Message

From: Gay, Harper (Sanders) [Harper_Gay@sanders.senate.gov]
Sent: 6/25/2013 8:17:29 PM
To: Gutro, Doug [Gutro.Doug@epa.gov]
Subject: RE: Merit Awards

Thank you!

-----Original Message-----
From: Gutro, Doug [Gutro.Doug@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, June 25, 2013 04:00 PM Eastern Standard Time
To: Gay, Harper (Sanders)
Subject: Merit Awards

This award nomination is for Kiersten Bourgeois, who works for the Vermont Agency for Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) and Patricia Coppolino who works for the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). This award is for their work together in cleaning up and redeveloping properties contaminated by hazardous materials. Their unique partnership stands as a model for other states to follow when attempting to combine both protection of human health and the environment, with the productive and sustainable reuse of brownfields properties. One could say that this is their job and that there is nothing different about the way this has been implemented in Vermont. But years of Brownfields experience demonstrates that the work they do together is different. It is interconnected and provides a standard of partnership that is not common.

Many property owners and developers are extremely reluctant to become involved with regulators and state agencies with regard to contamination issues on their properties. The degree of responsiveness, involvement, and encouragement that Patricia and Kiersten provide on an ongoing basis goes above and beyond the call of duty, but is a key ingredient to their success. Their interpersonal skills, technical expertise, and penchant for creating opportunities have fostered a positive and collaborative business environment which has won over many landowners, developers, and other project partners who are now willing to take the necessary risks to achieve successful brownfields redevelopment.

Both ACCD and DEC receive Brownfields funding from EPA. ACCD has received a Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund grant valued at almost $3million and DEC receives annual funding valued at approximately $600,000 to fund staff positions and to fund assessments and cleanups. Kiersten and Patricia utilize this funding in concert to position sites for assessment and then cleanup activities, leading to redevelopment.

Working together, they have identified sites in many communities that while potentially ripe for redevelopment are dragged down by the notion that they are contaminated and therefore not able to be reused. Patricia and other Vermont grantees provide the impetus to get the site assessed, and Kiersten works to provide not only the funding to get it cleaned up but to identify developers who will put the property back on the tax rolls and remove blight in Vermont's cities, towns, and villages.

Many examples illuminate the work they have done together. How does a property get cleaned up and redeveloped? Only when attention is continually paid to the project and the work is followed through to completion. Here are just a few examples of their work together and what they have accomplished:

Jones and Lamson is a former large machine tool facility located in Springfield. This small town was once the center of industrial activity during World War Two. Since that time, it has been all downhill. The Jones and Lamson building has been idle since the 1980's, burdened with a variety of environmental concerns. Despite its overwhelming issues, Patricia worked diligently over a number of years to get the assessment accomplished and to work with the Vermont State Historic Preservation to determine a future use. Kiersten brought funding to the project to clean up the extensive interior asbestos. The building will be demolished and the town now has much needed land to redevelop a very visible parcel of downtown Springfield.

Another project in downtown Springfield involved the 100 River Street project. This building was another former machine tool factory, this one contaminated by PCBs. This contamination was extensive and complex, and required many parties to work together to accomplish the cleanup. The participation of both Patricia and Kiersten was crucial in overseeing this work and ensuring that no matter what challenges arose the redevelopment would happen. The building is now clean and has been redeveloped into the Springfield Health Center. The building has retained its original historic character and has once again become a jewel in Springfield's downtown.

In Algiers Village in Guilford, a site was contaminated with TPH and PCBs. Owned by the non-profit Friends of Algiers Village, the redevelopment plan consisted of affordable housing consisting of a 17 unit project. Again, working

cooperatively, Patricia and Kiersten ensured that the project was accomplished. They worked with the Windham Regional Council who provided assessment funding, Kiersten provided the cleanup funding and Patricia oversaw the cleanup of the site. They worked together to ensure that the project reached completion and that any obstacles that were encountered were overcome.

Another project is the former Arthur's Property in Morrisville. This site consists of three contiguous parcels that are developed with three buildings and parking, and were contaminated with a variety of problems including an underground tank, containerized interior hazardous debris, asbestos, lead paint, and PCB-containing materials. The future redevelopment will be 18 units of affordable housing on the upper floors and three commercial/retail units on the ground floor. Assessment funding was provided by the DEC, the Lamoille County Planning Commission, the Northwest Region Planning Commission, and cleanup funding was provided by ACCD. This project is on its way to redevelopment.

Our last example is the Vermont Tissue site in Bennington. Here, Trish and Kiersten found extremely creative ways to promote the redevelopment of a former paper manufacturing facility into a combination of housing units and a hydropower facility along the Walloomsac River. This project involved working through complicated issues with river sediments, land use restrictions, and innovative air sampling methodologies. Without their willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty and think "outside the box", it is unlikely the private developer could have completed this project.

As one can see from these various examples from around the state, assessment, cleanup and most importantly redevelopment would not be occurring if Kiersten and Patricia were not working in tandem to ensure that these projects reached a successful conclusion. Both not only bring funds to the table, but bring a positive attitude, compassion, and dedication to their work.

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