

# Lawmakers Support Rezoning for Economic Development and Housing Expansion on St. Croix

**Senators back multiple rezoning requests aimed at boosting economic growth, creating housing opportunities, and fostering local business competition**

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Lawmakers on Monday expressed wholehearted support for several rezoning requests in the St. Croix district promising economic development and new housing opportunities for the island.

During a meeting of the Committee of the Whole, legislators heard testimony in support about rezoning various plots of land to allow for the construction of two separate housing developments, a mixed use property, and a retail and wholesale propane vendor. A final request sought the stamp of approval of the 35th Legislature to reconstruct a hurricane dock for private use.

?Bill No. 35-0302 requested the rezoning of Plot No. 8-E Estate Mount Pleasant, Prince Quarter, St. Croix from R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family) to B-3 (Business-Scattered), and the remainder of that property from R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family) to R-3 (Residential-Medium Density). That move would allow Lasso Investments LLC to construct a mixed-use development, and move their existing pharmacy from its current rental property to the Estate Mount Pleasant land that they own.

The owners are also interested in developing other retail spaces for lease, and a seventeen-unit tiny home development on the second plot of land. Despite some public concern over increased residential traffic and dust population during the construction phase, Design District Architects stated that the project will not disrupt “the established character of the area and will fit seamlessly along Centerline road.”?

The prospect of additional housing almost always wins over lawmakers, who in large part also supported Bill 35-0321. In this measure, property owners want to change the zoning designation of Plot No. 1068 Estate Williams Delight, Prince Quarter, St. Croix, Virgin Islands, from R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family) to R3 (Residential-Medium Density). There, they intend to build four to six small, long-term apartment units. The planned development has received no objection from neighbors. “The sole intent for the requested R-3 zoning was to address the housing crisis by offering greater housing density,” said the Department of Planning and Natural Resources’ Jewel Polimus.?

Meanwhile, BR No. 24-1172 sought to ratify the zoning application for Plot No. 8 Estate Cassava Garden for a use variance to the I-2 (Light Industry) zoning to operate the storage, retail and wholesale of propane. The applicant will offer propane for sale to commercial and residential customers. According to project representative and former senator Alicia Barnes, “Estate Cassava Garden presents an ideal location to operate a propane retail and wholesale facility,” as two similar businesses are already located in the area. The project will “drive competition in the local propane retail and wholesale market, which is a benefit to consumers.” The development is expected to generate approximately ten permanent jobs after completion.?

The property in question is subject to a retained easement that allows Hovensa LLC and its successors to access the premises to utilize existing monitoring wells on the property, or install “additional monitoring and or recovery wells or remediation systems, as may be required by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.” The property owners, Siri Hamed and Atta Misbah, are aware and cooperative.

The final request, Bill No. 35-0280, seeks to ratify Minor Coastal Zone Permit No. CZX-21-22 (W) issued to Teague Paradise, LLC for the redesign and size reduction of an existing 338 sq. ft. dock, to a 268 sq. ft. dock seaward of Plot 20, Teague Bay, Christiansted. The current dock had been damaged by Hurricanes Huga, Irma, and Maria. The new owner, Michael Joukowsky, is expected to pay \$3,200 in annual rent for the marine property. The size reduction aligns the dock with the original design of the structure.?

Lawmakers are expected to vote in favor of these rezoning requests at an upcoming Legislative session.