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Developers of New Charles Harwood Complex Share Design Ideas, Eye August 2023 as Construction Start Date

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Design concept of the new Charles Harwood Memorial Complex. By. V.I. DEPT. OF HEALTH, FLAD ARCHITECTS.

Flad Architects, the developers of the new Charles Harwood Memorial Complex hosted a meeting on Monday to share concept ideas for the new facility with community members of Christiansted.

The 70-year-old building, which served as a hospital from 1952 will be demolished and rebuilt for use as a community health clinic and wellness center.

The project will cost a total of \$291 million which includes funds for the abatement and demolition of the old structure, construction of the new facility as well as the contents inside.

However, before construction is to begin, the contractors must deal with a lead and asbestos problem which they have encountered at the old facility.

“We’ve done several studies and there’s a little bit of lead and asbestos in the building and that has to be abated or mitigated or dealt with or demolished in a safe way, before we actually begin the complete demolition,” Reuben Molloy, assistant commissioner at the V.I. Department of Health stated.

Flad also has to go through the Federal Consistency Review process to be able to use FEMA funds to design the building, according to Steve Jackson, principal and designer at Flad Architects.

“We understand that there is going to be impact around the site because of the demolition. We are fully prepared to mitigate everything that we possible can for the least disruption to the community during the demolition,” Mr. Jackson explained.

“Our next step is just to continue to the development of this project. The federal consistency determination, demolition and then ultimately construction,” he added.

The new design will include plans to make the hospital hurricane resilient and energy-saving.

Mr. Jackson says they intend to design the building in such a way that it reduces the cost of energy provided by the Water and Power Authority, in turn reducing the operating cost for the Department of Health.

The design will also include strong roof protection, the installation of hurricane-rated glass to prevent water infiltration and shocks, ease of access, disability and electric vehicle parking, an elevated patio, and the possibility of a pharmacy.

To enhance security, the hospital intends to issue badges to people coming into the health center. In addition, one of the largest areas within the new building will be the inclusion of a club house and a healthy life and education center to facilitate behavioral health services.

The demolition date for the old Charles Harwood Memorial Complex is slated to begin in late August/ early September 2022 to be completed in February 2023. Construction of the new facility will begin in August 2023 and will take three years to complete – meaning a completion date in 2026.