

[EXTERNAL MAIL] Parcel 9-3 Glucksberg St. John - rezoning

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To: Leia LaPlace <leia.laplace@dpr.vi.gov>

Good day Ms. LaPlace,

I am writing to express my **strong opposition** to the rezoning request for Parcel 9-3 Gluckberg, as a 20+ year resident of the island of St. John, and a nearby Gluckberg property owner.

Spot rezoning for the purpose of developer greed has already done irreparable harm to the community of St. John, as illustrated by projects like [Sirenusa](#) [now 'the Hills'], which totally overwhelmed the light residential neighborhood. The project at 9-3 Glucksberg would do the same, but with significantly higher density. There's a reason that the high-density R-3 and R-4 properties are centered around the towns - that's where the public services of sewer, WAPA water, transportation, shopping, and walkability are, not in a light residential area miles from town. This is a city project, not a country project, and the property should not be rezoned [nor granted a variance] to build such high density.

I realize from the DPNR rezoning hearing last month that Ari, the owner of the parcel, has tried to spin his project as being "good for the community" and providing a solution for the housing crisis on the islands, but these are all lies, it's exactly the opposite. He's in it entirely for his property investment portfolio, not for the long-term renters of St. John, and he literally wrote a [\[low-rated\] book](#) on multifamily property development. **He's a classic predatory developer who has moved in to extract dollars from the community, not a savior swooping in to help.**

While this is 'designed' to be cheap construction, basically Army barracks style of prefabbed shipping containers stacked up, his target pricing structure continues to drift upwards, starting initially at ~\$1200 for a 160 square foot apartment, now noting that pricing would be "market rate" for 1-bedroom apartments in Cruz Bay, and at least \$1600 per month. Per square foot, that would be **one of the most expensive rentals on the island**. As clearly indicated from his off-island solicitation of interest, this project is **not** designed for low-income locals, or Irma-displaced elderly, or even for the Airbnb-displaced restaurant workers who are currently on island. It's for remote workers who want to spend 2 months in paradise and for restaurants to bring in new crops of lower-paid workers who will only stay a few months on the property before realizing they can find better-paid work and lower-cost housing. Once you've made a friend or two, you've got \$3-4k to budget towards a much better shared apartment, *which worsens the housing crisis, bringing rents up across the board.* They also have no families [can't fit kids or a partner in a 160sf space with a twin bed], no pets, no 'stuff' - to be sure, they can't even have more than a suitcase of clothing, as there's only 24" of 'closet'. **This so-called 'solution' to the long term housing issues on this island is exactly the opposite, and will further displace the people already struggling to make it work here.** There's zero housing security with Ari's units either - he's noted his leases would be month to month. I don't think he realizes stays of less than 90 days require the payment of [12.5% VI Hotel Tax](#), [the definition of short term/hotel stay...] but I believe tenant's rights don't come into play until 90+ days - so he could evict at will. This project is not safe, it's not legal, it's not helping with the housing crisis, it's not helping with housing security, and it should not be built.

Lastly, a rezoning would give this greedy developer so many easy outs that would actually further worsen the housing issues on island - there would be nothing stopping him from renting all 73 units *short term*, basically creating one of the biggest key-count hotels on island, or selling the property to a developer with deeper pockets... with an acre of R-4, look to [Grande Bay](#), built on just about the same acreage, as the model of the development potential for the parcel. Nobody wants that sort of density in the middle of the island, as illustrated by nearly all of the reachable neighbors signing on the petition opposing the project.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments,

Theodore Chouiniere
St. John VI

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