

September 25, 2025

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

Re: Re-Zoning Application CCZP0069-25 – Plot 6A Beeston Hill

Dear MS. LaPlace-Matthew,

I strongly object to Plot 6A Beeston Hill's proposed re-zoning from R1 (Residential – Low Density) to B2 (Business). As a licensed Architect living and working full-time on St. Croix for over 36 years and a homeowner in Maison de Poincy, I feel compelled to raise concerns about this re-zoning attempt.

The proposed B2 zoning change would allow various uses that lack intrinsic value to our community. The central issue is that the uses permitted in B2 zoning are incompatible with the surrounding R-1 neighborhood. If the developer genuinely intends to provide affordable housing as they stated during the online meeting, they can easily achieve this within the current R-1 zoning framework.

The proposed B2 spot zoning change aims to accommodate uses that already exist and are underutilized in nearby locations such as Golden Rock, Downtown Christiansted, Gallows Bay, Five Corners, Peter's Rest, Sunny Isle, La Reine, and Sunshine Mall. This zoning change is not only unnecessary but would also directly compete with business and property owners in these areas who have been and continue to be under immense economic stress due to the closure of HOVENSA, Hurricane Maria, and most recently COVID-19.

During the developer's previous attempt at rezoning this parcel of land to B3 (Business) in 2021, he was recognized for providing contradictory and inaccurate information during the online meeting held at that time. This led to his agitation and threats. He disclaimed that if the zoning change was not approved, he would never sell the property but instead subdivide the land and build as many trailer homes as possible. Does this sound like a socially responsible individual who can be trusted to make the right decisions? This time around, he realized he was his own worst enemy in the last public online meeting and hired a mouthpiece to attempt to distract the community from the true intent of the zoning change.

The proposed zoning change and the so-called affordable residential development are not sustainable. The housing renderings provided were recycled from his previous presentation and attempt at zoning change. It's strange how condos from the last application have become low-cost housing in this application. This zoning change directly and aggressively assaults every adjacent R-1 property owner. As long-time residents and professionals, we all know that if this property were developed under B-2 zoning, it would likely fail to make a return on investment and end up as an underutilized and rundown like so many of the other existing B2 & B3 developments have become. We can't become short-sighted to the long-term consequences of spot zoning and the damage it can do to the fabric of existing low-density neighborhoods.

The Virgin Islands needs to preserve land, develop, and enforce sensitive zoning regulations. We should also implement incentive programs that foster the revitalization of existing commercial and business areas. We shouldn't be changing the lowest-density areas to allow for the highest-density uses. This zoning change represents outdated and short-sighted thinking. Instead of cleverly maximizing and revitalizing what we already have, let's let it decay and ruin. We'll duplicate it in another location, only to repeat the process when that area is also in decay. When will we stop? When will we be responsible? We live on an island with limited land resources, so everything we do to diminish it becomes amplified and accelerated. As a community, we need to wake up and realize that recycling isn't limited to plastic, glass, and metal in our everyday products. Recycling, revitalizing, and repurposing extend fully to our built environment. I urge you to reject this unnecessary and irresponsible attempt at zoning change.

Respectfully,

George C. Ashley Jr. RA NCARB