

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Potter: 'I Will Assume Monthly Cost Of Condominium Going Forward'

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ST. THOMAS -- Lieutenant Governor Osbert Potter made known this afternoon that he will start paying the cost of the monthly Mahogany Run condominium that was secured for him by the Government of the Virgin Islands on April 1 to the tune of \$2,800 per month.

Potter revealed his decision at a press conference here held at Government House at 2:00 p.m., saying that he wanted to bring to a "halt" the confusion surrounding residency for governors and lieutenant governors of the territory.

"What I have decided to do, because it is not my intention to make a 2-bedroom resident for the lieutenant governor to occupy, to make that be a continuous, nonstop, bone of contention and distraction for this administration, for the legislature [and] for the people of the Virgin Islands," Potter began.

"What I have decided to do going forward -- because I have not spent a day at the condo -- I will personally assume the cost for rental for that condo going forward," he added. He would later reiterate twice his commitment to pay the rent.

The lieutenant governor said he will make the \$2,800 monthly payments with the hope that the executive and legislative branches of government can come to a solution that would "once and for all" rectify the residency issue for the territory's leaders.

"I will assume that [cost] until and with the expectation that the executive branch of government, in conjunction with the legislature, come together and once and for all bring some resolution to this situation," said Potter.

The lieutenant governor again mentioned the mix-up the situation has caused amongst constituents, which he says clouds the administration's efforts in moving the islands forward.

"It is something that, in my view, is too much a distraction and a confusion-generating situation that's worth it. I'm not going to allow for this situation to continue in the fashion that it has continued over the months or weeks," Potter said.

The housing arrangement blew wide open after documents provided to the Daily News revealed that the GVI had secured a condominium for Potter in St. Thomas. The situation became more damning after the monthly tag [was reported](#) by The Virgin Islands Consortium to be some \$2,800, which was revealed by Acting Property and Procurement Commissioner Randolph Bennett at a finance committee hearing.

The agreement, Bennett said, was signed by Governor Mapp, and the government will also expend \$5,000 to \$7,000 to furnish the condominium for Potter, who has a home on the island. The acting commissioner also said that the money will be coming from the lieutenant governor's budget, although he was not able to confirm the revenue stream through which the rental was being funded.

Senator Violet, as was the case throughout the hearing, voiced his disapproval with the ongoing activity at Government House without the 31st Legislature's consent.

Violet wondered aloud why was it that Potter, who has a home in St. Thomas, and with an official lieutenant governor's residence on St. Croix, want to live in a condominium on the island. He said with the governor already being commissioned by law to reside in the capital, Potter should — as has been the case with most lieutenant governors in the territory, the last being Gregory Francis — live on Croix, in the Sion Farm complex.

Senator Janette Millin Young, vice president of the 31st Legislature, echoed Violet's sentiments. She said her father, Henry Millin, was a lieutenant governor in the Juan Luis administration, and although he was offered housing, he refused because he lived on the island.

“It shouldn’t be a decision here to say we’re renting a house or an apartment for the lieutenant governor who lives right here on St. Thomas,” Millin-Young said. “And then you add to it that we have to buy him furniture, too.”

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