

Chaguaramas being considered for medical cannabis industry

THE development of parts of Chaguaramas for the country's medical cannabis industry was highlighted when Planning Minister Kennedy Swaratsingh yesterday appointed the new nine-member board of directors of the Chaguaramas Development Authority (CDA).

Calise Narinesingh-Martin has been named chair of the CDA board.

Narinesingh-Martin and the nine members of the CDA board, including Felicia Holder, received their instruments of appointment from Planning Minister Kennedy Swaratsingh at the Planning Ministry's head office in the Eric Williams Finance Building. The CDA falls under the remit of the Planning Ministry.

'The board was reminded of the agricultural designation of parts of Chaguaramas and the idea of the lands being a key part of the development of a medical cannabis industry in Trinidad and Tobago was raised. Members were also reminded that the Chaguaramas Peninsula has the potential to be a foreign exchange generator for Trinidad and Tobago and can build the economy through the development of entrepreneurs. The need for a policy for the minor islands in the west, commonly referred to as Down the Islands or DDI, as well as the revitalisation of the yachting sector, were also outlined as important items for consideration,' a release from the Planning Ministry stated yesterday.

The nine members of the CDA board include deputy chair Kirby Joseph, Manmohan Balkaran, Dr Louis Percival Anthony Nurse, Jamie Sarah Edwards, Nalini Goindoo, Ms Shelly Balkissoon and Dr Nalini Kokaram.

'Minister Swaratsingh expressed his appreciation for the members' acceptance of the appointments and reminded them of the importance of the Chaguaramas Peninsula to Trinidad and Tobago from an economic historical, environmental and cultural perspective. The minister stated that while development has been on auto-pilot for the past ten years, master plans for Chaguaramas do exist and therefore can be used as sources of ideas for the enhancement of the space,' a release stated yesterday. According to Swaratsingh, some key issues include reviewing the facilities and amenities under the CDA's remit, ad hoc property development, the abandonment of derelict vessels in the surrounding waters, ocean pollution, and the current state of leases.

'The minister also raised the enhancement of tourism and entertainment on the peninsula as well as the revitalisation of the hotel school and the exploration of other ideas to contribute to national economic enhancement and opportunities for citizens,' it stated.

Swaratsingh encouraged the board to embrace their appointment and to explore the natural wonders of Chaguaramas, drawing inspiration for development while taking into account the preservation of natural features such as beaches, trails, and wildlife, including capuchin and howler monkeys, as well as the area's historical sites and infrastructure.

'Minister Swaratsingh implored members to keep the history of the Peninsula in mind while focusing on making it an amazing place for the heritage, citizens and future well-being of Trinidad and Tobago,' it stated.

The Chaguaramas Development

Authority (CDA) was established by an act of Parliament in 1972 to administer and coordinate the development of the northwestern peninsula. The CDA is vested with all the land of the northwest peninsula of Trinidad, including the offshore islands.