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Ballpark Upgrades Stalled by Contractor Disputes, DSPR Tells Lawmakers

Asphalt and lighting delays at the Emile Griffith Ballpark reflect wider problems across basketball and tennis courts. Officials admitted some projects were substandard and vowed to push for bonding remedies or new contracts.

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Nelcia Charlemagne **September 26, 2025**

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The Emile Griffith Ballpark in St. Thomas, USVI. By. OFFICE OF DISASTER RECOVERY.

Despite “considerable work” done on the Emile Griffith Ballpark, which reopened in January 2025, Senator Angel Bolques Jr. has noted “delays” with the installation of “asphalt upgrades and some lighting.”

He sought an update from the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation when a team of representatives appeared before the Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports and Parks on Friday.

Arol Able, DSPR's disaster recovery specialist, responded, indicating that the department has "an issue with our asphalt contractor in completing a job that he was hired to do a couple years ago." The matter has been escalated to the Department of Property and Procurement.

"They're exploring the possibility of going after their bonding, since it appears to us that they're not willing to or able to complete the job," Mr. Able shared. The contractor in question was not named. However, Mr. Able revealed that the challenges are not unique to the Emile Griffith Ballpark.

"There's quite a few basketball courts and tennis courts that have not been done. Some were done, and they were done substandard," Mr. Able said. Now, the department is working assiduously to "solve that situation." They intend to eventually "hire another contractor to complete the job."

The aforementioned projects are federally funded. While Mr. Able does not believe DSPR is at risk of losing any of these funds, he emphasized the need to "get the job finished." However, Mr. Able was not able to anticipate just how long it will be before a solution is achieved.