

VIPA Ratifies Sublease Arrangement Tied to Randall “Doc” James Racetrack Reconstruction

The vote allows the government’s existing FAA-approved lease arrangement with VIPA to remain in place while Southland Gaming becomes involved through a sublease structure connected to the ongoing reconstruction of the St. Croix racetrack.

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The V.I. Port Authority governing board on Wednesday ratified an earlier poll vote tied to a sublease arrangement involving the Government of the Virgin Islands and Southland Gaming, clearing a procedural step connected to the ongoing reconstruction of the Randall “Doc” James Racetrack on St. Croix.

The action was not presented as a new direct lease between VIPA and Southland Gaming. Instead, the structure discussed around the item indicates that VIPA's role was to consent to the use of an existing lease arrangement connected to the property, allowing Southland Gaming to participate through the government's leasehold interest rather than through a separate lease directly with the Port Authority. VIGL previously held the government agreement tied to the racetrack project, but that contract was later unwound, clearing the way for the government to pursue a new arrangement involving Southland Gaming.

The distinction is important because the racetrack property is tied to VIPA's airport-related land obligations and federal oversight. VIPA previously leased the property to the Government of the Virgin Islands, with the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation connected to the government's use of the site. That VIPA-to-GVI lease had already received approval from the Federal Aviation Administration.

With the government now [seeking to advance](#) its arrangement with Southland Gaming for the racetrack project, the approach allows the existing VIPA/GVI lease to remain in place. Under that structure, the government side — through Sports, Parks and Recreation and related agencies — remains connected to the underlying lease, while Southland Gaming would operate as the sublessee or authorized user for purposes tied to the racetrack reconstruction.

The practical effect is that VIPA does not have to create a separate direct lease with Southland Gaming for the property. Southland's rights would flow through the government's existing lease arrangement, rather than directly from VIPA. The structure also appears designed to avoid reopening the already FAA-approved VIPA/GVI lease for a new round of federal review.

The matter was one of two poll votes brought before the board for ratification during Wednesday's meeting. The racetrack-related item was approved without extended debate, formally confirming the earlier vote.

The second ratification item, however, prompted a broader discussion about VIPA's internal voting procedures. That matter involved a May 14 poll vote to extend an agreement between VIPA and Sky City for an undisclosed length of time.

During that discussion, board member Celestino White questioned whether board members should continue participating in poll votes if they are unable to change their votes by the time the matter returns for ratification at a public board meeting. Mr. White expressed concern that new information could emerge between the original poll vote and the later ratification, potentially causing a board member to reconsider their position.

VIPA legal counsel Catherine Hendry explained that once the window for reconsideration has passed, board members are locked into their votes for ratification purposes. However, she said members who participated in the earlier vote could still pursue other procedural options, including motions to rescind or amend the action if they believe such a step is necessary.

No such motion was made on the Sky City matter, and the agreement extension was ultimately ratified.