Testimony of
Vincent Richards

Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement
On behalf of

Lisa M. Alejandro
Commissioner of the Department of Property & Procurement

On

An act amending Official Zoning Map No. STZ-10, St. Thomas, to rezone Parcel No. 9 A-6 Estate Nazareth, No. l, Red Hook Quarter, St. Thomas, from R-1 (Residential-Low Density) to R-3 (Residential-Medium Density) (Zoning Application #CCZP0014-26)

Before

Committee of the Whole

Monday, November 9, 2026.

Earle B. Ottley Legislative Hall
ST. THOMAS, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Good morning, Committee Chair Milton E. Potter, Vice-Chair Kenneth L. Gittens, Honorable Senators, Central and Legislative Staff, fellow testifiers, visitors present in the chambers, and members of the viewing and listening audience.

My name is Vincent Richards, Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement (DPP). I appear before you today on behalf of Commissioner Lisa M. Alejandro to present the Department's testimony in support of Bill No. 36-0400, the Act amending Official Zoning Map No. STZ-10, St. Thomas, to rezone Parcel No. 9 A-6, Estate Nazareth, No. l Red Hook Quarter, St. Thomas (Zoning Application #CCZP0014-26). The Department of Property and Procurement respectfully seeks this Committee's consideration and approval of the proposed zoning amendment to facilitate the property's intended use as a children's home.

I. Bill No. 36-0400 (Zoning Application #CCZP0014-26)

On July 18, 2025, the Government of the Virgin Islands (GVI) acquired the subject property from Vessup Lane, LLC by Warranty Deed, pursuant to Section 10 of Act No. 8921, for the express purpose of leasing the premises to the intended Nana Baby Children's Home, Inc.

On December 16, 2025, DPP executed a one-year lease agreement with Nana Baby Children's Home, Inc. for Parcel No. 9A-6, Estate Nazareth, No. 1 Red Hook Quarter, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. The property comprises approximately 17,424 U.S. sq. ft. (0.40 acres) of improved land containing a single residential structure and is currently zoned R-1 (Residential Low-Density).

Nana Baby Children's Home, Inc. intends to operate a 24-hour emergency placement group home for children from birth through twelve (12) years of age who require immediate care and placement due to crisis circumstances.

II. Zoning Considerations and Recommendation

The property is currently designated R-1 (Residential-Low Density) and Zoning Map Amendment Application # CCZP0014-26 was intended to amend the zoning designation of the premises to R-3 (Residential Medium Density). In line with DPNR's recommendations, the Department recognizes that title 29, section 229(q) of the Zoning Code, designates Government-owned properties as P (Public), irrespective of their prior zoning classification.

Following its review, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) recommends:

1. Amending Official Zoning Map No. STZ-10, pursuant to Title 29, Virgin Islands Code, § 238, to reclassify Parcel No. 9A-6 from R-1 (Residential-Low Density) to P (Public), consistent with its Government ownership; and
2. Granting a use variance pursuant to Title 29, Virgin Islands Code, § 238a, to authorize the proposed use of the premises as a Children's Home.

DPP supports and concurs with DPNR's recommendations. The proposed Public zoning designation aligns the property's classification with its Government ownership, while the associated use variance addresses the specific intended use of the premises.

The one-year agreement with Nana Baby Children's Home, Inc., states, *"Lessee shall cooperate with the Lessor in applying for a zoning change or use variance to facilitate the uses in Paragraph 1.02 of this Lease. The processing of the Multi-Year Lease is contingent upon the approval of a zoning change or use variance for the Premises."* Nana Baby Children's Home, Inc., has cooperated with DPP and complied with all obligations of the one-year agreement; therefore, to accommodate the intended use of the property, the proposed rezoning is necessary to comply with the Virgin Islands zoning law. This project is designed to enhance a valuable service to the community and contribute positively to the general welfare of the youth and infants in the care of Nana Baby Children's Home, Inc.

Accordingly, DPP respectfully requests the Committee's consideration and approval of the proposed zoning amendment and associated use variance, consistent with DPNR's recommendations.

Approval will advance the Government's intended purpose for the acquisition, facilitate the property's appropriate utilization, and support an essential service dedicated to the safety, protection, and welfare of the Territory's most vulnerable children.

Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony and for your consideration of this legislation. This concludes my Testimony, and I am prepared to answer any questions the Committee may have regarding the proposed rezoning.