

**LEGISLATIVE HEARING TESTIMONY**  
**IN SUPPORT OF PETITION TO AMEND OFFICIAL ZONING MAP. NO.**  
**ZAT-24-7-1**

**BY MR. JAMES J. JONES**  
**(Application No. ZAT-24-7-1)**

Testimony Given By  
Jennifer Jones, Esq.

Good morning, Senate President, esteemed members of the 35th Legislature, and representative from the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Ms. Leia LaPlace-Matthew. My name is Jennifer Jones, and I am an attorney practicing here in the Virgin Islands. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of Mr. James Jones regarding the rezoning application for Parcel No. 19-1, Estate Smith Bay, St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands. Mr. Jones is a driven young Virgin Islander and entrepreneur who currently owns and operates a successful water delivery company. He is now expanding his business ventures into both the long-term housing rental market and the agricultural sector. To do this he needs to rezone the parcel from its existing A-Agriculture designation to B-3 Business—Scattered, and obtain a variance to retain certain agricultural uses.

To provide some context, the property in question is a 3-acre plot located in Estate Smith Bay, just off the Emile Francis Memorial Drive. This parcel was originally part of a larger tract in Estate Smith Bay that has been held in private ownership for several decades. It remained a part of the large undeveloped track until 2022 when Mr. Jones acquired it from Candace Lindqvist-Wallace with plans for agricultural and residential development.

Currently, the property is zoned A-Agriculture and is adjacent to the Government Cemetery, separated only by a vacant lot. Mr. Jones plans to develop a portion of this property into a modern apartment complex featuring four three-story buildings with a total of 36 two-bedroom units. The development will also include a convenience store, a laundromat, and a management/leasing office. The goal is to offer affordable housing while integrating accessible commercial uses and fostering self-sufficient communities. Though this approach to land use is not entirely new, Mr. Jones is applying it in a way that aligns with contemporary best practices. The parcel's strategic location—within walking distance of a gym, restaurant, and beach, a shopping center and near the federal services building, Smith Bay, and Red Hook—will minimize travel, protect the environment, and promote community cohesion. To realize this vision, Mr. Jones seeks to rezone the parcel from its current A-Agriculture designation to B-3 Business—Scattered, with a variance to retain certain agricultural uses.

The proposed rezoning will enable Mr. Jones to incorporate various commercial activities that are beneficial to the local economy and community. These include equipment rentals and leasing, car rental, auto garage, water delivery, storage, and distribution services. Additionally, he aims to continue the property's historical use for light organic farming and retail sales of agricultural products.

Along with our testimony, we are providing a PowerPoint presentation to better illustrate Mr. Jones's ideas and the details of the proposed development. We hope this presentation will visually convey the scope of the project, the benefits, and how it integrates with the surrounding areas.

[ZAT-24-7-1 James J Jones Rezoning .pptx](#)

The benefits of this rezoning are multifaceted. Environmentally, the property's flat topography minimizes sedimentation, and its distance from the nearest residence ensures minimal impact on surrounding properties. Economically, it will stimulate local growth in the following

ways:

**Job Creation:** The development of the apartment complex and associated commercial services will create several jobs, from construction to ongoing operations. This includes positions in property management, maintenance, and retail, as well as in the new businesses such as the auto garage, car rental and equipment rentals.

**Boost to Local Businesses:** The addition of a convenience store, laundromat, and various service-oriented businesses will provide essential services to the immediate community and create opportunities for local entrepreneurs. This, in turn, will stimulate additional economic activity and growth.

**Attraction of Temporary Workers:** The proximity of the property to the Red Hook Dock makes it an ideal location for housing temporary workers. This is particularly important as St. Thomas and St. John prepare for major upcoming projects. Providing affordable, well-located housing will help attract and retain skilled workers for these critical developments.

**Long-Term Impact:** By increasing the availability of rental units, we will help stabilize the housing market, which can have a cascading effect on reducing rental prices and improving housing accessibility for a broader segment of the population.

**Sustainable Agriculture:** By continuing the historical agricultural use with light organic farming and retail sales, Mr. Jones is supporting local agriculture and contributing to food security and sustainability within our community.

Throughout this process, we have engaged with residents of the area and stakeholders, addressing their feedback and concerns. We want to make it clear that the current complaint of dumping of tires and the historical complaints of debris dumping and disturbance concern an adjacent parcel. Also, the gut is more than 500 feet away from the subject parcel and will not be in any way impacted by the construction or operations. As is currently the case, the easement or access road to the property will be well maintained, and the commercial activities will be limited in time and scope to minimize impact on current residents along the access road.

In conclusion, the rezoning of Parcel No. 19-1 Bay to B-3 Business with a variance for agricultural uses is a vital step forward for both the economic and community development of St. Thomas. We respectfully request your support for this proposal so our client can move forward with the next phase of development.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am here to answer any questions you may have and to provide additional information as needed.