



GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Report on Petition to Amend Official Zoning Map No. SCZ-11

Application No. ZAC-23-1

Petition of Learie Aubert to amend the Official Zoning Map No. SCZ-11 from R-2 (*Residential-Low Density- One and Two Family*) to B-3 (*Business-Scattered*) for Plot No. 140-H Estate St. George, Prince Quarter, St. Croix.

PROJECT PROFILE

Owner/applicant: Learie Aubert as per Warranty Deed dated March 19, 2021, Document No. 2021001115.

Acreage: The subject property comprises a total of 0.334 acres as described on Drawing No. D9-6672-C020.

Current Use: The property is currently being used for livestock farming.

Proposed Use: The purpose of the request is to allow mixed use development.

Surrounding Uses/ Zones: Surrounding the property to the north are residences with R-2 zoning and further north is undeveloped B-3 zoned land. East is undeveloped B-3 zoned land. To the south is a B-3 zoned shopping center and to the west is undeveloped I-2 zoned land.

Infrastructure: Water needs will be supplied by the public water line and cistern. Wastewater will be handled by a septic system.

Public Response: There has been no opposition to the proposed rezoning. No one spoke in support of, questioned, or commented on the petition at DPNR's public hearing held March 20, 2023.

ANALYSIS: Mr. Clarence Browne and Mr. Learie Aubert testified during the Department's public hearing that the intent is to allow mixed use of the property. Mr. Aubert proposes a single, two-story building that would have a business on the bottom floor and a residence on the upper floor. He intends to make value added products and sell them from the site. Example items would be baked goods, pastries, jams/stews, and confectionaries.

The subject property is part of a small R-2 residential subdivision (approximately four acres) consisting of eight plots. They are surrounded by B-3 and I-2 zones. The northern and eastern undeveloped B-3 zoned property is proposed for mixed-use development. Future development of the western I-2 zoned property will also impact the eight R-2 zoned lots. It is likely the eight R-2 zoned lots will lose their desirability for low density residential use and may see future requests for higher density residential and business uses.

As the territory tackles its housing crisis, alternative living arrangements have been gathering national attention from the planning field for almost a decade. Zoning reform is being encouraged at the national level to address the housing shortfall and reform is encouraged to increase the density of housing allowed in various zoning districts. The Virgin Islands has a recognized gap in the housing density allowed by the R-2 zone and the next zone up, R-3. Nationwide, this gap for the coined term “Missing Middle” housing is being tackled by zoning reform to allow units ranging from triplexes, fourplexes, sixplexes, townhouses, and live/work units. These “Missing Middle” housing units could allow for the gradual transition of a commercial corridor from strictly commercial or mixed use onto a lower density residential neighborhood, essentially acting as a buffer.

The requested B-3 zone is one that allows the mix of residential and business and would allow for the live/work unit proposed by Mr. Aubert’s intent for the property. The B-3 zone would allow retail operation on the bottom floor and a residential unit on the upper floor. This zoning can also allow for greater residential density that could act as a buffer and allow for a gradual transition between the B-3 and I-2 zoning nearby and the farther north low-density residential activity found in the R-1 and R-2 zoned portions of Estates St. Georges, Mountain, and Hope.

In conclusion, the department views the request as reasonable. The department recognizes the impact the surrounding B-3 and I-2 zoning will have on the property and sees the merits in allowing the mixed use (live/work) unit proposed by the applicant.

Recommendation:

The Department of Planning and Natural Resources recommends that Official Zoning Map No. SCZ-11 be amended from R-2 (Residential- Low Density- One and Two Family) to B-3 (Business-Scattered) for Plot No. 140-H Estate St. George, Prince Quarter, St. Croix.



 Jean-Pierre L. Oriol
Commissioner

24-Apr-2023

Date