

The Virgin Islands Consortium

At Festival Village Opening, Mapp Talks Changes, Expansion

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ST. CROIX -- Governor Kenneth Mapp spoke at the opening of the Crucian Christmas Festival Village on Thursday, as has become custom for governors. At the event -- which saw light attendance in the beginning but grew immensely as time passed -- Mr. Mapp encouraged eventgoers to enjoy the festivities, but also made mention of changes that he believes would enhance the experience of festival and carnival.

Speaking to The Consortium in the company's Elevate Lounge, the governor made known that the carnival and festival committees in St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John, though they are financially sustained by the government, were formatted as private entities, giving the government little say in decisions being made, or how the monies are

spent. Mr. Mapp proposed changes that would see the government having at least two seats on the committees, which he said would lead to more investments into the festivities.

Mr. Mapp also addressed the controversy surrounding the lack of festival village rides; there are none this year. Mr. Mapp said the company that had worked with the St. Croix Festival Committee in the past was providing rides that were unsafe.

Also speaking at the opening ceremony were Lieutenant Governor Osbert Potter, outgoing Senate President Neville James, Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, and Police Commissioner Delroy Richards -- who spoke about the V.I.P.D.'s efforts to ensure a safe festival season, while warning potential criminals to think twice before acting.

Bands that played last night included Kylo and the Stylee Band, Fusion Band, and Onion and the Three Cylinder Band, out of Antigua. Tonight, festivities continue with KPI Band, Hartatak International Band, Small Axe Band.

This year's Festival Village honored Rita Chiverton (above with Mr. Mapp), whose first booth in the Village was 26 years ago. She has participated in the Village ever since, according to the event's program.