

## **SEC informs residents about renewable energy project**

SABA--Keeping residents informed about its renewable energy plans, also in light of its efforts to keep electricity prices affordable, is important for the Saba Electric Company (SEC). For this reason, the company recently hosted three townhall meetings where residents received information about the phase 3 solar park, wind energy and battery storage project.

“We want to engage our community and make sure that our customers are well-informed about the benefits and effects of renewable energy. Stakeholder engagement is important to us. We also want to inform you about the trend of the electricity rates, the electricity bill and how it determined by the regulator,” said SEC’s Head of Distribution David Leonce during his presentation.

### **Subsidies**

Currently, electricity on Saba is produced by a combination of the solar parks and diesel generators, with 36% on average being produced by solar power over a 24-hour period. The current electricity rate, set by the regulator Authority Consumer and Market (ACM) in the Netherlands, is US \$0.51 per kiloWatt hour for the period of July to December 2022. But with the subsidy provided by the Public Entity Saba, the tariff is \$0.45 per kWh. The solar parks have a positive effect on reducing the electricity rates, because without the solar parks, the tariff would have been somewhere in the rate of \$0.62 per kWh.

“The tariffs would have been much higher without the subsidies and the solar parks,” explained David, who noted that in 2025, once the renewable energy project is completed, SEC is projecting that the electricity tariff is estimated at \$0.24 per kWh, based on the current price of fuel. “When the renewable energy project is completed, the cost and usage of fuel will go down drastically, which our customers will notice in their bills.”

The solar park phase 1 and 2 were fully subsidized partly by the European union (EU) and the Ministry of EZK. The EU and the Ministry of EZK have committed to invest \$17.5 million in the new phase 3 solar, wind and combined battery storage project. This project is currently in the research phase and SEC is looking at the different options. The number one benefit of the renewable energy project will be the lowering of the energy cost by some 30-40%. Once completed, Saba will generate approximately 90% of its electricity in a sustainable manner, which would be the highest percentage in the Dutch Kingdom.

### **Proposed location**

SEC is looking at the options to install one or two wind turbines which should supplement for the lack of sun during the night for charging the batteries. Several locations for a windmill are being studied along the coast line between Fort Bay Harbor and the quarry before the Black Rocks area leading to Giles Quarter. If the plans go ahead, it will consist of two 250 kWh windmill that is limited in size. The hill of Giles Quarters with an estimated size of 34,000 square meters is the proposed location to install the third solar park and the additional battery storage. SEC is assessing with the Public Entity Saba the possibility of constructing the by-pass road for the new harbor that will pass through the proposed area of the solar park. SEC hopes to acquire the land by the end of 2022 and start the tendering process by the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2023. The final design would be completed in 2023 and the construction activities end in 2024.

### **Save energy**

Using less energy to save costs remains important, said David. He mentioned cost-saving measures such as installing LED lights, turning off air conditioning and lights when leaving a room, unplugging devices that are not in use. “This is the low-hanging fruit with which you can save considerably.” The consultation sessions took place on November 8, 10 and 14 in respectively, The Bottom, Windwardside and Zion’s Hill. The public had ample opportunity to pose questions during the

townhall meetings and people did make good use of it by asking a lot of questions, which SEC management answered diligently.