

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Cruise Line Executives Said To Be Encouraged By USVI Harbor Plans

Tourism / **Published On July 05, 2018 11:47 PM /**

Staff **July 05, 2018**



The Ports of the U.S. Virgin Islands group recently completed its quarterly update with the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association's (FCCA) Operations Committee in Miami, where cruise executives were briefed and provided feedback on port improvements, including the introduction of transportation to the Charlotte Amalie Harbor this year, the Department of Tourism (D.O.T.) announced via release Thursday.

The U.S.V.I. team included D.O.T. Commissioner Beverly Nicholson-Doty; Dept. of Public Commissioner Nelson Petty; Virgin Islands Port Authority Executive Director David Mapp; V.I.P.A. Assistant Executive Director and Director of Engineering Damian Cartwright; and Clifford Graham, CEO of The West Indian Company Limited (WICO).

Mr. Petty outlined progress on implementing harbor transportation and updated the FCCA group on the Main Street and Veterans Drive projects, while Mr. Mapp and Mr. Cartwright spoke about the proposed dredging of the Charlotte Amalie Harbor, its adjacent channel as well as cruise ship berths at WICO to accommodate larger Oasis Class vessels, according to the D.O.T. release.

The dredging design for Crown Bay and a new mooring dolphin to accommodate quantum class vessels on the north berth were discussed, along with plans for a Christiansted dredge project for St. Croix, D.O.T. said.

Mr. Graham shared with cruise executives a revised concept for proposed new berths in Charlotte Amalie, while Mrs. Nicholson-Doty outlined the department's updated crisis communications preparedness plan and the department's new "Purpose in Paradise" voluntourism program. The program was met with enthusiasm by the executives present, who also complimented the U.S. Virgin Islands team for sharing helpful updates in the aftermath of last September's storms, according to the release.

"Having an ongoing dialogue with the FCCA as we upgrade our infrastructure and visitor experience is a key component of our destination strategy," said Mrs. Nicholson-Doty, who underscored that the safe and free movement of visitors and traffic complements growth plans as cruise sector activity revives in the territory.

"The FCCA is very happy with the honest and frank discussions," said Carlos Torres de Navarra, chairman of the FCCA Operations Committee and vice president of Commercial Port Operations of Carnival Cruise Lines. "One of the big things that we've been pushing as an industry, and the Territory has agreed that it was important, was this whole issue of water transportation to add another element to what is the beauty of the USVI," he added. "So, we (are) really happy to hear that potentially, we're looking at a fourth quarter installation start of those operations ... it's just one more thing that's going to make the USVI great."

Following the Ports of the Virgin Islands meeting, the USVI delegation, along with the FCCA members, met with tourism and ports representatives from the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Puerto Rico and St. Maarten for talks centered on disaster preparedness and strengthening Eastern Caribbean itineraries.