GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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November 9, 2026

Honorable Milton E. Potter
President
36th Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands
Capitol Building
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

Re: Petition to Amend Official Zoning Map No. STZ-9, Application No. CCZP0031-26

Good day Senate President Milton E. Potter, members of the 36th Legislature, legislative staff, and members of the public. My name is Leia LaPlace-Matthew, Territorial Planner with the Division of Comprehensive and Coastal Zone Planning (CCZP) within the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR). I am here to present the Department's recommendation on Zoning Map Amendment Application No. CCZP0031-26.

This application, submitted by Stefan Jurgen through authorized agent Roosevelt Saint Claire David, seeks to amend the zoning designation of Parcel No. 1CA Estate Frydendahl, No. 4 East End Quarter, St. Thomas, consisting of 10,796 square feet, from R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family) to R-3 (Residential-Medium Density). The purpose of the request is to increase residential density by constructing three additional two-bedroom apartment units above an existing one-story residential structure that currently contains a pair of two-bedroom units, resulting in a total of five dwelling units on the property.

The subject property is located within a mixed-use area consisting of residential, commercial, and public land uses. The surrounding area is zoned R-2, R-3, B-3 (Business-Scattered), B-4 (Business-Residential Areas), and P (Public). Existing R-3 zoning already occurs within the neighborhood, making the requested designation compatible with surrounding development patterns.

DPNR has conducted a thorough review of the application, including an analysis of the surrounding land use, zoning trends, infrastructure availability, and public input. The Department notes the following key findings:

- Public utility lines will provide water service, while two septic tanks with a combined capacity of 6,462 gallons will manage sewage disposal.
- The applicant proposes to expand an existing residential building by constructing a second story containing three additional two-bedroom apartment units, increasing the total number of dwelling units from two to five. The applicant stated that the project is intended to help address the Territory's housing shortage by providing additional long-term rental housing.
- During the DPNR-CCZP public hearing held on July 22, 2026, DPNR staff requested additional information regarding septic system capacity and potential easement or access considerations affecting neighboring landlocked parcels. No public comments were received during or following the hearing.

- The applicant subsequently provided an as-built drawing confirming that 11 parking spaces can be accommodated on the lot without impeding the 20-foot right-of-way along the eastern boundary.
- The property currently complies with R-2 requirements relating to lot area, density, lot occupancy, parking, building height, and front and rear setbacks. However, one side yard setback does not meet current R-2 standards because the existing structure, constructed in 1970, has a side setback of 6 feet 9 inches where 10 feet is required.
- Analysis of the proposed development demonstrates compliance with R-3 standards, including minimum lot area, density, lot occupancy, parking, height, setbacks, and open space requirements. The proposed development would accommodate five two-bedroom units housing approximately 15 persons, which is below the maximum density permitted in the R-3 district (20 persons for this lot).
- The proposed rezoning is consistent with the goals and policies of the 2024 Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan. The proposal would expand long-term housing opportunities within an already developed area and supports housing production, housing diversity, and zoning reforms intended to address the Territory's housing needs.
- The request aligns with the Comprehensive Plan's objective of directing growth to developed areas served by existing infrastructure and promoting efficient land use and orderly, sustainable development.
- The Department further finds that the requested rezoning does not constitute isolated spot zoning because R-3 zoning already exists within the surrounding neighborhood and the amendment advances an adopted Comprehensive Plan housing policy.

After thorough analysis of the applicant's request, the surrounding land uses, infrastructure capacity, and consistency with the 2024 Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan, the Department finds the proposed rezoning appropriate and supportive of the Territory's housing objectives. The Department recommends approval of the zoning map amendment request from R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family) to R-3 (Residential-Medium Density).

Pursuant to Title 29 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 3, Section 238, the report of the Planning Office regarding this proposal, including the detailed reasons for our recommendation, is incorporated into the records submitted prior to this Committee of the Whole Hearing. We respectfully request that the PowerPoint presentation for CCZP0031-26 now be displayed.

This concludes the testimony on behalf of the Department, and we are available to answer any questions.