



GERs Havensight Mall DPNR Rezoning Hearing

GERs Retirement System (Board of Trustees)

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- 0:00:00 so good morning again some housekeeping other than the presenter and stenographer everyone else should have their cameras off and mics muted the stenographer needs to be on so that she can quickly let us know if she cannot hear or needs something repeated Good day, I am Lila Plath, territorial planner with the Division of Comprehensive and Coastal Zone Planning within the Department of Planning and Natural Resources and I'll be serving as a chair of this public hearing.
- 0:00:50 With me today is Assistant Commissioner Keith Richards. morning good morning good morning we are here pursuant to title 29 chapter 3 sections 238 and 239 of the virgin islands code which provide for the amendment of the zoning maps and the conduct of public hearings on petitions to amend zoning maps once the public hearing is complete we have 30 days by law to prepare a recommendation report which goes to the commissioner for signature once he has signed off on the recommendation report we forward a copy to the legislature and the applicant the legislature will call a committee of the whole public hearing based on their schedule dpnr has to appear and read the report into the record of that hearing Following the Legislature's Committee of the Whole hearing, the Legislature will then schedule a session to vote on the request if a Senator has sponsored a bill.
- 0:02:06 Before we begin, I would like to review the procedure that we will be following. First, the applicant will present their request and intention to develop the property. upon completion of their presentation staff will then ask questions of the applicant any letters on file in support of or in opposition to the proposed zoning amendment will be read into the record the floor will then be opened to members of the audience wishing to testify in support of the petition members of the audience wishing to testify in opposition will follow I ask that members of the audience limit their statements to a maximum of three minutes.
- 0:02:48 Finally, the applicant will make a closing statement and respond to any statements which may have been made. Today's agenda is ZAT-22-3 Government Employees Retirement System of the Virgin Islands requesting that parcel numbers 2 and 4 Estate Thomas numbers 6B and 6F New Quarter St. Thomas be rezoned from W2 Waterfront Industrial to R3 Residential Medium Density. The purpose of the request is for ground lease to developer for construction of a hotel. I

will now ask the applicant to identify themselves and begin their presentation. Good morning and Happy New Year to everyone. My name is Austin Elnibs. I'm the Administrator CEO of the Government Employees Retirement System of the Virgin Islands. A parent with me today are kati m smith general counsel ishmael myers junior deputy general counsel asia clandid in gums chief operating officer botis smith operation manager at havenside mall roy mohead chief security officer at havenside mall and glennville henderson grs investment Annals. We are pleased to be in attendance in full support of GRS's application ZAT-22-3 requesting that parcels number 2 and 4 is to Thomas number 6B and 6F New Quarter St. Thomas

0:04:39 Virgin Islands as shown on DWG number 1843-V-3 and OLG file number A9-431-T93 dated June 25, 1993 be rezoned from W2 waterfront industrial to R3 residential medium density. The purpose of the request is for the GRS to enter into a ground lease with the developer for construction of an upper mid-scale limited hotel on the Havenside Mall property. The GRS purchased the Havenside Mall from the West Indian Company Limited, so known as Waiko, in 1993 after Waiko purchased the mall and docked from the Danes. GRS then entered into a management agreement with Waiko to manage the Mall as its agent, which ended on March 30, 2020, with GRS assuming direct management of the mall with the intent to redevelop and rebrand the mall. One of the first major developments is the demolition of the dated and damaged warehouses, which are eyesores, that sit on parcels number two and four parcel number two will be leased for development of five stories 125 room brand name hotel and parcel number four will be used for welcome center parking and green space warehouse j the structure on the south side of the property adjacent to the virgin haven restaurant will be renovated and used for tenants used by tenants for storage

0:06:26 The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we will do business at the Havenside Mall. The mall cannot survive depending 100% on the cruise ship industry. We must diversify the mix of the stores to attract more local community shopping in the mall and provide a cultural experience for all who visit the mall. Having a hotel at the Havenside Mall is a game changer for the GRS for tenants with increased foot traffic in addition to the cruise ship visitors. We know that this project will be the first new hotel being built in St. Thomas in decades, which will be a major boost for the tourism product and resiliency to the economy of the territory. We look forward to any questions, concern and clarification for the proposed project. Thank you. Now I'll have Miss Asia Clinton and Gums, the chief operating office of the GRS, to make a slide presentation.

0:07:32 Good morning. The government employees retirement of the Virgin Islands rezoning hearing presentation. The first slide we will go over portrays the aerial view of the Haven Site Mall. You would see from the slides to the north of the mall, we have White Coal and Porter Sale.

0:08:06 to the south of the proposed parcels two and four the white warehouses closest to the ocean we have virgin haven budget and senior frogs to the east we have haven site malls um buccaneer mall and lots of green area directly behind the commercial district with paradise point on the top. To the west, we have the Waiko Dock. In this aerial view, you see where the cruise ship is and the ocean. This is another vantage point. Again, the proposed area for the hotel is the El State White Warehouse closest to the ocean.

0:09:01 the first phase of our project will include the demolition of the existing warehouses shown on the screen are warehouses three michael's storeroom the welcome center warehouses 5, 4, and 4A, as Mr. Nims read, Warehouse J closest to Virgin Haven will remain as storage for tenants of the Haven Site Mall.

0:09:46 The developer's name is to be determined. The legal address for the site where the development is proposed was read into the record by Administrator Nib. And the project scope and description, again, it's for the ground lease of the construction and build of an upper, mid-scale, limited service hotel on parcel number two. Above ground pool, it would include a bar, a kitchen, a meeting space. We would use modular construction, the developer would use modular construction technology to reduce impact on the environment and construction waste.

0:10:26 Parcel four will be used for additional parking and a large green space area. The proposed building on Parcel 2, shown here, 70,586 square feet of hotel, 5 stories, 126 rooms with 27 parking spaces on this number 2 parcel. The modular process that would be used is Step 1, there is Podcom provides a pre-construction services to help the team, his team, design the optimal modular solution for the project.

0:11:13 The finishes are done at the manufacturer's site. The rooms come together like you see in number three in little boxes. They provide training to the contractor and they send onsite instructors to the building site to assist in installation they would come on a container port in the evening and be set up i would say almost overnight it will take a couple weeks but much quicker than our traditional construction process these are additional pictures of parcel number two again parcel number two is where the site would be for the upper to mid-scale hotel. Again, GRX is entering into a ground lease to diversify the mall. These are additional shots of parcel number two.

- 0:12:25 These additional shots of parcel number two provide various angles of the site intended for the ground lease. The conceptual drawing of the five-story hotel is as follows on site number 2, parcel 2. project water and waste estimated average daily water and waste water usage it would be 191 beds 126 rooms five floors 70 586 square feet averaging about 30 gallons per person so you see the total yearly gallons of water is almost a million and a half gallons there will be a 20 by 12 foot pool the shallow depth would be four feet with 7 000 gallons in the pool other amenities such as the kitchen the laundry the public spaces It's estimated to use 292,803,000 gallons for a total of 1,763,999 gallons of water.
- 0:14:14 Currently the Haven Site Mall is on the public water system through the Water and Power Authority. We do have a few cisterns on site. Projected wastewater for guest rooms, kitchen, and laundry is \$1,708,017. Parcel number four would have green space for the public and our visitors. The Welcome Center will be placed there and parking for guests. Parcel four is the parcel where that warehouse was damaged on the screen.
- 0:15:15 Questions and asks, what's currently on the property and what has been the past use of the property? property has been used for warehouses. It's been used for storage and parking. And currently the property is at about 50% currently in use. Other structures damaged by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Surrounding the property, we covered already to the north, Wycliffe's Administration Building, Port-A-Sale, Wendy's, Yacht Haven Grand to the south, Haven Grand Restaurant, Budget Rental Car, the INGN offices, the Jim, Olsen, Your Frogs, and the Closed Waterfly Farm to the east, Haven Site Mall stores, Buccaneer Mall, and then way up on the hill, the tramway. And to the west, it's Olsen and Wycos Dock. So the proposed, as we've been stating, is for the hotel, the Welcome Center, green space and parking to be there on parcels number two and four. There is no flooding or a gut on the properties to be rezoned on those parcels to be rezoned and no cultural or historical resources on those parcels nor is there there any endangered plants or animals and it's not within a tree boa habitat this will be a multi-phase development with the first phase being the demolition of the warehouses and the second phase being the construction of the hotel parking spaces and green space there are no homes to be built on parcels number two and four the lot size for the hotel to be developed on in parcel two it's 1.62 acres 51 256 square feet and again it will be for hotel rooms the business name is to be determined mr miller is our developer and the prices range
- 0:17:13 depend on season and to be determined the amenities proposed will be a pool a fitness center for guests and a meeting space the proposed timeline demolition once we receive the permit will take three months and then one year from the permit and groundbreaking subject to covet and supply chain delays of course would be uh one year for the completion of the hotel there are sewer and water sources on site it will be one building five stories employing 25 persons a 24-hour operation with 126 rooms there are 27 spaces on parcel 2 about 40 on parcel 4 and hundreds of parking spaces at the haven site mall there will be landscape greenery and benches and a lawn and buffering the area of the hotel property this concludes the powerpoint presentation with a gerf for zoning Thank you that the presentation overall for JRS.
- 0:18:32 Yes, OK, thank you. So the only question I have, I saw you mentioned kitchen. Would there be a restaurant on that site? No, it would be a limited service. they're not going to be serving like full lunch and dinner and anything like like that. It'll be a small thing because they're business travelers is what they're attracting. So if they have a muffin or something like that, the developer really wants the hotel guests to patronize the restaurants on the property of Haven site. Okay, so just be for the hotel use. Correct. For the general public that is correct um any questions uh assistant commissioner richard uh yes good morning good morning everyone good morning um in your presentation you indicated the amount of wastewater that's going to be generated um from from the hotel are you is the site currently service by um viwma waste management yes and is it the intent for the um development to be hooked up to the public sewage yes um in terms of in terms of electricity What is the plan for the developer? Is the is the developer going to put in a generator or is he going to be or are they going to be hooked up to to WAPA? Presently, that's something that we have under consideration. We have met a meeting with WAPA in regards to a project, regards to power generation at the mall. You know, maybe in something like a grid concept where we would supply our own power. Uh, we've also been speaking with WAPA and the water distribution because we plan to partner with them to change out those old piping that are under the ground.
- 0:20:49 So there's some options available in discussion right now. And we're looking forward to our own power generation at the mall. Similar to great great concept. OK, so. what so the property is currently under lease the lease has already been executed no it has not been yes okay and and in terms of the operation of the hotel and the continued operation of the mall is it are you trying to enter into like a partnership with them or once you release the property um if the property is rezone and you lease the property and the property is developed as a hotel what would be the what would be the relationship between the hotel and the mall landlord tenant relationship um the the developer is looking obviously for a long-term lease and um but it would be just like a landlord tenant similar to the port of sale landlord tenant land port of sale has to say a ground lease also so it just be a landlord tenant relationship okay and and similarly but would they be involved in the maintenance of the entire area would that be part of the lease that they have to contribute to the overall maintenance of the of of the waico area yes i mean the the area that they would be leasing um they would have to

maintain that um also you know there's a negotiation uh thing that we're looking at we we have certain provisions in our um in our draft of the um uh you know the um term sheet so you know i think the the developer has been very um open and receptive but they would be required to maintain the area that they lease. And again, it's the Haven Site Mall.

0:22:55 The Haven Site Mall. Not the Waiko. Thank you. Right, Haven Site Mall. So in terms of the height, I know some in the public may view the height and have issues with the views. Have you been able to do sort of a conceptual assessment of how the five stories would impact the view from various locations um east north and west and south of the property yeah i mean if miss clinton wants to put up um the presentation as you care if you look east direct east of that property there are no houses there at all right and if you look at the top there's a houses way on the top which would not in any way um have any impact on the views and even if you go to the to the north northeast they would be clear those homes are also clear so they wouldn't impact the views in my opinion um at all and especially directly east of that there's green space there there are no homes there that is correct and everything else would be high up in the hill they would see clear over it um i think the hotel will be shorter than the cruise ships that come there Okay, and what about property that's that's east, but not that vacant land that's not developed? Well, to some extent, you have five stories. So if you if Miss Kalina can put up, I saw one of the pictures. Let's see. we want to show you exactly uh it's on page let's you know we don't have a page but parcel number two site picture and area yep right there on the on the top left as you can see if you put that hotel right there

0:25:14 where that warehouse is right now there's just vacant property and the homes are higher up so there's no impact really um correct because it's on the ground level and everything above is elevated they would see clear over it if that area is developed that's slated that clearing of the land is slated i think to be a parking deck so those individuals on the top can really see over that hotel have you got any um comments from any of the surrounding property owners as thus far regarding your project i have not received any and we have not received any yet Alright I don't have any other questions at this time. Thank you. Thank you so at this time we'll open the floor for any public comments or questions. If you could raise your hand please and I'll recognize you so it could be put on the record. There will also be a public comment period after the public hearing if you do not wish to put any verbal comments at this time. I will allow for verbal comments if we have any. Okay, I see I see a man in the corner. If you could identify yourself and go ahead. Yes, good morning. Happy New Year to everybody. Yes, I just want to make note in the record that uh that we just received the documents identifying the whole project we have not seen it before i represent the unlimited holdings portion which is the guardian building so you know i reserve comments at this time because we haven't really seen all the details sir could you please put your name on the record raymondournier

0:27:23 I represent our limited holding sink is the owner of the property, which is known as the Guardian Building or Team AB Estate Thomas. Thank you. And there will be a comment period so you could get those comments into me. Anyone else? OK, seeing no other hands raised, I'll ask the applicant to make a closing statement. Well, thank you.

0:28:04 DPNR, Miss Laplace and Mr. Richards for giving us the. Time to make our presentation on rezoning of the parcels at the Havenside Mall. As you know, Havenside Mall is changing. And having a hotel like this and also the diversification of our tenants will make it a better cultural experience and improve for traffic to the mall. We're looking for more local community involvement, cultural projects so it would make it a place to to go other than going to down to the main street. We want people to be able to have an experience and stay within the mall.

0:28:54 So this is one of the reasons why we feel that this hotel will be again, a game changer for the mall. And we want we look forward to comments from, you know, individuals and the process, the process goes forward. We look forward to also participating in those in those hearings. Thank you. Thank you. So I've put up the last slide. We will have a public comment period, sorry, public comment period ending January 23rd.

0:29:38 And so any written comments from the public, please email them to me at the address on the screen leah.laplace at dpnr.vi.gov the recommendation report will then be prepared based on the received comments and evaluation of the proposal as a reminder the recommendation report could state approval modification or denial of the applicant's request the public hearing is now at an end. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:30:40 Thank you. Thank you. You