

Residents can vote on two proposed plans for Christiansted through Friday

By **JOY BLACKBURN**
Daily News Staff

ST. CROIX — Residents can check out two different proposed town plans for Christiansted today through Friday and vote on the one they prefer.

The proposals will be on display at the Steeple Building, where balloting also will be conducted.

The voting is part of a process that included a charrette in March aimed at getting ideas and input from the public on a town plan for Christiansted. A town plan is supposed to provide a road map for the economic, social and architectural development of a town, incorporating the history and culture, as well as dealing with social issues, housing and infrastructure.

A charrette is a quick, intense, collaborative method of creating a town plan by bringing in the public to help do the work.

The Enterprise Zone Commission, part of the V.I. Economic Development Authority, brought local architects and planners together for a contest to design the town plan. Those who were interested attended the charrette.

Although six architects had expressed interest in the contest at one point, only two submitted proposed town plans, said Nadine Marchena Kean, director of the Enterprise Zone Commission.

"I thought both of them offered very interesting solutions to some of the challenges I heard at the charrette," she said.

Those two proposed town plans will be on display at the Steeple Building, where people can take a look at them and enter their votes, Kean said.

"They have put together what they think would meet the needs — to deal with the challenges, include the solutions that were suggested at some of these meetings, and also create others as well," she said.

Officials want to hear what residents think and which plan they'd like to see implemented, she said.

"What is happening now is that the community, as promised, gets an opportunity to view these plans and vote on these plans," she said. "It's really an important part of the process."

Others who deal with various aspects of history and culture, social

issues, housing and economic development will also review the plans, Kean said.

Ultimately, the plans will go before the Economic Development Authority board, which will make a recommendation to the governor, she said.

A public meeting on the matter also is planned.

"This is the vote, but once the vote has happened, we want to make sure everybody knows and feels comfortable with it," Kean said, noting that the chosen plan may need to incorporate something more. "The one plan may be accepted, but there might be components of the other plan that are of value as well."

The proposed town plans for Christiansted will be on display and people can vote from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. today through Friday at the Steeple Building in Christiansted.

The building, at Company and Church streets, is part of the National Park Service's Christiansted National Historic Site.

— *Contact Joy Blackburn at 714-9145 or email jblackburn@dailynews.vi.*

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New queen conch harvest limits in effect off St. Croix

Daily News Staff

ST. CROIX — New trip limits for the commercial harvest of queen conch in federal waters off St. Croix went into effect on Friday, the day the fishing season opened for queen conch in the district.

The new commercial trip limit is 200 queen conch per vessel per day, according to the Southeast Regional Office of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service.

The trip limit applies to the whole U.S. Caribbean exclusive economic zone, but only affects the management subzone of St. Croix, which is the only area in federal waters where fishing for queen conch currently is allowed. The federal waters around Puerto Rico, St. Thomas and St. John remain closed for all fishing of queen conch.

The conch fishing season in the federal waters around St. Croix opened



Daily News File Photo

Local fishermen remove the meat from conch shells at Altona Lagoon.

Friday and is scheduled to close May 31, or when the 50,000-pound quota for combined federal and territorial

waters around St. Croix is reached, whichever comes first, according to the National Marine Fisheries Service.

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