

Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority
Presentation to the
Committee on Culture, Historic Preservation, Youth & Recreation
31st Legislature of the Virgin Islands
St. Croix, Virgin Islands
Monday, February 22, 2016

Pleasant Good Morning. I am Nadine Marchena Kean, Director of the Enterprise Zone Commission. I would like to thank Senator Myron Jackson and the members of the Committee on Culture, Historic Preservation, Youth and Recreation for inviting the Economic Development Authority's Enterprise Zone Commission to provide a report on "In Search of Identity," a centennial project for the development of a school of architecture on St. Croix and a school of the arts and museum on St. Thomas.

The mandate of the Enterprise Zone Commission is to revitalize once vital vibrant communities that are now considered distressed. In 2010, through Act no. 7197, the Enterprise Zone Commission was tasked with creating town plans that would have within them business activities that would give rise to tax exemptions. The Frederiksted Collaborative, Christiansted Community and Garden Street and Upstreet Community Plans have all been completed. The plans were all comprehensive, offering socio-economic solutions to positive community development. The Savanne-Downstreet Community Plan is expected to be completed this year.

For the purposes of this hearing I will focus on the Christiansted and Upstreet Plans. The goal of the Christiansted plan is to double the population to 5,000 individuals residing within the town. In order to accomplish this, the plan recommends that there be an expansion of the University of the Virgin Islands' campus in Christiansted which would offer architectural and cultural studies. The Old Barracks Yard was identified as the future location of the school. No dorms will be built as it is hoped that the students will reside in the upstairs of the building within Christiansted town. This plan was created a result of a design charrette competition that was won by Gerville Larsen. Although I am sure that Mr. Larsen had been working on this project for quite awhile, the community loved the idea and endorsed it as their own during a community-wide vote. Since then, the Enterprise Zone Commission engaged the University of the Virgin Islands and they enthusiastically took the opportunity to get involved in this community development initiative.

On St. Thomas, the goal of the Upstreet Plan is to become a neighborhood that is the center of sports, entertainment and the arts for the district by offering a variety of facilities and spaces that would allow for these activities. The Virgin Islands chapter of the American Institute of Architects created three distinct plans and again the community voted. The anchor facility of the Upstreet Plan is the Lionel Roberts Stadium but during every community meeting that we have had during this planning processes and on the ballots voting on the community plan there was a request for a second anchor – the community's beloved school known as the J. Antonio Jarvis School – which has been shuttered for over 5 years. The J. Antonio Jarvis School has long been a project of Senator Myron Jackson as he

has always been extremely active in the Upstreet community and has been adopted by the community as essential to the revitalization of Upstreet.

The revitalization of the Old Barracks Yard complex in Christiansted for the School of Architecture and the J. Antonio Jarvis complex in Upstreet for the School of the Arts and Museum has the full support of the VI Economic Development Authority and it's Enterprise Zone Commission. As economic and community developers, we see these centennial projects as critical to the exponential forward movement of these communities.

Again I would like to thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony and I am now available to answer questions.