

logo not found or type unknown

Roberts Outlines Bold Agenda for DSPR, Wins Committee Approval for Commissioner Role

Roberts vows to revitalize department facilities, activate the Sports Commission, improve safety and ADA compliance, and reduce dependency on government funds through asset-based revenue strategies and sports tourism partnerships.

Senate / **Published On July 23, 2025 07:17 AM /**

Nelcia Charlemagne **July 23, 2025**

Image not found or type unknown



Vincent Roberts at the V.I. Legislature on Tuesday, July 22, 2025. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE.

Vincent Roberts, acting as commissioner of the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation since Calvert White [resigned in January](#), has received the nod of approval from the Committee on Rules and Judiciary.

Mr. Roberts appeared before the committee on Tuesday, armed with a list of goals that he intends to turn into reality at DSPR. Boosting employee morale is one of his priorities. “It appears to be affected by a lack of communication, inclusion in decision-making and limited recognition of upward mobility opportunities,” Mr. Roberts explained. The department must now “renew its focus on communicating effectively with employees.” He is planning to work more closely with his team of 113 to accomplish long and short-term goals, including increased revenue generation.

“I will lead the implementation of several key strategies designed to diversify DSPR’s revenue base, reduce reliance on appropriated funds and unlock the earning potential of departmental assets,” he testified. Mr. Roberts proposes adjusting facility rental fees and lease agreements to reflect “the fair market value.” He plans to introduce “advertising and sponsorship opportunities across department assets.”

Enhancing safety at DSPR’s facilities is another of Mr. Roberts’ goals. “Among the most pressing issues are unauthorized vending, vagrancy and crowd control violations,” he testified. Mr. Roberts envisions eventually establishing dedicated vendor zones at selected facilities to promote order. In the absence of funding for internal enforcement expansion, DSPR intends to engage the V.I. Police Department and Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs for support.

In the interim, DSPR has “closed some loopholes” between itself and DLCA that led to vendors receiving licenses for activities not permitted by the department. “It’s a collective effort to put a policy or procedure in place,” he assured Senator Angel Bolques, Jr. While the department is working with other agencies currently, “it’s still our position that we need our own enforcement arm,” Mr. Roberts said, but disclosed that “our budget does not have the funding for that right now.”

Beautification of DSPR’s facilities is one of Mr. Robert’s low-hanging fruit.

There are several goals, though, that will require sustained work. “I aim to transform the United States Virgin Islands into a top destination for sports tourism,” Mr. Roberts declared. To achieve long-term goals such as the aforementioned, Mr. Roberts promised lawmakers that he will activate the Sports Commission and work closely with the Department of Tourism to “pursue partnerships.”

“I definitely would like to see the activation of the Sports Commission,” remarked Senator Kenneth Gittens. He also backed the idea of partnering with the Department of Tourism, noting that the agency recently gave \$10 million to a major sports team—possibly the New York Jets—and suggested that similar funding could help upgrade local facilities to attract teams for winter training.

Mr. Roberts is certain that the tenure of the last set of Sports Commission members has expired. Historically, there have been issues in achieving a quorum for the nine-member Commission. The commissioner agreed with committee chair Senator Carla Joseph’s suggestion that the Commission could be downsized to five. “We’ll take that into consideration,” she promised.

Mr. Roberts also wants to implement the Capital Improvement and Facility Enhancement Plan, a territory-wide assessment of all DSPR facilities. The plan is a “blueprint for transforming our public spaces into thriving, inclusive and future-ready centers of community life,” testified Mr. Roberts. It focuses on safety, accessibility, usability, and sustainability. Ensuring facilities become ADA compliant is important for DSPR.

The commissioner nominee is also holding on to hope that the Department could construct and operate public gymnasiums in both districts. The commissioner nominee plans to “identify suitable locations and pursue funding opportunities through local appropriations, federal grants, [and] public-private partnerships to bring this vision to reality.”

Outside of those goals, Senator Clifford Joseph was interested in Mr. Robert’s plans to ensure accountability and “efficient use of public funds.” For the upcoming fiscal year, DSPR is requesting \$9,272,040 from the general fund. “I think we get away from documentation a little too much,” replied Mr. Roberts, emphasizing the need for related policies and procedures.

Once the Paul E. Joseph Stadium is complete, [potentially by Christmas 2025](#), the facility will be handed over to DSPR. Senator Alma Francis Heyliger attempted to gauge the Department’s readiness. “We would actually need a few more employees stationed to that facility permanently because it's a big facility,” noted Mr. Roberts. That comes at an additional cost. “The last thing I want to hear is he says he turned over the keys and then we're still waiting,” Ms. Francis Heyliger stated.

With Mr. Roberts one step closer to the commissioner title, Senator Gittens has pledged the Legislature’s assistance. “We have to support you as well in order for you to succeed, so don't hesitate to reach out.”