

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Horse Racing Commission Approves Motion to Seek Bids For Cleanup Work at the Clinton E. Phipps Racetrack

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Members of the Virgin Islands Horse Racing Commission on Wednesday approved a motion that provides for bidding documents to be received from three contractors to clean the Clinton E. Phipps racetrack in St. Thomas.

Commission Chairman Hugo Hodge said funds for the clean-up would be provided through the Horse Racing Improvement Fund. He said the track needed to be cleaned to provide a place for horses to exercise, while the raceway will be cleared of trees and the infield and mangrove manicured.

Sports Parks and Recreation Commissioner Calvert White, who also serves as a commission member, said whoever wins the bid to clean the track would have to clean, prune and bring down the overgrown mangrove, clear any grown grass on the running surface and clear the immediate area along with the surrounding and running surface.

"It is the intention to clean the entire track right now," Mr. White said while disclosing that there is equipment at the track that requires some maintenance before use. Among the equipment is a tractor.

"Once we can get those stuff back up and back online we will then have equipment... We have already made contact with Puerto Rico so we can get some parts for it," he said.

Regarding a timeline for procuring services and getting the cleanup work done, Mr. White said, "I estimate going to [Property and Procurement], [the Dept. of] Finance, and all of that I could get an approval within a week — that is best-case scenario... After that, a contractor will be given the job for them to start work." Mr. White said the immediate cleaning work should last approximately one week.

"All of us have seen out there it is not an easy task and I estimate it will take them between four days to a week," Mr. White told the commission before it moved into executive session to discuss legal matters.

These actions follow the approval of a major bill that cleared the way for Southland Gaming to rebuild the racetrack in St. Thomas as part of its [decades-long exclusivity on video lottery terminal gaming](#) in the St. Thomas-St. John district.