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\$5 Million Infusion Expected to Jumpstart Redevelopment of St. Croix Racetrack After Years of Stalled Progress

Sports, Parks and Recreation leaders said they will issue bids and begin renovations to stables, rails, and track facilities once Bill 36-0119 is approved. Senators emphasized the need for maintenance in the meantime to avoid further costs and delays.

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The current site of the Randall "Doc" James Racetrack after the original facility was demolished. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

The V.I. Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation may soon have access to a \$5 million injection of funds to complete the improvements at the Randall "Doc" James Racetrack in St.

Croix.

Previously the responsibility of VIGL Operations, LLC, the Government of the Virgin Islands [regained control of the racetrack](#) in early 2025. With the VIGL contract terminated, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. contended that the agreement “presents a valuable opportunity to reassess and refocus our efforts on delivering a racetrack that meets the needs and expectations of our community.”

On Friday, Senator Avery Lewis informed the DSPR team that Bill No. [36-0119](#) would “reprogram \$5 million to the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation to assist with the Randall “Doc” James racetrack.”

Though the bill has not been brought to the Legislative floor, it reprograms the \$5 million that was appropriated in Act 8651 from the Community Facilities Trust Fund and given as a grant to VIGL Operations via DSPR. Now, through Bill 36-0119, the department will keep the money.

DSPR is understandably excited. “It's been a long time coming,” remarked Arol Able, the department’s sister recovery specialist. “As soon as we get access to that funding, we'll be putting out a scope of work, accepting bids,” said Mr. Able, promising to “start work immediately” on moving the project along.

The department has already conducted walkthroughs at the racetrack and has identified several challenges. Apart from issues with the rails, Mr. Able shared that “there's major work that needs to be done at the stables.” That includes plumbing and electrical upgrades as well as work on the roof. Per Mr. Able, there is “a lot of work to be done there.”

DSPR initially aimed to have the running surface [prepared by December](#), but Mr. Able indicated that a more realistic timeline is early 2026. “We hope to have at least the running surface done so individuals can exercise their horses, prepare their horses, particularly the young ones, and also have horses to supplement the St. Thomas races while the St. Croix racetrack is being built.”

“I ask you and the team, get all your documents together. Got that money coming,” Senator Lewis stated.

Senator Novelle Francis was also excited about the prospect of work kicking into high gear. “We will make the \$5 million available in the near future to go towards the necessary work to be done,” he stated. “I'm hoping and praying that outside of that initial funding, that in fact, we have everything in place to move that forward.”

DSPR has already conducted testing of the running surface and analyzed the structural integrity of the stables. The design of the grandstand is “60% complete” per Mr. Able.

Until Bill 36-0119 is discussed and acted upon in the Legislature, Senator Franklin Johnson has encouraged DSPR to do what it can to maintain the grounds. He referenced overgrown brush on the racing surface.

Mr. Able offered an explanation, stating that “our thinking is that if we cut the grass and make it more attractive, it will generate more people to come there.” Currently, there is no security stationed on location, and DSPR fears that individuals would be likely to enter the grounds if the race track is made more hospitable.

Franklin understood that logic but nonetheless felt that they could tidy up the parking lot. “It's not going to get cheaper. So if you at least maintain the parking lot area, [and the] circle inside the track, it will be a lot easier when you're ready,” he advised. He has encouraged DSPR to partner with relevant government entities that possess the necessary equipment to handle such tasks.

“If you're going to wait until you're ready to do this, you ain't going to have no government agency that can help you. It's going to take a private contract. It's going to take more money again,” Mr. Francis warned.

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