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Housing Finance Authority Breaks Ground on 'Wild Pineapple' Subdivision in St. Thomas, Where 57 Homes Will be Built by 2025

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Aerial Shot of Wild Pineapple location and groundbreaking ceremony in St. Thomas. By. VIRGIN ISLANDS DRONE SERVICES

ST. THOMAS — The Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority held a groundbreaking ceremony on Thursday for its newest subdivision called "Wild Pineapple". V.I.H.F.A. will build and offer 57 single-family homes at the subdivision, located in Estate Fortuna for first-time homebuyers.

The new subdivision will sit in the heart of Estate Fortuna on the western end of the island. Daryl Griffith, executive director of V.I.H.F.A., said the authority chose the name "Wild Pineapple" because the fruit is grown around the same area the homes will be built.

Wild Pineapple will be V.I.H.F.A.'s latest, newly constructed subdivision in St. Thomas since the completion of its Whispering Hills subdivision in Estate Donoe in 2015.

"It's always a good day when it comes to homeownership opportunities in the territory," said Senator Marvin Blyden, chairman of the Senate Committee on Housing, Transportation, Infrastructure, and Telecommunication.

Mr. Griffith stated that the project would be constructed in several stages. The first phase, which is the initial infrastructure, will be financed through local Stamp Tax (also called the real estate transfer tax) funds. Actual construction of the homes will be financed through Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery Funds.

The land Wild Pineapple sits on is currently undeveloped; the authority will be putting in the roads, proper drainage, retaining walls, underground utilities, and all of the community's necessary lightings. The subdivision plan was completed by engineers from Advanced Methods of Surveying, and the infrastructure is being developed by Eric Castro of Grade-All Heavy Equipment Inc.

Additional Projects

V.I.H.F.A. will be advertising procurement to attract contractors for what will be 16 turnkey homes in Whispering Hills in St. Thomas. "We are breaking ground on new construction in that community, and that will provide more homeownership for all Virgin Islanders," said Mr. Griffith. The authority will also be moving into phase two and four on its Mount Pleasant West and Estate Bonne Esperance subdivisions on St. Croix.

"Projects such as these are the types of projects that can revive and give hope to our community during these times," said Jenifer O'Neal, chairwoman of the V.I.H.F.A. Board of Directors. Ms. O'Neal is also the director of the Office of Management and Budget. She said such projects are the "cornerstones on which the V.I.H.F.A. is built upon: to execute on our mission to increase the availability of affordable homes within the Virgin Islands."

Mr. Griffith said the V.I.H.F.A. Homeownership Division will be with clients every step of the way, providing education such as first-time homebuyer classes, credit and budget counseling (if needed), grants, mortgages, mortgage financing, closing, and move-in day assistance.

The infrastructure work has already started on the subdivision. Still, actual home construction is projected to begin in 5-6 months. The first 16 homes are projected to be finished by 2022, while the remaining homes will be completed by 2025.

Wild Pineapple will be comprised of two to three-bedroom homes with approximate square footage ranging from 1200-1600. The estimated amount per house will be based on the appraisal value.