

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Magens Bay Authority Plans 'More Aggressive' Marketing Campaign for Smith Bay Park Amid Concerns Over Low Visitor Numbers

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Smith Bay Park, St. Thomas.

The Magens Bay Authority (MBA) has announced plans to embark on a "more aggressive" marketing campaign aimed at increasing visitor numbers at Smith Bay Park. The decision was revealed during a Senate Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance hearing on Tuesday.

Barbara Peterson, chair of the MBA Board, acknowledged that a renewed marketing strategy was necessary, including engagements at trade shows and partnerships with

cruise ships.

"We just assumed people will come, but we have to be more aggressive," Ms. Peterson admitted, highlighting past complacency in promoting the park. She assured lawmakers that ongoing discussions were happening with the Department of Tourism and other agencies. "We understand that the only way to win in the territory is if we work together," she said.

The announcement came after Senator Carla Joseph expressed concerns over what she perceived as insufficient efforts to collaborate with the Department of Tourism. Ms. Joseph suggested that the MBA should work more closely with the department to offer a "well-rounded experience" for visitors, including promoting excursions to Smith Bay Park.

Ms. Peterson confessed that previous collaborations with the Department of Tourism had not met the expected standards, despite no ill-will between the organizations. "We work very well together when we work together," she said, adding that a strategic plan is essential to better integrate Smith Bay Park and Magens Bay into the Department of Tourism's advertising efforts.

In response to a query from Senator Milton Potter about infrastructure, Ms. Peterson noted that the MBA is planning to strengthen that aspect of its operations. "If it requires having a couple of food trucks there with beverages and that kind of thing, we'll make it happen," she assured.

Ms. Peterson also said that there was "no need" for a taxi stand at Smith Bay Park due to low visitor numbers, a point that underlined the urgency of the new marketing push. "The numbers are very low," she stated, emphasizing the need to boost traffic to the park.

There was a time when the MBA did not have an advertising and promotion budget, a stance that has now changed considerably. "There were some that suggested that we didn't need to advertise at Magens Bay, that people just come," Ms. Peterson reflected. But with the new aggressive marketing campaign, the authority aims to significantly reshape visitor interest and revitalize Smith Bay Park.