

WHO'S WHO | in Commercial & Residential Real Estate Law

By LISA MORRIS JOSEFAK

MICHAEL H. SAHN

Sahn Ward Coschignano & Baker, PLLC

Michael H. Sahn is a partner at Sahn Ward Coschignano & Baker, PLLC in Uniondale.

Sahn began his legal career as a deputy town attorney of the Town of North Hempstead in 1977. At the Town of North Hempstead, he served as counsel to the board of zoning and appeals from 1978 through 1979, and as senior deputy town attorney in 1979. He then served as commissioner of planning and research development for the Town of North Hempstead from 1979 to 1981.

In 1981, Sahn joined the law firm of Margiotta & Ricigliano in Uniondale, where he served as a partner of the firm. Additionally, from 1984 through 1997, Sahn served as associate counsel to New York State Sen. Michael J. Tully, Jr. representing the Seventh Senate District in the New York State Senate. From 1997 to 1998, he served as associate counsel to New York State Sen. Michael Balboni, also representing the Seventh Senate District in the New York State Senate.

A current issue and trend in commercial real estate law is the "greening" of municipal building codes, Sahn said.

"The green building movement seeks to improve the minimum standards set by building codes by introducing more environmentally conscious building design and construction requirements," he said. "The two most notable programs establishing standards for sustainable and energy efficient building practices are Energy Star and LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). Although municipalities across the country have adopted the LEED standards in their building codes, the future of green building standards will come from the amendment of public codes to incorporate



green building standards directly. Therefore, the USGBC LEED certification, which requires applicants to apply and pay to receive certification, may become less important."

Other states are developing green building codes, which establish their own state energy efficiency standards for buildings, providing an alternative to the costly third-party certification programs, Sahn noted.

"New York and its municipalities have thus far moved slower than other jurisdictions in adopting green building standards, but that is likely to change dramatically in the next decade as the state finds ways to meet the governor's Executive Order 24 of 2009, which directs New York State to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050," Sahn said. "Buildings are responsible for 40% of greenhouse gas emissions, nationally, and 80% in New York City."

New York City is exploring amending its zoning provisions to incorporate green principles, Sahn said.

"Municipalities on Long Island can take leadership in the State in greening their building codes to further efforts at

sustainability," he said.

Sahn was admitted to practice in the state of New York in 1977, and was admitted to practice before the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York in 1978, and the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York in 1980.

Sahn graduated from The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan with high distinction and from Indiana University School of Law, Bloomington, Indiana, cum laude.

Sahn is a trustee of the North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System, Manhasset and a member of the Community Board of Southside Hospital in Bay Shore. He is also chairman of the board of zoning appeals of the Incorporated Village of Flower Hill and serves on the advisory board of the Chicago Title Insurance Company. He is a member of the Nassau County Bar Association and co-chairs the real property law committee.

Sahn is also a member of the Paralegal Studies Program advisory committee at Hofstra University's School of Continuing Education, where his focus is on ensuring the continued high quality of the program. He is also a member of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York. He is frequently invited to lecture before professional groups in his areas of expertise.

Sahn Ward Coschignano & Baker is a full service law firm concentrating in the areas of zoning and land use planning; real estate law and transactions; civil litigation in state and federal trial and appellate courts and alternative dispute resolution; environmental law; corporate/business law and commercial transactions; telecommunications law; municipal law and legislative practice; labor and employment; real estate tax certiorari and condemnation; estate planning and administration; and family law.