

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Work Being Conducted at V.I. Housing Finance Authority Parking Lot Without Permits Halted by DPNR

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V.I.H.F.A. Frederiksted Office parking lot where construction was ongoing without the required permits on March 7, 2022. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

The V.I. Dept. of Planning and Natural Resources on Monday used its enforcement division to stop construction work that was being conducted at the V.I. Housing Finance Authority Frederiksted office parking lot. The action was taken because V.I.H.F.A. lacked the necessary permits to conduct the work.

D.P.N.R. in response to queries from the Consortium said V.I.H.F.A. was advised to secure the permits in order to be granted clearance to continue.

"Work was stopped by one of our Enforcement Officers due to no placard being placed at the VIFHA office located at their Lagoon Frederiksted Office where work was being conducted," said D.P.N.R. Media Relations Coordinator and Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Jamal Nielsen. "The contractor was notified to contact the office to obtain the required permits once it was established that he did not have permits."

Mr. Nielsen said the job appears to be the removal of slabs and replacement correction to V.I.H.F.A.'s ADA parking access area. He said D.P.N.R. staff have spoken to John Green, director of V.I.H.F.A.'s Planning and Construction Division, notifying him that permits are required. "We continue to remind persons that in their planning of improvement or development of their site to contact Division of Permits to make sure they would be in compliance with the V.I. law," Mr. Nielsen stated.

V.I.H.F.A. acting Executive Director, Dayna Clendinen, described the construction as a "partial resurfacing of the step-up leading to the courtyard" at the authority's Lagoon Complex in Frederiksted. "As the authority has historically not needed a permit for a resurfacing project, our onsite contractor proceeded accordingly. However, as we do want to be fully cooperative with our partner agencies, we have ceased the work pending their authorization," she said in response to the Consortium Monday.

Mr. Nielsen described the permitting process and said the following items are required as part of the submittal to D.P.N.R.:

- Construction plans reflecting scope of work
- Proof of Interest
- Building Permit Application
- Clearance from V.I. State Historic Preservation on scope of work
- If applicable Earth Change Permit Application Approval
- Any other related permits depending on the scope of work.

Thereafter, D.P.N.R. will conduct a review of the proposed work "to make sure it meets code compliance."

Mr. Nielsen said if the application and all supporting documents are complete, an approval can be granted and permit issued. Fees are associated with all submitted applications and issuance of permits.

Additionally, all construction is required to be inspected at specific phases to make sure construction is in compliance with approval and code. Once all work is completed and meet compliance, the project can be deemed complete by the division and a Certificate of Completion or Occupancy is issued.

Mr. Nielsen also cited Chapter 1 of the International Residential and International Building Code, which reads in Section 105, "Any owner or owner's authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system, the installation of which is regulated by this code, or to cause any such work to be performed, shall first make application to the building official and obtain the required permit."

