



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-7

Application No. ZAC-23-7

Petition of Steve and/or Young Baker, Salt River Equity LLC DBA Sericore VI Member Managers to amend the Official Zoning Map No. SCZ-7 from R-1 (Residential-Low Density) to R-3 (Residential-Medium Density) for Plot No. 9A and Parcel No. 10 Estate Grange, Company Quarter, St. Croix.

PROJECT PROFILE

Owner/applicant: Salt River Equity LLC as per Warranty Deed dated March 30, 2021, Document No. 2021001530 and Quitclaim Deed dated April 20, 2021, Document No. 2021001544. Steve and Young Baker are the Managers/Members of Salt River Equity LLC.

Acreage: Plot No. 9A Est. Grange consists of 26.085 acres, as shown on Drawing A9-80-C012. Parcel No. 10 Est. Grange consists of 0.490 acres, as shown on Drawing No. 318.

Current Use: Applicant is the sole employee at residence developing and managing software infrastructure for customers.

Proposed Use: Office, Event Rental, Solar and Wind energy (development, research, and testing of technology), agricultural production and sales, and short-term rentals (for employees and guests).

Surrounding Uses/ Zones: Surrounding the property is a mix of uses including the Youth Rehabilitation Center, Tennis Club of St. Croix, undeveloped land and residences. The immediate area is zoned R-1, R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family), B-3 (Business-Scattered), and P (Public).

Infrastructure: Water needs will be supplied by cisterns and wells. Wastewater will be handled by septic tank.

Public Response: There has been no opposition to the proposed rezoning. Four emails/letters of support were received prior to and after DPNR's public hearing held Monday, August 21, 2023.

ANALYSIS:

Mr. Steve Baker and Mrs. Young Baker testified during the department's public hearing that the site is currently used for developing and managing software infrastructure but with the home occupation limitation that not more than one outside employee is allowed. A multifaceted proposal for the property will be developed over at least two phases and several years. Phase 1 is proposed to allow expansion of the office use with the hiring of more employees and the opening of the great house as an event rental space. Phase 2 is proposed for development, research, and testing of solar and wind technologies as well as agricultural production and sales. Accessory to the above uses will be long and short-term rentals for use by both employees and guests.

The site is located south of the Queen Mary Highway in between the entrances of the Youth Rehabilitation Center and Tennis Club of St. Croix. The immediately surrounding land is undeveloped but Estate Anna's Hope residences are within 850 ft. of the site's entrance.

The office and event rental use would not be allowed in either zone as a matter of right. Development and research of solar/wind technology would be authorized in all zones by Act Nos. 7075 and 7533, however, the assembly, manufacturing, retail, and/or wholesale of Alternative and Renewable Energy Systems and Components is only allowed in the business, commercial, industrial, and W-1 zones. The current R-1 zoning would allow for agricultural production (both outdoor and accessory climate-controlled operation (i.e., greenhouse)), however, the requested R-3 zoning would not. Neither would both zones allow for agricultural sales. A group dwelling permit under the R-1 zoning would allow for the development of up to 106 dwelling units, however, only for long-term housing/rentals. A group dwelling is a group of two (2) or more detached or semi-detached one-family, two-family or multiple dwellings, occupying a parcel of land in common ownership and having yards or courts in common. They are permitted in the R-1 and R-2 zones with conditions. An R-1 zoned property's allowed density is a maximum of two units for every 0.5 acre or four units per acre, whichever is greater.

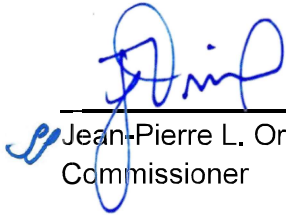
The below table summarizes the preceding paragraph:

Use (√ = allowed and x = not allowed)	R-1 ZONE	R-3 ZONE
OFFICE	X (UNLESS HOME-BASED WITH ONLY ONE EMPLOYEE)	X (UNLESS ACCESSORY TO HOTEL/APARTMENT COMPLEX)
EVENT RENTALS	X	X (UNLESS ACCESSORY TO HOTEL/APARTMENT COMPLEX)
SOLAR/WIND-DEVELOPMENT & RESEARCH	√	√
SOLAR/WIND-ASSEMBLY/ MANUFACTURING/ RETAIL/WHOLESALE	X	X
AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION	√	X
AGRICULTURE SALES	X	X
SHORT-TERM RENTALS	X	√

The department analyzed the requested R-3 zoning and found it would not allow all the uses the applicant wishes to undertake. Also, the surrounding area has only had two zoning map amendment requests (one was granted for B-3 zoning in 2009 by Act 7138, however, the property remains undeveloped). The R-3 zoning is not found in the area (nearest R-3 zoning is in Estate Hermon Hill) and the area is predominantly low density residential with R-1 and R-2 zoning. The department determined it would be more appropriate to recommend use variances for those uses that could not be allowed under the current R-1 zoning as there is no indication the area is changing, and the R-3 zone would not be compatible with the area's predominant character of low-density residential activity under R-1 and R-2 zoning.

Recommendation:

The Department of Planning and Natural Resources recommends that use variances be granted to the R-1 (Residential-Low Density) zoned Plot No. 9A and Parcel No. 10 Estate Grange, Company Quarter, St. Croix to allow for office, event rental/rental of commercial space, retail, assembly/manufacturing/retail/wholesale of alternative and renewable energy systems and components, and short-term rentals.



Jean-Pierre L. Oriol
Commissioner

07-Sept-2023

Date