

The Virgin Islands Consortium

First Major Multipurpose Facility in St. John Set to Begin Construction in 2023 at VIPA-Owned Enighed Pond

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For the first time plans are underway to create a multipurpose cultural space at the V.I. Port Authority-owned Enighed Pond property on St. John.

VIPA is to develop just over two acres of its lands to erect a park which will serve as both a place for large gatherings as well as a space for community and recreational activities.

“There’s no place in St. John for a large crowd to congregate, or gather for festivals,” recalled VIPA Executive Director Carlton Dowe, who described the design as “unique.”

“Where we keep the Carnival Village now is really outlived its size and so we want to do a park and an entertainment area or probably a few restaurants,” he shared, adding that it would also be a place where residents can display their artwork.

As part of the construction process, VIPA held a town hall meeting on September 8, which according to Mr. Dowe, “A lot of people came out, probably over 100 plus people, [and] St. John is small.”

Residents, he said, expressed concern over the noise level that the project would create and encouraged VIPA to keep the areas as “culturally aesthetic” as possible, leaving room for local vendors.

“I think the big thing is they wanted to be involved in all aspects,” he recalled.

As a result of the town hall meeting, residents agreed to create an organization made up of community members who would liaise the community’s vision for the area with VIPA.

Mr. Dowe told the Consortium, “We will continue the dialogue and the communication and my staff at the port authority will be working with the organization to make sure that we try to get as much [input] from the community as we possibly can.”

Funding for the project is being derived from monies allocated by the government under the St. John Capital Improvement Fund. “Every year, \$1.5 million is set aside for projects in St. John but it had never really been tapped to this extent so, we had Senator [Donna] Frett-Gregory, who brought forth the legislation,” he said, as he noted that the development fund will also aid with future maintenance of the facility.

The project is pegged to begin in late 2023 and is estimated to be completed in 18 months to two years, following the permitting process and construction. Already, \$400,000 have been set aside for the design phase of this project which is funded by an appropriation from the 34th Legislature via Act No. 8473, under the same development fund. The company Moffatt & Nichol has been hired as consultants to design the project.