



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-18

Application No. ZAC-23-4

Petition of CAT5 Builders, LLC requesting that a use variance be granted to the R-4 (Residential-Medium Density) zoned Plot No. 19 and 20 Prince Street, Frederiksted Town, St. Croix.

PROJECT PROFILE

Owner/applicant: Evolve Warehouse, LLC as per Warranty Deed dated June 8, 2017, Document No. 2017002611. CAT5 Builders, LLC has entered into a lease agreement for use of the property.

Acreage: The property consists of 9,625 square feet as described on Measure Brief Folio No. 229.

Current Use: Property in use as CAT5's office and under lease agreement.

Proposed Use: To allow applicant to operate a Building Contractor's Office, Shops & Yards (General Contractor Services).

Surrounding Uses/ Zones: Surrounding the property is a mix of empty lots and uses including long and short-term rentals and former retail/storage buildings. The immediate area is zoned R-4 and B-3 (Business Scattered).

Infrastructure: Water needs are supplied by a cistern and in the future the public water line. Wastewater will be handled by the public sewer line.

Public Response: There has been no opposition to the proposal. One letter of support was submitted prior to DPNR's public hearing held May 23, 2023. During DPNR's public hearing, an adjacent property owner expressed their support and a second expressed concern with their property being used for parking.

ANALYSIS: Mr. Donald Stevens, managing member and co-founder of CAT5 Builders LLC testified during the Department's public hearing that the intent is to allow use of the property for his construction company's office.

The property has a two-story, warehouse-style building which was last used for a retail shop around 2016/2017. The property has historically been used for non-residential uses and had grandfather

or nonconforming status. The Zoning Code states that after three years of discontinuance of use or abandonment the grandfather or nonconforming status ceases.


The property's current R-4 zoning would have allowed for a home-based office under the "Home Occupation" category in the R-4 table of permitted uses. The home occupation use could have allowed for office use, internet retail sales, and storage of the applicant's equipment. The applicant, however, does not live on the site and permission cannot be granted.

The applicant's construction operation is a low-tech, compact manufacturing process that operates in a mobile fashion by producing building components at a construction site on a portable trailer. Steel and magnesium oxide boards go through a cold roll-forming process like how gutters are roll formed for housing. The highly weather resistant and cost-effective building system occurs under an environmentally friendly building process involving no heat, hazardous chemicals, or volatile organic compounds.

The applicant's request was analyzed based on the surrounding zoning and area's character, as well as the compatibility of their intended use of office and retail shop. The department sees the merits of the applicant's request for an office and retail shop in our downtown area. The proposed use would not be out of character with the surrounding area's zoning and character. It must be noted that the applicant intends to use the property as a start-up point and with company growth, move to an appropriate site for a large-scale manufacturing facility. It must also be noted that the property owner intends to convert the property's use once the lease agreement with CAT5 ends.

Recommendation:

The Department of Planning and Natural Resources recommends that a use variance be granted to the R-4 (Residential-Medium Density) zoned Plot No. 19 and 20 Prince Street, Frederiksted Town, St. Croix to allow for Building Contractors' Office, Shops & Yards (General Contractor Services) with the condition that construction manufacturing of building components are to occur at construction sites.



Jean-Pierre L. Oriol
Commissioner

05-July-2023

Date