



GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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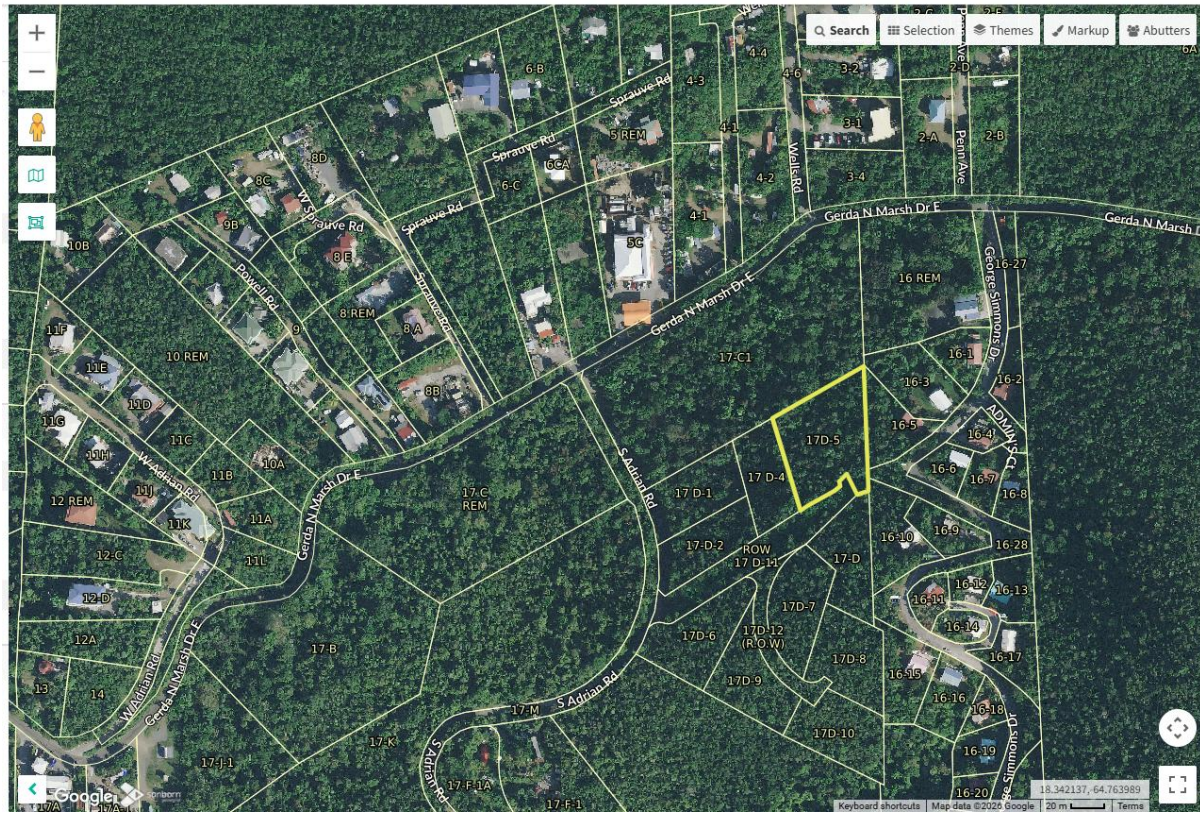
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Office of the Commissioner

**Report by the Division of Comprehensive and Coastal Zone Planning on the Petition to Amend Official Zoning Map No. SJZ-1, Application No. CCZP0011-26**

Petition of applicants Maxentius Griffith and John D. Griffith to amend Parcel No. 17-D-5, Estate Adrian, No. 18 Cruz Bay Quarter, St. John, from R-1 (Residential-Low Density) to B-3 (Business-Scattered). The purpose of the request is to allow a commercial trucking operation, including equipment storage facilities.



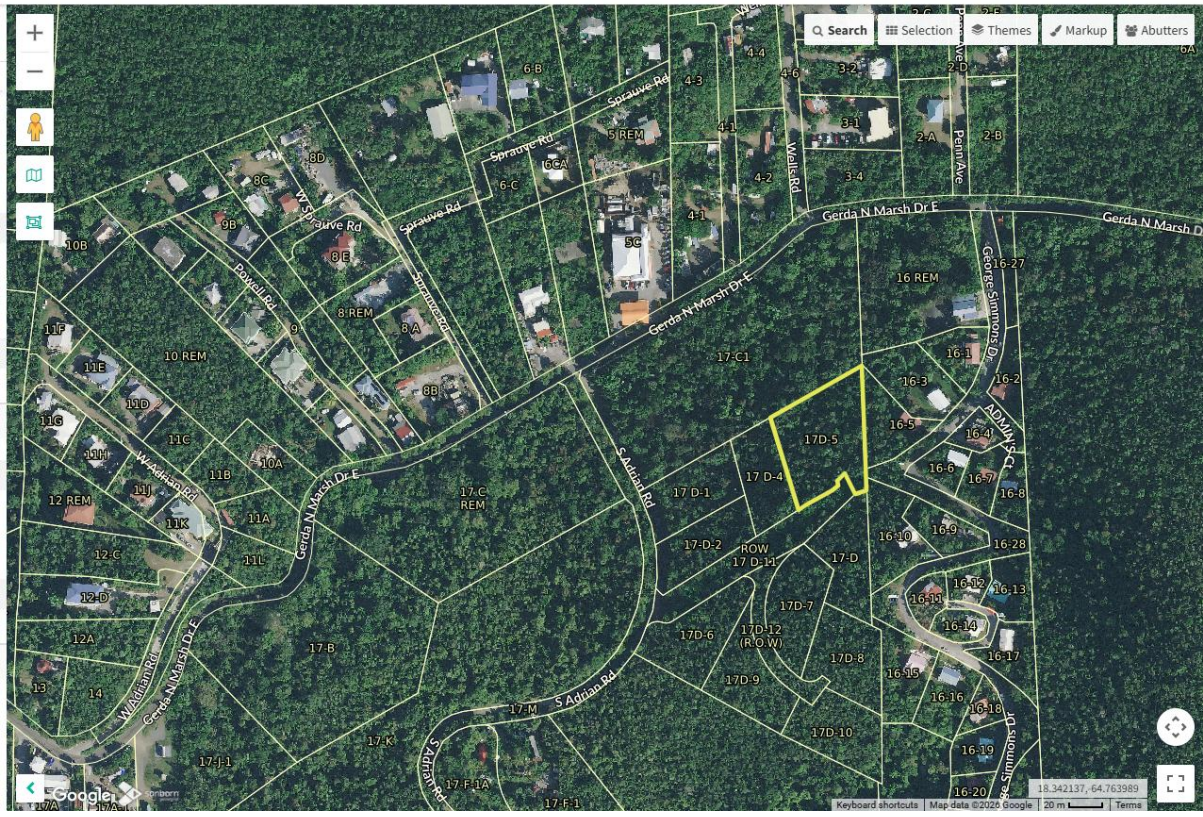
*Mapgeo aerial photo of site location- vacant land highlighted in yellow*

**Property Owner(s):** Maxentius Griffith and John D. Griffith, as per Warranty Deed dated May 15, 2017, recorded as Document No. 2017002889.

**Applicant Representative(s):** Jennifer Jones, Esq., Maxentius Griffith, and John D. Griffith.

**Acresage:** 0.83 acres, as described on Survey Drawing No. D9-9095-T016.

**Surrounding Uses and Zones:** North, South, and West- vacant land. East- residential subdivision.



*Mapgeo aerial photo of site location- vacant land highlighted in yellow*

The surrounding area is zoned R-1, R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family, and R-4 (Residential-Medium Density), with 13 zoning map amendments. The surrounding area reflects a mixed zoning pattern with multiple rezonings and use variances granted within Estate Adrian, including approvals for retail, professional services, automotive-related uses, restaurants, assisted living facilities, and heavy equipment operations.

Parcel No.	Year Rezoned	Original Zone	Rezoned To	Act No.
2B	1998	R-1	Use Variance	6235
5C	2005 & 2018	R-1	Use Variances	6812, 8144, & 8147
6	2020	R-1	Use Variance	8322
6D	2020	R-1	Use Variance	8324
8B	2004	R-1	Use Variance	6670

10B	1989	R-1	R-2	5455
11-D	1996	R-1	R-2	6129
11-E	1997	R-1	R-2	6192
11-K	2009	R-1	R-4	7083
16	1997	R-1	R-4	6192
17A Remainder	2001	R-1	Use Variance	6469
17F-2 & 17F- Remainder	2024	R-1	R-4	8862
17J-1	2011	R-1	Use Variance	7276



Official Zoning Map No. SJZ-1 (property location indicated by blue circle)

**Infrastructure:** Water- Cistern; Sewer- Independent sewage disposal system.

**Other DPNR Division reviews needed:** None, other than permits required for new construction.

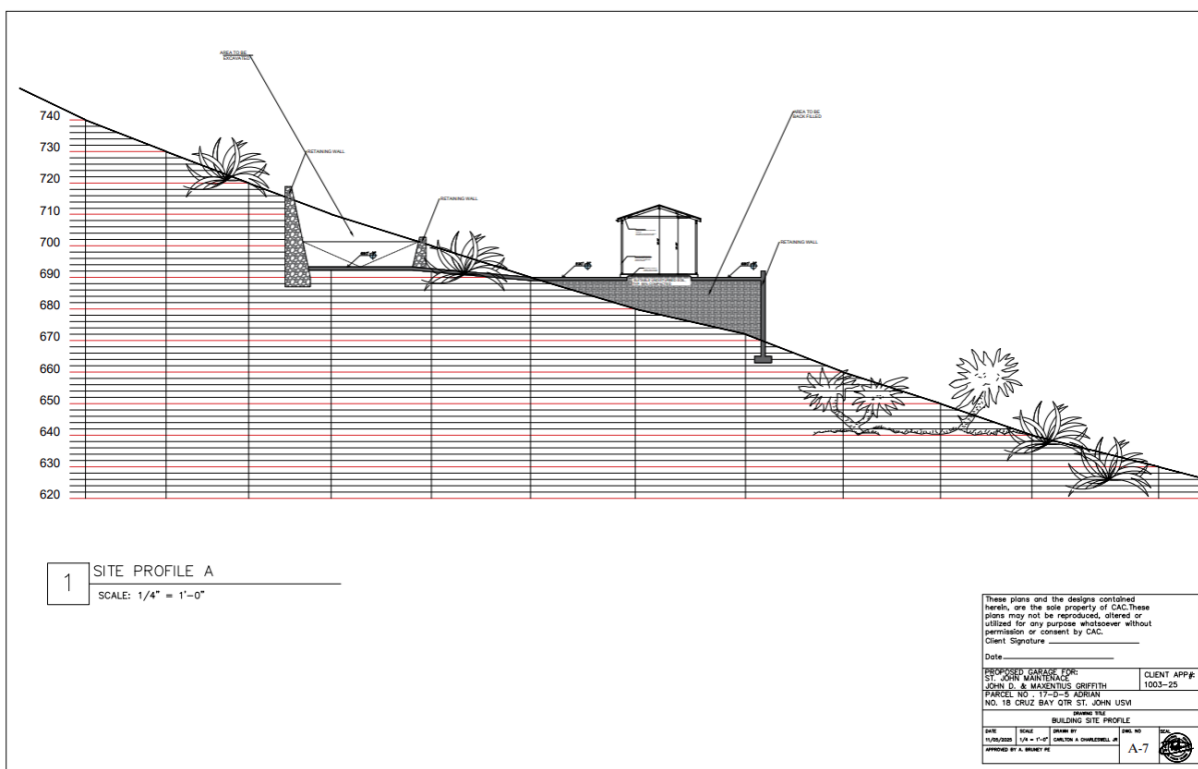
**Project Summary:** The applicants intend to establish permanent operations and an equipment storage facility for an existing locally owned trucking and water delivery business. The applicants currently operate from a rented site and seek a

secure, owned location to support and modestly expand essential services, primarily potable water delivery and construction support, for St. John. The proposed development will consist of construction of a single-story, enclosed three-bay garage for storage of water trucks, dump trucks, and heavy equipment.

Minimal on-site maintenance is proposed to be conducted indoors; major repairs would occur off-site. A small administrative office for scheduling, recordkeeping, and staff coordination will be housed in the garage. On-site parking (under 10 spaces) for employees and equipment will be provided, and the property will be fully fenced with vegetative buffering to minimize visual and noise impacts.

Operations would consist of approximately 6-8 trucks total (3-4 water trucks and the remaining dump trucks). About four employees on site at any given time and hours of operation being generally 8 am to 6 pm.

Property is vacant, previously agricultural use; low-lying but not within a floodplain, and contains no guts, cultural resources, or endangered species habitat. Stormwater management and erosion controls are proposed. Gravel/compacted surfaces are planned to reduce construction impacts.



Conceptual Site Plan Layout

**Public Response at DPNR-CCZP Public Hearing held April 20, 2026:** Public hearing comments focused on potential noise, traffic, infrastructure impacts, proximity to nearby residences, and the appropriateness of introducing commercial use in an area with surrounding residential zoning. The applicants stated impacts would be mitigated through buffering, limited operations, enclosed activities, and compliance with permitting requirements.

Consolidated Key Points Summary from 22 Public Comment emails/letters received after the public hearing:

#### Core Points of Opposition

- Strong, unified opposition to rezoning
  - All commenters oppose changing the parcel's zoning from residential to commercial/business to allow truck storage, construction yards, or equipment maintenance.
- Protection of residential neighborhood character
  - Estate Adrian is repeatedly described as a quiet, established residential community of families, seniors, and long-time residents.
  - The parcel is landlocked within residential homes, making commercial use fundamentally incompatible.
- Incompatible proposed use
  - The intended use, storage and repair of water trucks, dump trucks, and heavy equipment, is viewed as wholly incompatible due to:
    - Persistent diesel noise and idling
    - Early morning truck activity
    - Increased heavy vehicle traffic
    - Fumes, disruption, and loss of peace
- Impact on vulnerable populations
  - Numerous comments stress negative effects on elderly residents, including those at a nearby senior center, who rely on quiet and stability.
  - Safety concerns are raised for children and pedestrians on residential roads.
- Private road and infrastructure limitations
  - Access is via private estate roads never designed for heavy commercial traffic.
  - Heavy trucks would:
    - Accelerate road deterioration
    - Create safety hazards

- Shift maintenance and repair costs to residents, not the applicant
- Spot zoning concerns
  - The request is consistently characterized as spot zoning, benefiting a single property or business at the expense of:
    - Neighborhood cohesion
    - Fair land-use principles
    - Long-term planning integrity
- Conflict with the St. John Comprehensive Plan
  - Many comments cite inconsistency with the Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan, which prioritizes:
    - Residential housing
    - Cohesive, liveable communities
    - Protection of remaining residential corridors
- Cumulative commercial encroachment
  - Residents express concern over the growing spread of construction yards and truck storage into residential zones, setting a harmful precedent and gradually eroding community character.
- Property values, aesthetics, and liveability
  - Heavy equipment yards are described as unsightly, depressing property values, discouraging residential investment, and diminishing quality of life.
- Family, cultural, and historical significance
  - Many writers identify as descendants of the land's steward and stress a cultural responsibility to protect:
    - Family heritage
    - Community history
    - The long-term well-being of Estate Adrian
- Notice and public participation issues
  - Several commenters state they were not properly notified of the virtual hearing, limiting meaningful community participation and potentially understating opposition.
- Availability of alternative locations
  - While acknowledging the importance of water delivery and construction services, commenters argue these uses belong in properly zoned commercial or industrial areas, not residential neighborhoods.

## Uniform request to decision makers

- All submissions urge the Planning and Zoning authorities/DPNR to deny the rezoning application and require the applicant to pursue alternatives consistent with existing zoning and appropriate locations.

**Analysis of Request/Reason for Recommendation:** The proposed zoning map amendment has been reviewed for consistency with the U. S. Virgin Islands Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan (Comp Plan), adopted December 2024, including the Territory-wide guiding principles and the St. John island-specific policies. The Comp Plan establishes a clear policy direction to end ad-hoc rezonings that benefit isolated parcels and undermine long-term land-use planning, stating a foundational principle of “No More Spot Zoning.” The Comp Plan directs that zoning changes should occur only within the context of comprehensive planning, future land-use mapping, and implementation of modern zoning tools such as mixed-use districts, overlays, and performance standards.

The requested rezoning of a single residentially zoned parcel to a Business-Scattered classification, absent a broader area plan or identified future land-use designation, is inconsistent with this principle. Approval would constitute isolated spot zoning, providing a private benefit without demonstrating consistency with surrounding residential land-use patterns or advancing a defined public planning objective, contrary to the Comp Plan’s core reform goals.

Additionally, the St. John chapter of the Comp Plan places heightened emphasis on the protection of established residential neighborhoods, recognition of the island’s limited infrastructure capacity, and the prevention of incremental commercial and industrial encroachment into residential areas. The Comp Plan directs that non-residential uses be concentrated within planned mixed-use centers, commercial nodes, or appropriately designated industrial areas, rather than introduced through rezoning of residential parcels.

Service-industrial functions such as trucking operations, equipment storage, and business yards are specifically contemplated to be accommodated within planned mixed-use or industrial districts, where infrastructure, access, and land-use compatibility can be addressed comprehensively. Rezoning residential land to accommodate such uses is inconsistent with the Comp Plan’s island-specific guidance for St. John and its overarching objective to preserve neighborhood character, environmental quality, and community livability.

For these reasons, the proposed zoning amendment is not consistent with the U. S. Virgin Islands Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan, and denial is warranted to maintain conformance with adopted territorial and island-specific planning policy.

**Recommendation**

The Department of Planning and Natural Resources recommends denial.



Jozette J. Walker, CPM  
Assistant Commissioner

5.12.2026

Date

Cc: Jean-Pierre L. Oriol, Commissioner