DPNR-CCZP
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9/28/26

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September 27, 2026

Via Electronic Mail (leia.laplace@dpnr.vi.gov)

Mrs. Leia LaPlace-Matthew
Territorial Planner
Division of Comprehensive and Coastal Zone Planning
Department of Planning and Natural Resources
#45 Mars Hill
Frederiksted, VI 00840-4474

Re: Application CCZP0101-26 – Applicant's Response to Public Comments, Parcel No. 32A Hospital Line, King's Quarter, St. Thomas (Rezoning from R-3 to B-2)

Dear Mrs. LaPlace-Matthew:

Thank you and the Division for conducting the virtual public hearing on Application CCZP0101-26 on Tuesday, September 22, 2026. I attended the hearing and personally addressed the questions raised during the question-and-answer period, following the presentation delivered by Mr. Jason P. Charles on my behalf. I acknowledge that the public comment period remains open through Thursday, October 1, 2026, and I ask that this response be placed in the file and considered in the recommendation report. I write as the sole member of Cornerstone Holdings, LLC, the applicant.

Several concerns were raised during the hearing. I addressed them at the hearing and restate my responses here for the record.

1. Noise

The uses proposed are a health food store, a spa, a yoga studio, and a small mobile food and drink court. None of these is a noise-generating use; there is no nightclub, bar, or entertainment venue in the plan. Anticipated hours of operation are 6:30 a.m. to no later than 7:00 or 7:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday, with the early opening intended to serve morning commuters. There will be no business operations on Sundays.

2. Water Availability

The project will not draw down public water available to neighboring properties. Water disruptions and limits in the Hospital Ground area stem from the condition of the public utility's infrastructure, not from demand at any one parcel. Based on my own experience operating the sister property at 45 and 46 Prindsens Gade, where public water has been unreliable and I revitalized a historic cistern which alleviated all of my water concerns, Parcel 32A will be built with a cistern to capture rainwater, supplemented from the public line only as necessary. The project is designed to be substantially self-sufficient for water.

3. Driver Visibility Re-entering Traffic

The retaining wall does not obstruct sight lines as at the corner it will only be approximately 20 inches above ground level. Moreover, as double checked myself, a driver exiting Store Taarne Gade reaches the entrance at the road edge and has a clear view of traffic ascending Maude Proudfoot Drive. The only object obstructing any view at that corner is the large fiber-optic utility pole installed immediately at the corner, which predates this project and is not within the applicant's control.

4. Congestion at the Corner

It was never the plan for patrons of this establishment to park on the road. Parking has been planned on-site from the outset, and the revised layout described below expands it. Existing congestion at this corner is a product of illegal parking, which is a matter of enforcement. It is my understanding that the Virgin Islands Police Department, in coordination with the Department of Tourism, has taken an interest in the businesses located on Blackbeard's Hill and is aware of the parking conditions in the area. With continued dialogue, I expect the existing no-parking restrictions to be enforced during business hours.

5. On-Site Parking – Revised Site Plan

To further address the parking concerns, I have revised the site plan to raise the entire building on columns and create parking beneath it. Parcel 32A has approximately 128 feet of frontage along the Maude Proudfoot Drive boundary and in excess of 120 feet along the Store Taarne Gade boundary before the parcel narrows to its triangular point. The food court will occupy the majority of the Maude Proudfoot Drive frontage and extend back approximately 30 feet. The building will sit diagonally, from the upper portion of the Store Taarne Gade boundary running down toward the opposite boundary along Maude Proudfoot Drive. The majority of the building will sit on columns, leaving the ground area beyond the 30-foot food court strip available for on-site parking. This revised layout has been conveyed to my architect, and a rendering reflecting it is enclosed for the file.

Project Concept

The overall theme of the plan for Parcel 32A is health and wellness. The health food store will offer fresh produce and healthy options that I intend to make more affordable than what is currently available in the area. The spa and yoga studio address mental and spiritual health, which is too often overlooked. The food court will be known for fresh-pressed natural juices. I have not yet decided whether the food court will offer alcohol; if it does, it would be limited, ancillary, appropriately licensed, and oriented to visitors, with locally produced Cruzan rum paired with our juices. Finally, I hope to use the food court area occasionally to host a fun day for children in the neighborhood, drawing on my own experience cooking, which the mobile food van makes possible.

I appreciate the Division's consideration and remain available to answer any further questions before the October 1 deadline or as the recommendation report is prepared.

Respectfully,

/s/ Darren John-Baptiste
Darren John-Baptiste
Sole Member
Cornerstone Holdings, LLC

Enclosure: Site Rendering – Parcel No. 32A Hospital Line (Revised Layout)

cc: Keshoi Samuel, DPNR
Gail Pagan, DPNR
Jason P. Charles