

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Condo-Gate: Acting Governor Osbert Potter To Host Press Conference On Monday

VIC News / **Published On July 18, 2015 09:15 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **July 18, 2015**



ST. THOMAS -- Acting Governor Osbert Potter will host a press conference on Monday at Government House in the second floor's ball room, according to a press release the administration issued on Friday. The presser will commence at 2:00 p.m.

According to the release, Potter, who will remain acting governor until Governor Kenneth Mapp returns to the territory on July 26, will be discussing the recent appointment of a new Bureau of Corrections director.

But the conference will undoubtedly see Potter fielding questions about the Mahogany Run condominium rental that the government is paying some \$2,800 monthly for -- a

revelation that has perturbed senators and residents alike, who argue that Potter did not need a rental space in the territory's capital because he has a home here, and historically lieutenant governors have resided on St. Croix.

Property and Procurement Acting Commissioner Randolph Bennett attempted to defend the Mapp administration's decision to expend tax payers money for Potter's extra abode at a [recent Senate hearing](#).

"The most recent questions about the lieutenant governor's property is that we have looked at the cost and done some analysis on what it costs for the lieutenant governor to move back and forth in the territory when he's here in St. Croix, where he spends most of his time, come back to St. Thomas and where his private residence is located and [we] realized that there are some security concerns," Bennett said.

Bennett conceded that the administration did not adequately communicated its intention to provide housing for the lieutenant governor in St. Thomas. He also said his experience of managing properties and residences for ambassadors around the world and the level of funding that had to be expended to support these tasks, "it didn't seem as such a far stretch for me for this community," he said.

Sen. Gittens, chairman of the committee, asked Bennett where in the Virgin Islands Code did he identify provision for security or housing for the lieutenant governor.

Bennett said while the original or revised code never specifically mentioned the lieutenant governor, it made mention of the governor's secretary, "which, at that time, under the Revised Organic Act of 1936, was appointed and was provided residence here in the territory," he said. The acting commissioner also argued that the Revised Organic Act failed to make mention of housing for the lieutenant governor because said position was established in 1968 — some 14 years after the original code was revised.

"So yes, it did not mention those things but the precedent has been set for residence for the governor's secretary," Bennett said.