

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp On Randy Knight's Departure: 'The Timing Was Right'

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ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp on Tuesday morning at Government House here confirmed Randolph Knight's resignation from the chief of staff position, which occurred last week, nearly 24 hours following a Consortium story that revealed some of the contention that preceded Mr. Knight's departure. Mr. Knight, a multi-millionaire who in great part funded the governor's multiple bids for the highest office in the territory, also resigned from the West Indian Company's board, according to Mr. Mapp.

The governor said although Mr. Knight had committed to staying one year as chief of staff, he stayed for 20 months. And in an effort to downplay any sense of chaos that may be unfolding following Mr. Knight's departure, the governor told this reporter that

anywhere there are people, there must be disagreements.

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"When you speak of factions, I could put you in a room with just you and I sitting there, and I guarantee you there's going to have some contentions, because that's just the way it is. You know, people are advocating for their positions as to what they think may be best. People are sensitive how they are treated, so I think that's a normal course," Mr. Mapp said.

According to sources with intimate knowledge the wranglings, Mr. Knight had discord with the governor about Cherie Munchez, the administration's communications director, and wanted her fired for lack of experience. During the Limetree Bay official opening events, Mr. Johnson and Ms. Munchez were left out of a planned dinner; a situation that caused much consternation at Government House.

The governor contended today, however, that Mr. Knight did not leave because of bad blood between himself and other players at Government House.

"I can say Randy didn't leave because he had any war going with members of his staff, or confusion with members of the cabinet," Mr. Mapp said. "He has investments on the mainland, he has business that he's dealing with as well, and he left after he had reached to the point where [he said], 'Listen, I stuck as long as I can but I really need to move on,' and he chose to do that at this time."

Mr. Mapp added: "The timing was right; he was tremendously helpful with the efforts of this administration."

The governor said his administration would use the election season to take a break while giving the senators a chance to campaign. Following the elections, Mr. Mapp should announce a new chief of staff.

Also at the press conference, the governor discussed a wide-ranging wellness program that his administration is in the process of initiating. And he spoke at length about his time at The Biggest Loser program on the mainland, and how what was gleaned during the week-long program would benefit local efforts. We'll have more on that in story on Wednesday morning.