

LEGISLATIVE HEARING TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF PETITION TO AMEND OFFICIAL ZONING MAP. NO.
STZ-9

BY MR. NAJOCKI BOYD AND MS. KIT-ALIA FREEMAN

(Application No. ZA:CCZP0158-24)

Testimony Given By

Jennifer Jones, Esq.

GOOD MORNING, SENATE PRESIDENT MILTON POTTER, ESTEEMED MEMBERS OF THE 36TH LEGISLATURE, AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES, MS. LEIA LAPLACE-MATTHEW AND MR. KESHOI SAMUEL. MY NAME IS JENNIFER JONES, AND I AM AN ATTORNEY PRACTICING HERE IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS. THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TODAY ON BEHALF OF MR. NAJOCKI BOYD AND HIS MOTHER KIT-ALIA FREEMAN, REGARDING THE REZONING APPLICATION FOR PARCEL NO. 19-1-2-4 ESTATE SMITH BAY, ST. THOMAS, US VIRGIN ISLANDS.

MR. BOYD IS A PASSIONATE YOUNG VIRGIN ISLAND DEVELOPER AND ENTREPRENEUR, WHO ALONG WITH HIS MOTHER, MS. FREEMAN, A LONG-TIME ENTREPRENEUR AND THE FIRST BLACK FEMALE OWNER OF A MEDICAL LABORATORY IN THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS, ARE EMBARKING ON THIS AMBITIOUS PROJECT TO PROVIDE REASONABLY PRICED LONG-TERM RESIDENCES SURROUNDED BY MODERN CONVENIENCES TO THEIR COMMUNITY.

CURRENTLY, THEY ARE EXPANDING THEIR BUSINESS VENTURES INTO A GROUNDBREAKING MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT THAT WILL FEATURE 28 RESIDENTIAL UNITS AND 9 COMMERCIAL UNITS. THIS PROJECT REFLECTS THEIR VISION FOR CREATING VIBRANT, INCLUSIVE SPACES TO MEET BOTH RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEEDS IN THE SAME PLACES. MR. BOYD'S COMMITMENT TO ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT FURTHER POSITIONS HIM AS A LEADER IN SHAPING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

TO ACCOMPLISH THIS VISION, THE APPLICANTS ARE SEEKING YOUR SUPPORT TO CHANGE THE ZONING OF THEIR PROPERTY FROM ITS EXISTING R-1 RESIDENTIAL-LOW DENSITY DESIGNATION TO B-3 BUSINESS—SCATTERED, A ZONE WHICH WILL SUPPORT THIS MIXED-USE PROJECT AND HELP ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS WHILE CONTRIBUTING TO THE ECONOMIC GROWTH OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS. ADDITIONALLY, THEY ARE REQUESTING A VARIANCE FOR GENERAL WAREHOUSE AND STORAGE SERVICES.

TO PROVIDE SOME CONTEXT, THE PROPERTY IN QUESTION IS A 1.002 ACRE PLOT LOCATED IN ESTATE SMITH BAY, JUST OFF THE EMILE FRANCIS MEMORIAL DRIVE. ORIGINALLY PART OF A LARGER TRACT OF LAND IN ESTATE SMITH BAY, THIS PARCEL HAS BEEN HELD IN PRIVATE OWNERSHIP FOR SEVERAL DECADES, REMAINING LARGELY UNDEVELOPED. IN 2018, MR. BOYD AND HIS MOTHER

ACQUIRED THE PROPERTY FROM L. MARK LINDQVIST, WITH PLANS FOR CREATING A MIXED RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL COMPLEX. WITH SEVERAL YEARS OF PLANNING BEHIND THEM, MR. BOYD AND HIS MOTHER ARE NOW MOVING FORWARD WITH THIS NEXT PHASE OF THE PROJECT.

THE PROPERTY IS CURRENTLY ZONED R-1 RESIDENTIAL – LOW DENSITY AND IS ADJACENT TO THE GOVERNMENT’S EASTERN CEMETERY. IT IS SURROUNDED ALMOST ENTIRELY BY VACANT LAND AND BORDERS A PROPERTY USED AS A HORSE RANCH. PARCEL NO. 19-1-2-8 ESTATE SMITH BAY, WHICH IS SEPARATED FROM THIS PROPERTY BY AN ESTATE ROAD, WAS RECENTLY REZONED FROM A-2 TO B-3.

THE PROPERTY WILL BE DEVELOP INTO A MULTI-USE COMPLEX THAT INCLUDES A RESIDENTIAL AREA, A DAYCARE CENTER, COMMERCIAL/BUSINESS OFFICES, MAILBOX RENTALS, AND WAREHOUSE AND STORAGE UNIT RENTALS. THE GOAL IS TO PROVIDE A COMBINATION OF ESSENTIAL COMMUNITY SERVICES WHILE INSURING COMPATIBILITY WITH THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD. THE DEVELOPMENT WILL HELP MEET THE GROWING DEMAND FOR RESIDENTIAL UNITS IN THE SMITH BAY AREA. WITH MAJOR UPCOMING PROJECTS ANTICIPATED ACROSS THE ISLAND AND PARTICULARLY ST. JOHN, THIS AREA IS EXPECTED TO SEE A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN DEMAND FOR THESE TYPES OF RESIDENCES. THE PARCEL’S STRATEGIC LOCATION—WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF A GYM,

RESTAURANT/BAR, BEACH, THREE CHURCHES, HARDWARE STORE, AND NEAR A FEDERAL SERVICES BUILDING—WILL REDUCE TRAVEL, PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT, AND FOSTER COMMUNITY COHESION.

WE BELIEVE THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT ONLY BE A POSITIVE ADDITION TO THE AREA BUT ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY BY CREATING JOBS AND OFFERING VALUABLE SERVICES.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT TODAY. ALONG WITH OUR TESTIMONY, WE ARE PROVIDING A POWERPOINT PRESENTATION TO HELP ILLUSTRATE THE IDEAS AND DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.