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CZM Approves Reconstruction Proposals From Departments of Agriculture and Public Works

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Proposed design of V.I. Dept. of Agriculture building on St. Croix. By. JEFFREY BOSCHULTE

The St. Croix Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Committee on Tuesday held a decision meeting in which two proposals were approved: one from the Dept. of Agriculture and another from the Dept. of Public Works.

D.O.A. sought approval to build a two-story administrative building on Plot #1 Estate Lower Love in Kingshill, to replace the previous hurricane-damaged structure that had since been demolished.

Jeffrey Boschulte, the project architect representing the Department of Agriculture, said the new building will enhance how the department serves the public, improve staff morale and will also serve as an educational facility for visiting students.

Two water retention ponds are included in the design, which would hold water diverted from the area of the site which will be paved over for parking. These ponds, according to Mr. Boschulte, will serve to hold excess water in the event of flooding. "In a normal situation it would probably stay there a couple days before it's absorbed into the soil or evaporates," he said.

Whether the water could then be stored for reuse, according to Department of Agriculture Commissioner Positive Nelson, was beyond the authority of just his department.

The Department of Public Works was seeking CZM permission to demolish its main office building and equipment storage bays and replace them with new office facilities and a heavy equipment storage shed.

An existing warehouse in the northeast corner of the DPW property will be retrofitted to comply with current 2021 International Building Code.

The entire property would be enclosed with an aesthetic architectural security fence, and three small utility structures would be demolished, CZM heard.

DPW's Chief Engineer Tawana Nicholas said that the project aims to reestablish the department's in Frederiksted to better meet the needs of people on the west side of St. Croix. Managing Principal of Design District PLLC Clarence Brown told the meeting that the proposal was a disaster recovery project.

Mr. Brown said he believes that all possible concerns about the project have been preemptively addressed. He added that the structure will not just be enhanced, but that the entire site will also include other notable improvements.