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Quonset Business Park and North Kingstown making smart moves together

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The "Quonset Zone" designation for Quonset Business Park continues to draw attention, and praise - this time, from Grow Smart Rhode Island. Grow Smart is the state's leading nonprofit advocating for sustainable economic growth that builds upon and strengthens Rhode Island's exceptional quality of life and work.

In recognition of the innovative collaboration between a public and private entity, Grow Smart Rhode Island has awarded the Quonset Development Corp. (QDC) and the Town of North Kingstown with its prestigious "Outstanding Smart Growth Policies & Plans Award." The award will be presented at Grow Smart's "Power of Place Summit" on May 11 at the Rhode Island Convention Center. The theme of the event is "Beyond Austerity: Leveraging the Power of Place for a Stronger State Economy."

In nominating North Kingstown and QDC jointly, Grow Smart Rhode Island called the collaboration between the two "a model of smart growth innovation," and described it this way: "Requiring just beyond a year of work, these agencies forged binding agreements and leveraged millions of dollars of investment at levels that would typically require over a decade of negotiations. Massive reforms to the local Comprehensive Plan and the land use regulations for both the town and the QDC created a unified approach to developing QDC land as well as shared infrastructure that will unlock the development potential of the Post Road Corridor mixed-use development."

Frankly, we could not say it any better.

We are thrilled that a highly respected organization like Grow Smart Rhode Island sees what we see. That is, a prime example of what can be accomplished when a public/private partnership is motivated by the common good. We knew the idea for the "Quonset Zone" was bold. But we also knew it made sense. It made environmental sense. It made fiscal sense. And it made sense as part of our efforts to make it easier for businesses to come to the Quonset Business Park, or expand here. The Quonset Zone is another component in our goal to create more jobs and be an economic engine of success for the state.

We knew that the Quonset Zone would appeal to developers - so accustomed to red tape and regulatory hurdles - and help them locate at the Business Park, and view us as a business-friendly place to locate. The new unified process means that all development and re-development projects in the park can proceed at a much faster pace than ever before. For developers, that means a highly efficient permitting process - one that will save them time, and as a result, money. For the state and the Town of North Kingstown, it means more economic development initiatives at the Quonset Business Park, a facility fast becoming the region's engine for job creation.

Developers interested in Quonset Business Park now find themselves in a zone designed to get answers quickly, a "one stop shop" for the regulatory review of projects. In an economic climate that

has never been more competitive, the "Quonset Zone" is exactly what they need. We share with developers our thorough knowledge of every site, and we offer the ability to walk them through the process of conforming to regulations that we will oversee, and offer reliable estimates for how long we expect it to take.

It is truly an honor to be recognized by Grow Smart Rhode Island. Together with the Town of North Kingstown, we hope to serve as a role model for other public and private entities looking to jumpstart the economy, be it here in the Ocean State, or throughout the country.

The QDC is constantly looking for innovative ways to work with the community and businesses to bring more jobs and greater opportunities for success. And we believe that this most recent recognition from Grow Smart Rhode Island is just one more indication of the progress we have made accomplishing that goal.

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

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