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Site Redevelopment Technologies completes 2.3 acre Agawam cleanup

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David Peter,
Site Redevelopment Tech.

Agawam, MA Site Redevelopment Technologies (SRT), led by principal David Peter, have been cleaning environmentally distressed properties for years. They recently completed an environmental remediation of the site known as Games and Lanes. The company specializes in cleaning impaired properties and returning them to productive use throughout the northeast U.S.

In the case of Games and Lanes the property has gone through a quite typical scenario for contaminated sites. Originally a bowling alley, the problems began when a commercial dry cleaners operated at the property for many years creating a plume of hazardous chemicals underground throughout the neighborhood. Efforts to remediate the site began in 1989 while still operating, but in 2001 a fire caused the business to shut down. The building has been abandoned ever since with the roof collapsing and generally degrading the neighborhood.

At 2.3 acres located in the designated new downtown area the property had potential. SRT first heard of the opportunity while cleaning properties in Boston and Pawtucket, R.I. owned by the same dry cleaning company. Their expertise is in coordinating the environmental cleanup by assembling test data, performing remediation, negotiating with the municipality as well as environmental officials and creating a business model that includes a viable, marketable site upon completion.

In the case of Games and Lanes, the Mass. DEP and Agawam mayor Richard Cohen's office assisted greatly in finding a way to have the cleanup be completed as quickly as the regulations allow. The mayor along with the Planning Department kept in close communications and even appropriated some city funds, approved by the city council, to complete testing needed to persuade SRT to take on the challenge.

This combination of scientific expertise matched with regulatory, political and business experience is what is needed to complete the difficult problems involved with contaminated real estate.

Peter began his career of environmental cleanups with the massive Boston Central Artery project; the "Big Dig". During more than a decade of work there he met with environmental regulators and

participated in many of the negotiations needed to solve contamination issues ranging from the routine to the bizarre. This was not unexpected based on what was found while digging in one of the oldest cities in the U.S. Peter became general manager of Aggregate Industries during the Big Dig and was responsible for some of the largest private landholdings in Massachusetts since Aggregate Industries owned many quarries, asphalt and concrete plants with associated land..

Since 2000 Peter has been focused almost exclusively on cleaning some of the most difficult sites in the northeast, typically from New Jersey to New England. "Every part of the country has its own unique way of dealing with environmental issues, based on the national EPA regulatory framework" said Peter. Often it may be necessary to deal with federal, state and local authorities simultaneously to solve some of the more complicated problems. It has to make economic sense to spend all the time, effort and money on a property. "In many cases the cleanup costs far exceed the value of the property and these sites need a new, lower cost technology to be developed in order to bring them back to productive use". This is also an area where SRT can provide benefits. They are constantly monitoring government sponsored innovative technologies to find the most efficient alternatives for remediation. In addition, they have received many site specific government approvals to perform new, innovative remediation procedures reducing costs substantially while acheiveing the cleanup goal. This is possible by combining the chemical and engineering training of Peter with years of experience in the environmental field.

A number of new technologies have allowed properties such as the Agawam Games and Lanes site to proceed to an environmental closure as a result of the reduction in cost. When a property is under water, i.e. the cleanup cost is greater than the value, these new alternative procedures can make the difference between a dilapidated money pit or a clean property back on the tax rolls.

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