

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Has Big Plans For Paul E. Joseph Stadium

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Governor Kenneth Mapp has plans for the Paul E. Joseph Stadium project in Frederiksted, telling a packed audience at the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting on Thursday that while he suspended the work being done through a \$20 million contract [signed between former Governor de Jongh and GEC](#), the project's lead contractor, the idea was to eventually move ahead with the project, albeit in a grander fashion, through the Frederiksted Revitalization Project.

"On the issue of Paul E. Joseph Stadium, I want to be very clear that we're not opposed to this project," Mapp said, pointing out that, because of his years spent heading up the the Public Finance Authority (PFA), there is no way he could be opposed to the reconstruction of the stadium. Instead, the governor said, his concern is with making sure

the people of the Virgin Islands was getting the best possible deal.

"I want to be clear that my concern in this job is to ensure that you, the people of the territory, receive the value for your money," the governors said.

And just as he did during his [February press conference](#) held at Government House on St. Croix, Mapp again pointed out the many discrepancies with the contract that former



2005 rendering of reconstruction of Paul

E. Joseph stadium area in Frederiksted

"I'm not going to participate in just signing contracts and spending money on some premise that there will be some economic return to this territory," Mapp said. "That is not how you manage, that does not work, and anyone running a successful business will tell you that is a path to bankruptcy.

"And so I suspended the project simply because, how do you sign a contract of \$20 million to do a project for which there are no concepts, no designs, there are no specifications, and then the contract has loose ends regarding what could be done with savings, what the costs are, or no lack of cost containment," the governor said.

The governor's team had on display Thursday a concept design of the Frederiksted Revitalization Project the government paid \$200,000 for in 2005, which Mapp said was a "complete layout that was driven by the community of St. Croix in 2005."

Mapp made known that what was on display yesterday may not be covered by the \$20 million in the de Jongh contract.

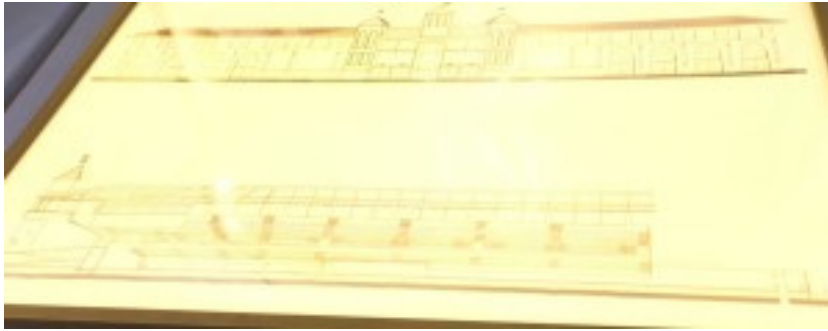
"We may need to put in more money," he said, "but there are funds available under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the flood mitigation issues at La Grange, which needs to be tied into part of this process."

The 2005 design, according to Mapp, contains "mitigation for the flood issues that occur at [Estate] La Grange," something he says is not included in the contract that was placed on hold.

"So, if you put \$20 million on the footprint of Paul E. Joseph Stadium, and do not deal with the flood issues that come out of the La Grange hill, on our first major rain, you will lose the facility because dugouts and bathrooms will be filled with mud," Mapp warned.

Earlier in his talk, the governor said the Army Corps of Engineers told him a lot of what he wants to do with the flood mitigation issues with phase 2 of the Frederiksted Revitalization Project is aesthetic. Because of this, the Corps said it will only contribute money to mitigate flood damage, "and that's fine," Mapp said.

"We will take the money to mitigate the flood damage and add the additional pieces of money to make sure that that project works in tandem with the revitalization of Frederiksted, and I should submit to the community, that the whole issue of the stadium and the softball field and the festival village -- and everything that was occurring in that area, was not about building a stadium only, it is about revitalizing a town, driving the value for visitation, for sports, competition, and for training of our young people. It's



governor explained.

Stadium plans from 2005

He continued: "And the evidence supports that, when we did phase 1 on [Strand Street](#), and put the government money in the infrastructure -- any of you that are in Frederiksted, we ask you to just simply turn east, stand in the park and turn east, and every private property that are [part of the] improvement of downtown Frederiksted on the waterfront has been restored and renovated by 100 percent private capital, with no tax incentive, and no government money.

"And that just drives the point that if the government takes care of its responsibilities in the infrastructure, private capital and investment will follow," Mapp said.

The 2005 design was a community effort, Mapp recalled, adding that it made no sense to relegate the work and money poured into it for something seemingly inferior.

"And so what we want you to see in the room next door is your plan," Mapp said. "Your work, your signatures for committee chairpersons in the charrette process that fully designed a stadium to house a population of 5,000 people. A softball field, flood mitigation issues, including the electrical infrastructures, the need to raise the level of the field from being below sea level to above sea level to be able to protect the asset that is there.

"Your government paid to have this done," Mapp continued, "why do we need to put \$2 million more on the table to start the process all over again?"

The governor, after driving home his point in support of using the concept that existed from 2005, then explained how his administration intends to move forward.



"So what is our plan. We're going to bring the company in that, in 2005 developed this process with the community, only to fully design the product in tandem with the community's efforts and the dollars that the government has available, do a costing of that project, for which we will then sit with the current contractor, GEC, to see if we could work out a system where they can, in fact, have access to do the construction of the project.

"But that the government knows what it is buying, and what it should pay for, and what the quality attributes of the stadium ought to be, and the flood and mitigation issues to protect the town and the community of La Grange, in tandem with federal dollars that we need to ensure that happens," Mapp said.

During his confirmation hearing before the Senate Rules and Judiciary Committee, Pedro Cruz, commissioner-designee for the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation, said the demolition of the Paul E. Joseph stadium is still underway in Frederiksted.