GOVERNMENT HOUSE
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Governor Albert Bryan Jr. addresses residents of Water Island during a virtual Town Hall meeting via Zoom on Wednesday.

Governor Bryan, Lt. Governor Roach Hold Virtual Town Hall Meeting for Water Island Residents

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – Governor Albert Bryan Jr., Lt. Governor Tregenza A. Roach, Esq., and representatives from seven agencies of the Government of the Virgin Islands (GVI) participated Wednesday night in a virtual Town Hall meeting with about 50 Water Island residents to hear their concerns, answer their questions and provide solutions to issues they raised.

The online forum was conducted via Zoom and organized and hosted by St. Thomas-Water Island Administrator Avery Lewis, who introduced the participants emceed the event. Other members of the administration who participated include DPNR Commissioner Jean-Pierre Oriol; Public Works Commissioner Derek Gabriel; VI. Police Deputy Commissioner Mario Brooks; Waste Management Authority Executive Director Roger Merritt; Tourism Commissioner Joseph Boschulte; DLCA Commissioner Richard Evangelista; and Sports, Parks and Recreation Commissioner Calvert White.

Water Island Resident David Roselle, who also is the president of the Water Island Civic Association (WICA), introduced the residents to Governor Bryan and led off the questions to ask about the Governor's short- and long-term vision for the island.

Governor Bryan said he is committed to investing in the Territory's people, infrastructure and future, and for Water Islanders he has a number of primary concerns including:

- Increasing the GVI's digital reach to provide government services without having to replicate offices on all islands.

- The Hotel-Marina project, which he said will transform Water Island.
- Protecting residents from escalating land prices and property taxes as Water Island is further developed.
- Increasing moorings while ensuring adequate anchoring for residents.
- Cleaning out the sunken vessels from the lagoon area.
- Enhancing Honeymoon Beach access for tourists while maintaining safe and secure access for residents.

Other residents asked a variety of questions and raised several issues, including about WAPA reliability; Internet connectivity; landing spaces for residents' boats on St. Thomas; road repairs; upgrading the commuter dock; how police respond to emergencies; repairs to the fire station; fixing up Fort Segarra for tourist visits; and charter boats playing loud music until late at night.

Governor Bryan offered assistance and solutions for a number of the issues residents raised, and he told them he will increase internet access, address commuter ferry availability, purchase a fire boat and find funding for repairs to the fire station, clear the sunk and wrecked vessels around the island, address security concerns at Honeymoon Beach and make sure that Water Island residents have a voice in the planning that is arising for the Territory as a result of President Biden's American Rescue Plan.

Commissioner Gabriel said Public Works is scheduled to begin road and dock repairs within the next 60 days an he anticipates that most of their projects on Water Island would be completed by the end of next year.

Commissioner Oriol also told residents that DPNR is in the process of creating designated mooring areas for residents while also providing controlled access points for boats to come in, drop off visitors and use day mooring passes.

The Bryan-Roach Administration is committed to investing in the Territory's people, infrastructure and future through transparency, stabilizing the economy, restoring trust in the government and ensuring that recovery projects are completed as quickly as possible. Visit transparency.vi.gov

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