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Cowpet Bay in St. Thomas Seeks Major Permit for Wastewater Upgrades and Balcony Repairs

The condominium development, built in the 1960s, is applying for its first full major permit to upgrade its wastewater treatment system, repair balconies, and bring the property into compliance with CZM regulations

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Cowpet Bay West Condominium By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

Members of the Coastal Zone Management committee on Thursday were presented with a permit application for Cowpet Bay West Condominiums on St. Thomas. The project seeks to upgrade the property's wastewater treatment plant, complete structural repairs on several balconies, and bring the entire condo development into compliance.

The CZM regulatory framework did not exist when the buildings were first constructed in the early 1960s, explained Emily Burton, the architect serving as the project representative. Renovations done after hurricanes in 1995 and 2017 were completed under a repair or maintenance permit. “So this is our first actual submission for a legitimate full major permit for the entire property,” Ms. Burton noted.

Cowpet Bay West consists of 17 buildings across nine acres of land, containing 104 condominium units in total. Plans are to construct a new wastewater treatment system, which is expected to significantly improve capabilities. The system exists within a container, which would itself require a 40 ft by 9 ft concrete slab to rest on. “We are also proposing to keep the existing wastewater treatment plant in place to serve as a backup,” Ms. Burton said.



The entrance sign for Cowpet Bay West, a private residential community in St. Thomas.

Regarding the property's first major permit application submitted to CZM, Ms. Burton explained that it included several drawings intended to serve as a “record set,” detailing the various spaces within the condo buildings throughout the property. The goal is to allow for repairs to the balconies on ocean-facing units, as well as any future repairs and upgrades, to be carried out under the same permit once it is approved.

After several technical questions regarding the operation of the wastewater plant and the disposition of the effluent from that plant (into landscaping and redirected back as gray water for toilet flushing), commissioners indicated that they would consider a site visit prior to scheduling a decision meeting for the project.