Bill No. 33-0113 seeks to posthumously honor and commend Lee “Lee Vee” Vanterpool, a native son, for contributions to the Virgin Islands community as a consummate media professional and mentor, and for his contribution of time and professional skills to numerous nonprofit organizations and events that benefitted the Virgin Islands community. “Lee Vanterpool was a media giant. He was the Walter Cronkite of the Virgin Islands. He was amongst the best media professionals,” said Sen. Athneil “Bobby” Thomas, sponsor of the bill. Sen. Dwayne DeGraff mentioned there is no greater honor than honoring your own.

In addition to television and radio broadcasting, Vanterpool had an opportunity to work for media services for both the Executive Branch and Legislative Branch of government. Furthermore, Vanterpool was an actor and dancer of the performing arts. In his spare time, he volunteered for various charitable events and served as a mentor to young people who were interested in pursuing a career in on-air broadcasting. “Lee will be forever remembered as the consummate media professional. The legacy of our beloved brother Lee is one of love for the Virgin Islands. His love, compassion, wisdom, and service are a testament to his legacy,” said Lee

Vanterpool's Brother Mel Vanterpool.

Furthermore, Sen. Jackson said, "Lee had an impactful voice and presence in which he was often requested as Master of Ceremonies. Lee also assisted in establishing the Buddhist religion in the Virgin Islands. Lee's contributions to the arts were significant; especially as a male dancer in the professional arena."

Separately, the Department of Public Works (DPW) Commissioner Nelson Petty shared an update on the status of the Main Street Revitalization Project and Veterans Drive Highway Project. Commissioner Petty indicated that August 2020 is the scheduled date of completion for the project. To date, progress is inclusive of the installation of sidewalks, electrical lines, storm drains, manholes, portable water lines, and communication conduits on both the western and northern sections of Store Tvaer Gade to Guttets Gade, according to Commissioner Petty. The Water and Power Authority Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer Lawrence Kupfer mentioned that although DPW completed work for underground infrastructure at the Main Street/Store Tvaer, remaining work at Store Tvaer Gade and Raadets Gade are still incomplete. Regarding water distribution, Director Kupfer noted that Island Roads is slated to replace water service lines and meter boxes. Afterward, WAPA will inspect water lines to ensure compliance with the standards of the American Water Works Association.

Regarding the Veterans Drive Improvement Enhancement, Commissioner Petty stated that sixty-three percent of Phase 1 is completed and ahead of schedule. Some aspects of this phase consist of seawall construction, roadway widening, pavement reconstruction, and draining improvements. To date, \$24 million was expended out of a contract worth \$42.9 million. Phase 2 is still in the design process.

Lastly, senators voted and approved Bill No. 33-0117 - An Act amending Title 1, chapter 11 of the Virgin Islands Code by adding a new section 200k establishing the Virgin Islands Flag Day. The measure

seeks to annually designate May 17th as the V.I. Flag Day” in recognition of the day the Virgin Islands flag was adopted. “Like a Virgin Islander, I am a strong believer in national pride. It is with great respect and pride that the Virgin Islands Flag is held at the highest esteem,” said Sen. Kurt Vialet, sponsor of the bill.

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