

The Virgin Islands Consortium

In Revealing Task Force, Mapp Calls For Improvements To Cruise Ship Visitor Experience

Business / **Published On April 13, 2017 10:17 AM /**

Staff **April 13, 2017**



ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp at a press conference held at Government House on Wednesday, called for the private and public sectors to work together to improve the experience for cruise ship passengers visiting Charlotte Amalie.

The call to action came during the inaugural gathering of the Ports of the Virgin Islands – Charlotte Amalie Task Force on Wednesday, where Mr. Mapp met with members of his cabinet, Senator Neville James, who chairs of the 32nd Legislature's Committee on Economic Development, the local business community and other stakeholders -- and called for a holistic working strategy that focuses on “newness and variety” to help spur visitor spending and to develop experiences that would inspire cruise ship passengers to

return to the territory both on cruises and stay-over vacations.

The task force, which comprises representatives from retail stores, ground transportation operators, spirits distributors, restaurants, the Virgin Islands Port Authority, the West Indian Company, the Department of Tourism, the Department of Public Works and the Office of the Governor, will produce a communications plan to provide updates on dredging and other major projects that impact residents and the visitor experience, as well as convene a Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA)/Ports of the Virgin Islands town meeting early this summer, according to the governor.

Mr. Mapp also called for renewal and revitalization of the St. Thomas product so that the destination can regain its position as the premier Caribbean cruise experience. During his talk, the governor said he'd received an email from an executive of the Carnival Cruise Line, who had described his visit to St. Thomas as "horrible."

Together with D.O.T. Commissioner Beverly Nicholson-Doty, D.P.W. Commissioner Gustav James, an Department of Property and Procurement Commissioner designee Lloyd Bough Jr., the governor updated task force members on the progress towards establishing a harbor transportation service in the Charlotte Amalie Harbor. The proposed service, for which a request for proposal (RFP) is being developed, would link five stops between Crown Bay and the West Indian Company docks and Downtown Charlotte Amalie.

The territory's leader, who appealed to the business community to recommend innovative ways to engage visitors in onshore activities, said another strategy being pursued is an effort to work with federal officials to ease some of the travel restrictions for neighboring Caribbean nationals wishing to visit the territory.

While task force members expressed support for the objective to improve the visitor experience, some voiced concern about the duration of major road construction projects such as the Main Street renovation and urged the administration to ensure efficient planning and execution.

Meetings of the Ports of the Virgin Islands – Charlotte Amalie Task Force are scheduled to take place on a monthly basis, while discussions with the FCCA will be held quarterly, the first of which is with the FCCA Operations Committee in Miami next week.

During today's meeting, Mr. Mapp thanked outgoing W.I.C.O. President and CEO, Joseph Boschulte, for his years of service to the West Indian Company and congratulated former senator Clifford Graham on his appointment as the new CEO. The governor said he looked forward to continuing a strong working relationship with Mr. Boschulte, who will assume a senior cruise-related role with the D.O.T. in the months ahead.

Feature Image: From left to right, atop: Clifford Graham and Joseph Boschulte. Below, Kenneth Mapp and Beverly Nicholson-Doty.