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13 Estate Beeston Hill
Christiansted, VI 00820

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Department of Natural Resources
Division of Comprehensive & Coastal Zone Planning
St. Croix, USVI
Attn: Leia LaPlace-Matthew
Territorial Planner

We are submitting these comments following the September 15, 2025 hearing for the Application No. CCZP0069-25: Atta Misbeh requesting rezoning R-1 (Residential-Low Density) to B-2 (Business-Secondary/Neighborhood) - 6a Estate Beeston Hill. The stated purpose of the request is to develop townhouses for both rental and sale.

In 2021, Mr. Atta Misbeh purchased the 15.94 acre parcel zoned R-1 (Residential-Low Density) and immediately began to work toward his goal which was “to build a shopping district as well as condos and townhouses.” Ultimately, in 2023, Governor Albert Bryan, Jr. wisely vetoed the effort to secure a spot zoning change from residential to commercial which, thankfully, ensured that the appropriate future land and water use applications for this beautiful hillside would remain as it has been historically designated - residential purposes only.

Mr. Misbeh has, once again, applied for a rezoning for the 15.94 acres from R-1 to B-2 this time proposing to construct and develop a 24 unit residential townhome community on up to four acres. It is important to note that the designated R-1 zoning *as written* allows for that exact type of development and that we, as residents of Estate Beeston Hill, approve of Mr. Misbeh’s rightful use of his land in keeping with the established surrounding residential neighborhoods. We have no objection to long term rental and ownership opportunities which are currently in short supply. Alternatively, short term rentals are widely available and do not fulfill Mr. Misbeh’s stated goal of providing quality homes for people who reside on St. Croix and for those who hope to one day establish themselves here rather than adding to the abundant housing options already available to the many visitors who come and go.

We have not yet had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Misbeh and look forward to meeting him someday soon especially as we understand that we share many foundational beliefs and experiences. We share a love of St. Croix- its diversity and unique culture, entrepreneurship, hard work, hospitality, family, and deep friendships with people from all over the globe who have made this island their home. Importantly, we too recognize the blessing that is being a part of this vibrant community and the responsibility we share to do our part to enrich the lives of others in whatever way we are able. We have visited family on St. Croix for years and, happily, just over one year ago purchased our

own home just up the hill from Mr. Misbeh's property. Our new neighbors have welcomed us warmly from the moment we purchased our home and have shown by their example how to appreciate and understand the uniqueness of this special place. These kind and compassionate neighbors have challenged us to engage purposefully and with greater understanding as we transition from visitors to invested stakeholders. We have been humbled by how they have demonstrated their own commitments to passionately serving and improving the lives of others who live on this island through their vocations, countless volunteer hours, generosity, and steadfast community mindedness over many years. Our neighbors continue to inspire us and challenge us to commit ourselves to being actively engaged in working to promote an increasingly healthy and thriving St. Croix - focusing especially on creating opportunities to maximize the potential of those just starting out in life. We are filled with optimism and have so much hope in the untapped potential of this beautiful island and especially in the beautiful people who call it home.

It is necessary and important to describe what we (and many others) have experienced here on St. Croix and to take the time to correct the misinformation about the "selfish" motives of those who are in favor of retaining the R-1 zoning for this property. Disappointingly, Ms. Alicia Barnes, who has been hired by Mr. Misbeh, has taken every opportunity to malign and disparage the good people of the surrounding neighborhoods that will be most impacted by the outcome of this decision. Shockingly, in public venues, Ms. Barnes has chosen to mischaracterize the concerned stakeholders as "not community minded" and "entrenched in luxurious entitlement, and even accused them of "seeking to stifle a younger generation of Crucians' potential." Furthermore, Ms. Barnes has claimed that those who are asking sincere and pertinent questions as to why Mr. Misbeh would even need to apply for a B-2 (Business-Secondary/Neighborhood) designation for a residential townhome community when R-1 satisfies his stated purpose. Ms. Barnes lamentably and wrongly described those who have concerns as emanating from a "hysterical space, bordering on some elitism, some classism, and a couple of other isms that I'm just going to let linger out there" and "they simply want their piece of paradise, and no one else is supposed to have a piece of it..." (to read even more of Ms. Barnes' defamatory, mean-spirited accusations please see the article in "The St. Thomas Source," September 15, 2025, by Mat Probasco as well as hearing Ms. Barnes repeating her derogatory remarks in the podcast "Walking the Talk with Alicia Barnes" September 22, 2025, S2 E2, entitled "Conversation with Atta Misbeh). Ms. Barnes' harsh, unkind, and untrue accusations are unacceptable and cannot go unanswered. Reasonable people can agree that her shameful personal attacks are extremely offensive and have no place in what is meant to be a forum for a cooperative and inclusive examination of the facts. Clearly Ms. Barnes' disrespect for her neighbors reveals that she has not taken the time to get to know the people who have joyfully, over many years, given much of their own time and treasure to enrich the lives of their Crucian neighbors regardless of where they live on the island.

The opposition to this rezoning request is, in fact, motivated by a sincere desire to achieve the highest and best outcome for the greater community which aligns with the

R-1 designation as well as the appropriate land use and water application. The central location of 6a Estate Beeston Hill is naturally integral to the daily lives of many - including all those who drive by, live, or work near this beautiful acreage. The significance of this parcel underscores the importance of retaining its intended use as it is currently and rightly designated - R-1 (Residential-Low Density).

Additionally, Ms. Barnes, representing Mr. Misbeh, has stated that securing the B-2 designation would “allow for a greater degree of leveraging resources” to finance the development of the property. With all due respect, easing and broadening Mr. Misbeh’s financing opportunities for developing the property should not be a consideration or a factor in the deciding whether or not to grant approval of a zoning change.

We’d like to end on a hopeful note, Mr. Misbeh has said that he desires to work “in good faith with the neighborhood” and we receive that as his commitment to work throughout each phase of the development and in the years to come with the utmost integrity. We are grateful for his desire to be a good neighbor. We share that desire with Mr. Misbeh as well. We are stakeholders engaging in good faith and with honorable motives as it should be.

Therefore it is in good faith that we, Mr. Misbeh’s neighbors, respectfully ask that his superfluous application for the rezoning of 15.94 acres - 6a Estate Beeston Hill- be denied once again. Mr. Misbeh is able to achieve his stated development goals within the existing R-1 zoning.

We thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely and with much gratitude,

Gregory A. and Helene K. Watts

“To whom much is given much is required...” Luke 12:48