

SEN. BRIAN SMITH HOSTS TOWN HALL MEETING TO DISCUSS STATUS OF CANEEL BAY RESORT AND BELLEVIEW APARTMENT COMPLEX

Date : May 1, 2018

St. John – The Office of Sen. Brian Smith, held a Town Hall Meeting at the Cleone Creque Legislative Conference Room on Monday, to discuss Bill, H.R. 4731 to extend the retained use estate agreement for Caneel Bay Resort, authorized by Delegate to Congress Stacy Plaskett and to learn the status of the restoration efforts of the Belleview Apartments Complex.

“I called this meeting to hear the concerns of the people of St. John and throughout the Territory. Everyone is angry, anxious and disgruntled because they do not know the status of Caneel Bay and Belleview Apartment Complex,” said Sen. Smith. “Caneel bay is not just a place of employment it is a part of the community. Residents want Caneel bay to live up to their expectations and people want to know the status of their employment.”

“If the bill passed in Congress next month, how soon will employment at Caneel Bay begin?” asked Sen. Smith. In response, Brad Dow, Director of Engineer and Capital Projects at Caneel Bay stated that work will start work immediately. However, Attorney George Dudley said, “The opening of the hotel depends heavily on the timeframe to obtain all required permits.”

Sen. Smith requested a further explanation of the Lease Extension Agreement for Caneel Bay Resort. Director Dow said, “Currently, Caneel Bay has an agreement with the Government of the Virgin Islands (GVI) which was extended until 2023. However, the most expeditious way to get back to business is to implement a 60-year extension. The long-term extension is necessary for investors to recoup their investments.”

A Concerned Resident inquired about the much needed improved quality of treatment of employees of Caneel Bay when the hotel re-opens. Director Dow said, “The contract for the Economic Development Certificate mandates that 80% of employees are Virgin Islanders, 20% of management are Virgin Islanders, and training locals for managerial positions is also a part of the agreement. Caneel Bay can work on minimizing any mistakes that occurred in the past.”

Additional concerns from the residents include the economic downside for businesses on St. John since the closing of Caneel Bay due to no tourists or visitors, and employee grievances such as non-unionized employees do not receive severance pay when the hotel closes seasonally and the notice of termination to all employees after hurricanes occurred which caused a rise in unemployment on St. John.

Separately, representatives of Belleview Apartments Complex were absent at the Town Hall

Meeting. However, Sen. Smith shared that with his correspondence with officials of Belleview, they stated that all concerns as it relates to the Belleview Apartments Complex will be dealt with by the team this week. Construction will be completed in the middle of May.

Senators present are Brian Smith, Janette Millin Young, and Myron Jackson. Photo:

<http://www.legvi.org/committeemeetings/Media>

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