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Historic agreements pave the way for growth at Quonset

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Anyone in the real estate, development, or the building and construction businesses knows that when it's time to partner with host cities and towns, we always hope for efficient collaboration but have to be prepared for something, well, less than that. That's why I am so grateful to the Quonset Business Park's (QBP) host town of North Kingstown. With great professionalism, fairness, and foresight, the town council and town manager worked with me to hammer out not one, but three important 10-year agreements. These will allow us to continue the growth that has led to 8,800 jobs and 168 businesses to date.

The pacts outline terms for tenants' payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT), service responsibilities at the corporate and industrial park, and expanded use of Quonset Development Corp. (QDC) wastewater services by the town.

Governor Donald Carcieri commented on their significance for the state, saying, "With these agreements, the town benefits from the continued remarkable growth at Quonset, and the businesses at Quonset are assured of first-rate public services." He was echoed by the state economic development director Keith Stokes, said, "Creating a more positive tax structure and positive business environment will assist in business growth and attraction to the QDC Business Park, which is already a bright spot in Rhode Island's economy."

The first agreement covers payment in lieu of taxes for tenants of our quasi-state agency, the QDC. Going forward, they will pay a flat percentage of the gross rent to the town. Currently, the QBP generates at least \$4.3 million annually in direct taxes and PILOT payments, combined, to the town. The second agreement irons out responsibilities to ensure first-rate municipal services in the QBP. Under the new agreement, the town will pay its share of maintenance for roadways, storm drainage, beaches, bike path, and some parking. The Town will continue to provide police and fire services. QDC will manage roadway improvements and dredging via a jointly-created infrastructure fund. All building code matters will be handled by state, not local, agencies.

The third and final agreement concerns wastewater usage. Wastewater customers in the town will be allocated 200,000 gallons per day of capacity at the QDC Wastewater Treatment Facility. The town will establish a sewer authority and assume all costs associated with the collection and transmission of additional wastewater.

Town council president Elizabeth Dolan said, "The successful negotiation of all three agreements demonstrates the town's commitment to a working partnership with the QDC to ensure the long term success and growth of the QBP."

The bottom line for businesses located here and prospective buyers and tenants is that QBP has assured itself a stable foundation for future growth. The state, the town, and the QDC are showing by our actions, not just words, that Quonset will remain among the East Coast's premiere locations for doing business. At last count, we were home to 168 businesses. Will your client's be next?

Steven King, P.E., is the managing director, of the Quonset Development Corp., North Kingstown.

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