



GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Office of the Commissioner

**Report by the Division of Comprehensive and Coastal Zone Planning on
the Petition to Amend Official Zoning Map No. STZ-4, Application No.
ZAT-24-2**

Petition of applicant, Demah, Inc. d/b/a Moe's Fresh Market, to amend Revised Parcel No. 17-3 Remainder Estate Nisky, No. 6 Southside Quarter, St. Thomas with a use variance to the I-2 (Light Industry) zoning to allow for a business hotel. The property is not in use, however, there is a 14,491 square foot steel-frame structure on the property.



Photo of current site condition

Property Owner(s): Government of the Virgin Islands as per Quitclaim Deed dated February 9, 1967, Document No. 2099/1967, and Amendment to Quitclaim Deed dated April 13, 1967, Document No. 2100/1967.

Applicant Representative(s): Alicia Barnes, Consultant, and representatives of the applicant/lessee: Waleed "Wally" Hamed, President; Mufeed "Mafi" Hamed, Secretary; and Hisham "Shawn" Hamed, Treasurer.

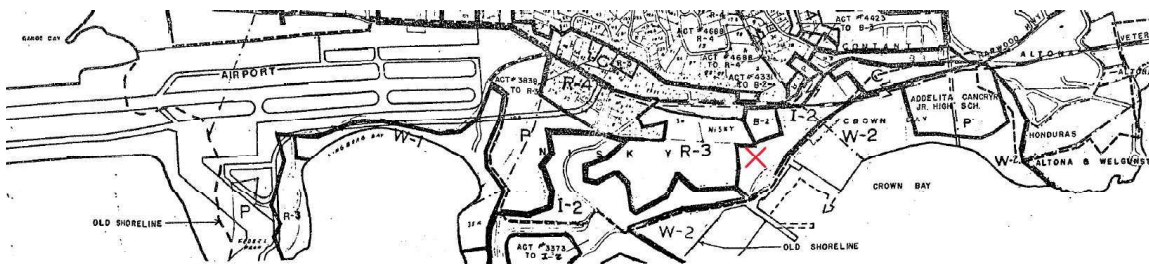
Acreeage: 0.701 acres as described on survey drawing D9-9723-T023.

Surrounding Uses and Zones: Surrounding the property to the north is the Nisky Center business/shopping complex. To the east and south is a mix of commercial and light industrial activities. To the west is Parcel No. 17-4 Est. Nisky, which is undeveloped land also leased by the applicant.



MapGeo aerial view of property (marked in red)

The surrounding area is zoned R-3 (Residential-Medium Density), B-2 (Business-Secondary/Neighborhood), C (Commercial), I-2 (Light Industry), and W-2 (Waterfront-Commercial-Industrial).



Official Zoning Map No. STZ-4 (property location indicated by red X)

Infrastructure: Water needs will be supplied by public water lines. Wastewater will be handled by public sewer lines.

Other needed DPNR Division reviews: Virgin Islands State Historic Preservation Office (VISHPO). A meeting was held between the architect and VISHPO. Design modifications will be made to align with design requirements for the historic World War II Naval warehouse building. VISHPO's recommendations were the proposed hotel's 2nd and 3rd story floor levels over the historic warehouse's south and north wings will need to be set back from the

east elevation of the building a minimum of 10 feet to make a clear distinction between the historic warehouse facade and the new 2nd and 3rd floor additions. The VISHPO is also requesting the same or similar window designs for the clear story windows in the center three story area of the warehouse. These are the windows that look out to the north and south sides. The main entrance bay openings on the east and west sides are to be preserved by using a glass window enclosure system so the original opening of the bay doors are still visible. The material finishes on the exterior of the building are to be metal to recall the naval era of the warehouse. Exterior lighting should also be of a modern design that reflects the WW II Naval period commonly used on warehouse facilities. In the interior areas of the historic warehouse, the steel frame of the building such as columns, beams, and trusses are to be left exposed to celebrate the Naval design. This will be especially important in the center bay area of the hotel's second and third floor levels that will be open to this area of the historic warehouse.

Overall, the goal is to achieve a positive balance of preserving the historic and unique details of this World War II Naval warehouse, while renovating it for a modern market and business hotel. This will preserve and celebrate an important part of Virgin Islands history and the territory's role and support in the Nation's mission during World War II.



VISHPO historical file photo of the warehouse building

Project Summary: At DPNR-CCZP's public hearing, Ms. Alicia Barnes testified the request is to allow a hotel that caters to business travelers, on the second and third floors of a gourmet retail food market and storage warehouse. She stated the proposed development is compatible with plans to transform the

Crown Bay corridor into an area cruise ship passengers are comfortable traversing and is in alignment with the Administration's vision for the area's redevelopment. The redevelopment of the historic warehouse is estimated to take 24-36 months and will generate 50 jobs during construction, 60 permanent jobs for day-to-day food market operations, and 8-12 permanent jobs for hotel operations.

The hotel will consist of two levels with 26 rooms per floor for a total of 52 rooms. It will not have amenities such as a pool, spa, or restaurant. The hotel's main entrance will be to the north on the second floor. The retail food market and storage warehouse entrance will be to the south on the first floor. Parking will occur on both leased parcels, Revised Parcel No. 17-3 Remainder and Parcel No. 17-4.

Public Response at DPNR-CCZP Public Hearing held December 1, 2023:

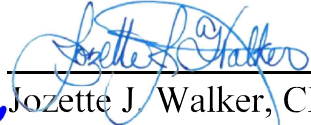
There was no opposition or concerns expressed with the proposal. There were no post-hearing comments received.

Analysis of Request/Reason for Recommendation: The property has not been used in over 20 years and its redevelopment will require VISPHO review prior to the issuance of building permits because of its historical use as a World War II Naval warehouse. The current I-2 zoning was adopted in 1972 due to the area's historical use as a submarine base and the intent of the I-2 zoning was to allow warehousing, contracting, light assembly, and textile manufacturing as a matter of right. The area's character has shifted since 1972 from industrial to a mix of business, commercial, and industrial and has seen 12 zoning map amendments ranging from use variances, B-2, C-Commercial, I-1 (Heavy Industry), I-2, and W-2 zoning.

In analyzing the applicant's request, the department considered the area's number of zoning map amendments, the presence of the cruise ship terminal, and the area's mixed-use character (business and industry) and found the use variance request reasonable.

Recommendation

The Department of Planning and Natural Resources recommends that a use variance be granted to the I-2 (Light Industry) zoned Revised Parcel No. 17-3 Remainder Estate Nisky, No. 6 Southside Quarter, St. Thomas to allow for “Hotels and Guesthouses.”



Jozette J. Walker, CPM
Assistant Commissioner

12/22/2023

Date

Cc: Jean-Pierre L. Oriol, Commissioner