

**Testimony Submitted to Committee of the Whole Hearing**

**Wednesday, April 17, 2024**

Submitted by Dionne Carty and Joseph Carty

Good day. Before I begin, I would like to extend greetings to Senate President Novelle E Francis, Jr. and the entire Committee of the Whole and express appreciation for the opportunity to come before this body today. I regret that I am unable to be there in person, but my father, Joseph Carty and my cousin Amos Carty, Jr. are present at the Legislature.

Our purpose for being here is to respectfully request a zoning variance for Lot No 3 Second Street, Subdivision of Estate Thomas, Kings Quarter, St. Thomas. We recognize that this building—which has been in our family for generations—is located in a residential area and is also very close to the Charlotte Amalie High School. Our aim is to have a restaurant and fruit bar on the first floor. The restaurant will provide fresh meals and delicacies from a local and Spanish menu. These meals will be prepared on the premises.

In addition to the restaurant, there will also be a fresh fruit bar. This will cater to people in the community who desire freshly blended smoothies that would

be made of fresh fruits and vegetables from local vendors. My father, Joseph Carty, has been doing this for 20 years, in a different location on island.

We believe that providing tasty and nutritious meals at this location, will be of benefit to the residents of the local community. Additionally, school students who may opt to cross the street in the mornings, the afternoons, and perhaps at lunchtime will be able to come and hot freshly prepared meals, and juices.

It is important to note that the beverages from the juice bar will be made of fresh locally sourced shakes and smoothies. This will provide healthy options, especially in light of the fact that it's very easy for students to consume sugar filled beverages and snacks from other locations. We believe that having access to freshly prepared juices would increase their fruit intake and have improved nutrition. We hope to be able to contribute to decreased obesity as well as enhanced performance in their school studies.

Our hours, our proposed hours will be from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Again, this is reflective of the target audience for the establishment.

I would also like to note, that there will be no alcohol anywhere on the premises. That's not the focus of this endeavor.

It is also important for me to mention that this will be a takeout establishment. There will be no “dining in” option. Patrons can pre-order, pickup their meals, and they will leave.

I grew up in the area—and lived in this building at one point—and am very well aware of the culture of this neighborhood. Little Bo Peep was one of my favorite restaurants and I used to be able to get a malt and hot beef pate from there in the afternoons. So this proposed establishment seeks to offer the same benefit to the community that some of the prior establishments have, in the past.

The last thing I will say is that this is my father’s livelihood. For the past 20 years, his fresh fruit juices have been a very popular refreshment among tourists who visited the island. This is an opportunity to now offer these beverages that he has served to visitors to the island for many years to the local community.

Thank you very much for your time and thoughtful consideration of this request. May we answer any questions?