

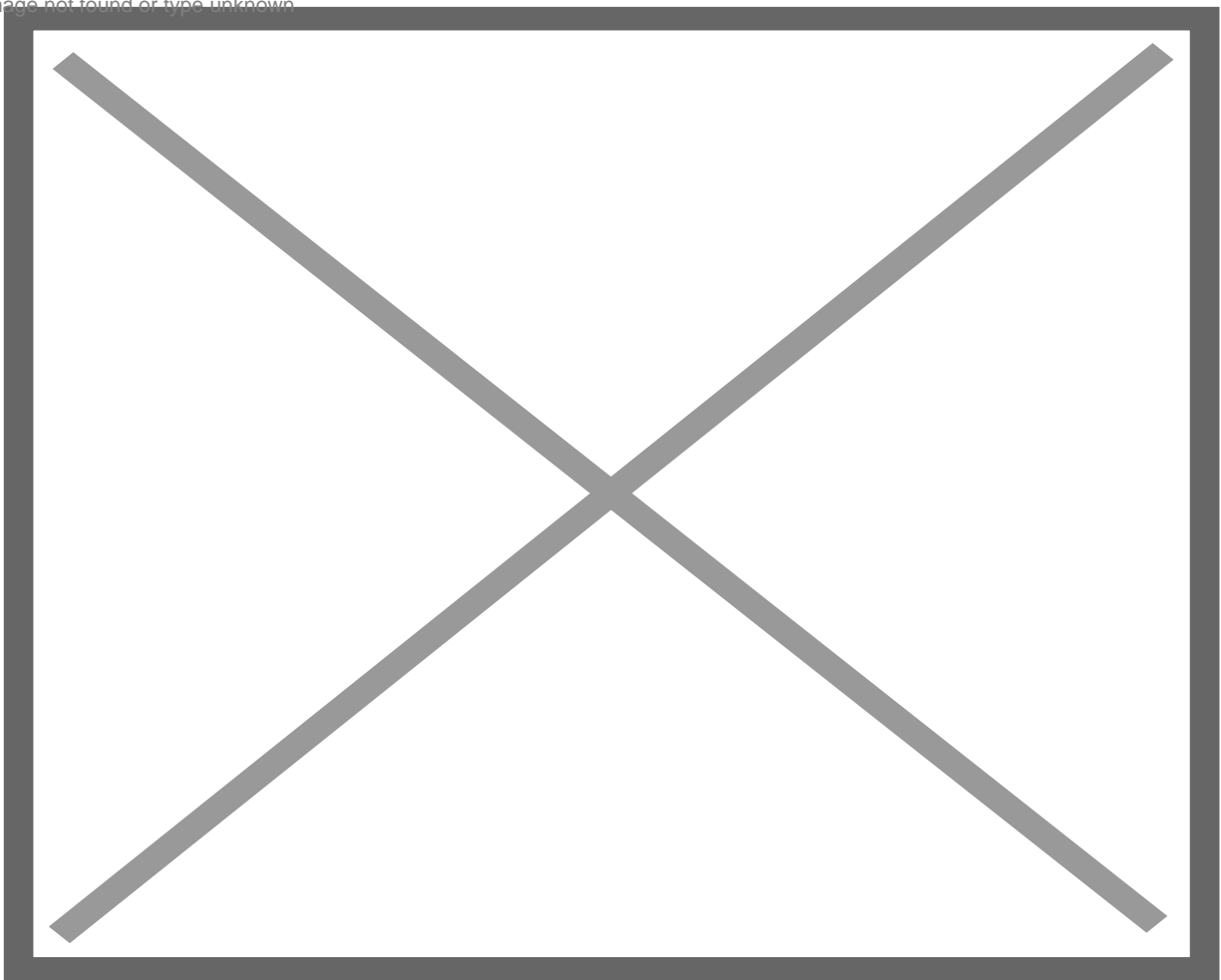
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# Horse Racing Bill Yanked From Agenda; Senators Override Bryan's Caravelle Hotel Ballroom Veto; G.E.R.S. Zoning Request For New Hotel Approved as Over 20 Measures Win Senate Approval

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**Caravelle Hotel in Christiansted, St. Croix By. GOTOSTCROIX.COM**

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More than 20 bills dealing with different aspects of life in the territory were approved when the Committee of the Whole met on Thursday and will be forwarded to Governor Albert Bryan. Among them was a measure that clears the path for a developer to build a branded hotel on St. Thomas at the Havensight Mall after lawmakers approved two Gov't Employees' Retirement

System zoning requests. The hotel is not being built and will not be operated by G.E.R.S.; G.E.R.S. [is simply leasing the land to the developer](#), Shaun Miller, a well-known and respected businessman and [owner of Standard Aviation](#).

Bill No. [34-0224](#), the controversial measure that sought to restart horse racing in the territory was removed from the Agenda. The bill [met opposition](#) as it would also give Southland Gaming, which has a powerful lobby in St. Thomas, a 13-year exclusivity extension for operating video lottery terminals, or VLTs in all of St. Thomas — not only exclusive to the race track. The 13-year exclusivity would activate after a previous extension granted during the John P. de Jongh administration expires 2028. This outcome would give Southland Gaming a 20-year monopoly on VLTs.

Lawmakers also overrode Governor Albert Bryan's [Jan. 14 veto of Bill No. 34-0186](#), which had sought to reduce from 400 to 75 the number of people a required banquet hall must facilitate as part of the Caravelle Hotel casino's existing license.

Bringing up the legislation for override was Senator Kenneth Gittens, and it was voted favorably by 11 senators while four did not vote. The 11 senators included Mr. Gittens, Kurt Vialet, Novelle Francis, Franklin Johnson, Genevieve Whitaker, Janelle Sarauw, Marvin Blyden, Dwayne DeGraff, Steven Payne, Samuel Carrion and Javan James. The lawmakers who abstained were Senators Milton Potter, Carla Joseph, Alma Francis Heyliger and Donna Frett-Gregory. Two-thirds of the V.I. Legislature is required to successfully override a veto, which is 10 of the 15 lawmakers. With the successful override, Bill No. 34-0186 is now law.

Most of the items down for debate had already received approval from committees including the Rules and Judiciary Committee, the Committee on Finance, the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety.

Besides the bills and resolutions, the 34th Legislature approved most of six different candidates who were nominated to serve on various boards. Approved to serve on the Board of Optometrical Examiners is Dr. Carl Maschauer, O.D., while Carolyn Hermon-Percell was approved to serve on the Virgin Islands Casino Control Commission. Sharon Amey, Laurent Alfred, Yvonne Toussaint, and Barbara J. Harris were all approved to serve on the V.I. Real Estate Commission

“To serve one’s community is definitely one of the most honorable things that a person can actually do or choose to do. It’s a personal choice where you receive little or no recognition when things are going great. However, when the stuff hit the fan then and only then you will be taking the blame head-on for everything that is going wrong,” said Senator Steven Payne.

Senator Janelle Sarauw, who expressed high praise for the nominees who were approved by the Rules and Judiciary Committee hours before, said the task ahead will not be an easy one. “I know it’s not an easy task before them,” she said while informing lawmakers that she once served on the United Way Board which she said was time-consuming.

Senator Kurt Vialet said he was very pleased to see new membership for the Real Estate Commission. “I am happy that we are finally getting nominees for the Real Estate Commission. It's time and we have some new members for that, and I hope that they hit the ground running,” said Mr. Vialet. He was followed by Senator Marvin Blyden who warned of the challenges ahead.

Lawmakers also approved a number of rezoning applications, most of which were homeownership or for establishing businesses. Among them were two from the Government Employees' Retirement System — both of which were endorsed by the Department of Planning and Natural

Resources — for a new five-story, 125-room brand-name hotel on the property of the Havensight Mall which is owned by the pension system.

Elsewhere, bill No. [34-0190](#) — An Act amending title 27 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 4A relating to the practice of professional counseling to modify and update licensure requirements, and for other related purposes, was sent back to the Committee on Rules and Judiciary.

Other rezoning requests approved were:

Bill No. [34-0184](#) — An Act amending Official Zoning Map No. SCZ-12 for the island of St. Croix to change the zoning designation of Plot Nos. 174 and 175 Estate Peter's Rest, Queen Quarter, St. Croix, Virgin Islands from R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family) to B-1 (Business-Central Business District)

Bill No. [34-0213](#) — An Act to amend Official Zoning Map No. STZ-4 to allow for the rezoning of Parcel "F" Estate Sorgenfri (Western Half, No. 1 Southside Quarter, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. from R-1 (Residential – Low Density) to R-2 (Residential – Low Density- One and Two Family)

Bill No. [34-0214](#) — An Act granting a zoning use variance from the B-4 (Business- Residential Areas) for Remainder Plot No. 14 Estate Saint John, Queen Quarter, St. Croix, Virgin Islands to allow for dwellings

Bill No. [34-0215](#) — An Act granting a zoning use variance from the R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family) zoning designation for Plot No. 44 Estate Williams Delight Prince Quarter, St. Croix, Virgin Islands to allow for a nail salon

Bill No. [34-0216](#) — An Act to amend Official Zoning Map No. SCZ-11 to allow for the rezoning of Parcels No. 5-E and 5-F VICORP Land, Estate Castle Burke, Prince Quarter, St. Croix from A-1 (Agricultural Zone) to A-2 (Agricultural Zone) and from A-1 (Agricultural Zone) to B-2 (Business Secondary/Neighborhood), respectively

Bill No. [34-0217](#) — An Act to amend Official Zoning Map No. STZ-10 for the island of St. Thomas to change the zoning designation of Parcel No. 13 and 14-A Estate Frydenhoj, No. 3 Red Hook Quarter, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands from R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family) to B-3 (Business-Scattered)

Bill No. [34-0218](#) — An Act amending Official Zoning Map No. SCZ-20 for the island of St. Croix to change the zoning designation Plot 32 of Subdivision of Parcel No. 11 of Estate Richmond Matricular 1 AL, Company Quarter, St. Croix from the C (Commercial) to B-3 (Business-Scattered)

Bill No. [34-0219](#) — An Act granting a zoning use variance from the R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family) zoning designation for Plot No. 126-E Estate Whim, West End Quarter, St. Croix, Virgin Islands to allow for an adult daycare and assisted living facility

In his support for all the rezoning measures, Senator Samuel Carrion reminded members that DPNR had no opposition to the rezoning. "This group of rezoning speaks about economic development, and we all know we need this in the Virgin Islands," he said.

Senator Novelle Francis was also in support of all of the rezoning because they are about building the economy. "I really commend DPNR for the efforts they have been making with these zoning

requests," he said. "We have seen where there were a lot of denials that had been done in the past, but now I see where they are working with the applicants."

The members of the 34th Legislature also approved:

Bill No. [34-0055](#) — An Act amending title 34 Virgin Islands Code by adding a chapter 4 to be known as "The Responsible Fatherhood Act of 2022".

Bill No. [34-0072](#) — An Act amending title 23 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 5, providing for the declaration of firearm components upon their entry into the Virgin Islands, and other related purposes.

Bill No. [34-0087](#) — An Act amending title 20 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 3 by adding subchapter II providing for a Complete Streets Policy and creating a Complete Streets Task Force within the Department of Public Works to aid in the development and implementation of strategies to increase the usability of all streets for all modes of travel for citizens of all ages and abilities in the Virgin Islands; making a \$100,000 appropriation from the Community Facilities Trust Account to the Department of Public works to implement the Complete Streets Policy and for other related purposes.

Bill No. [34-0090](#) — An Act amending title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 25, subchapter V, section 570, relating to the career incentive program for peace officers, to extend the program to peace officers in the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources; the Department of Health, Environmental Health Division and the Virgin Islands Legislature and to exclude exempt employees from the program; and providing for exempt employees participating in the program on the effective date of the act to continue their participation in the program.

Bill No. [34-0096](#) — An Act amending title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 1 by adding a section 27j, establishing the Virgin Islands Virtual Information System; and providing for other related purposes.

Bill No. [34-0141](#) — An Act amending the Virgin Islands Code title 34, chapter 8, to require the Bureau of Corrections and the Virgin Islands Attorney General's Office to notify expeditiously victims of crimes against the person of the release of their alleged perpetrator; amending title 5, chapter 407, section 4606 relating to restitution and notification of victims of crime by the Territorial Parole Board of an inmate's release to increase the time, contents, and the methods of notification to a crime victim of an inmate's release; and for other related purposes.

Bill No. [34-0142](#) — An Act amending the Virgin Islands Code title 20, chapter 45 by adding a subchapter II to provide for an Automatic license plate reader system as a crime-fighting tool throughout the Virgin Islands; amending title 20, chapter 32, subchapter I relating to the inter-island transport of motor vehicles to provide additional requirements in section 225a for transporting motor vehicles inter-island and adding section 225c to provide for a special permit for vehicles brought into the Virgin Islands; amending title 3, chapter 33, section 881(g) relating to public records to exclude from public examination captured plate data from automatic license plate reader systems; requiring the Virgin Islands Police Department in conjunction with the Office of the Attorney General to promulgate regulations relating to the automatic license plate reader system; making a \$500,000 appropriation to the Virgin Islands Police Department to establish a pilot speed and red-light camera program; and providing for other purposes.

Bill No. [34-0147](#) — An Act amending the Virgin Islands Code title 10, chapter 1, sections 2 and 3 relating to discrimination on account of race to include discrimination on the basis of hair texture or protective hair style; and amending title 17, chapter 3 relating to education to enact “The Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair Act” or “The Virgin Islands Crown Act.”

Bill No. [34-0152](#) — An Act amending the Virgin Islands Code title 27 chapter 10, relating to general construction contractors, to place for licensing and regulatory purposes the professions in the plumbing, electrical, mechanical and fiber optic fields, in addition to certain specialty trades, under the V.I. Board of Contractors, Trades, and Crafts; and repealing chapter 7.

Bill No. [34-0154](#) — An Act amending title 17 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 5, section 41a relating to bilingual education to direct the Department of Education to establish and maintain the Bilingual and English Language Development Program in the public schools.

Bill No. [34-0155](#) — An Act amending the Virgin Islands Code title 3, chapter 29, relating to notaries, notarial officers, and notarial acts by adding subchapter III enacting the “Virgin Islands Uniform Law on Notarial Acts (2021)”; and amending and repealing conflicting laws on notaries public.

Bill No. [34-0156](#) — An Act amending title 15 Virgin Islands Code, part 1, relating to decedents estates by adding chapter 1A enacting the “Virgin Islands Uniform Electronic Wills Act.”

Bill No. [34-0170](#) — An Act amending the Virgin Islands Code, title 29, chapter 12, sections 708, 708a, 708b, 710, 711, 712, 713a(b)(5), 715 and 723 relating to Economic Development Program, amend the incentives to beneficiaries to further their commitments to investment in the Virgin Islands community.

Bill No. [34-0171](#) — An Act amending Virgin Islands Code title 3, chapter 27, section 706 and chapter 28A, section 755 relating to the service retirement annuity to allow retirees to reenter government service and retain their annuity while paying a contribution to the Retirement System; amending title 3, chapter 25, subchapter III relating to the government personnel position classification system position to cover positions of annuitants who reenter government service; and for other related purposes.

Bill No. [34-0182](#) — An Act amending title 31 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 1, section 4, relating to the naming of real and personal property of the Government of the Virgin Islands after persons, to exempt the University of the Virgin Islands, the Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center and the Schneider Regional Medical Center from the requirement of obtaining legislative approval before naming any their respective property for the sole purpose of allowing fundraising and exchange for and recognition of significant financial bequests or endowments and for other related purposes.

Bill No. [34-0198](#) — An Act amending title 27 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 10, section 330 establishing the Virgin Islands Board of Contractors, Trades and Crafts.