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## **2020 Year in Review: Marc Angelone, Hinckley, Allen & Snyder LLP**

December 25, 2020 - Spotlights

Marc Angelone

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What was the most difficult part of working during the pandemic of 2020? Personally, the most difficult part of working during the pandemic is a certain diminished sense of camaraderie and collaboration among colleagues. Although technology, such as Webex and Zoom meetings, still provides the opportunity to interact visually with co-workers, it is definitely only a limited substitute for the daily contact and interactions that help build a sense of culture and teamwork that are critical to the success of any organization. At Hinckley Allen, we take the training and mentorship of our junior associates very seriously, and the necessary remote nature of working during a pandemic has forced us to adapt and become more creative in continuing our important obligation to train and guide our more junior attorneys. Our more junior attorneys are very often times the ones who are already well versed in current technologies and the advantages they provide, so this transition has also educated some of the senior attorneys and helped keep abreast of current trends and capabilities.

What aspects of working from home have you enjoyed most? I have two young daughters at home, who are also working remotely through their school year. Being able to spend some unexpected additional time in between classes or after their school day has ended, has been very enjoyable for me. To be around to help out with a difficult math problem or discuss some bit of history during the day in real time and in person, or simply to be able to walk into the next room to have lunch together, has definitely been one the advantages of working from home during these difficult times.

What was your greatest professional accomplishment or most notable project,

deal, or transaction in 2020? Rather than point to any one individual project, I would note that there has been a tremendous increase in the deal flow of renewable energy deals that Hinckley Allen has been involved with over the past 12 months. We have seen not only an influx of new deals throughout New England, but we have been fortunate enough to see a rise in the number of new

clients that we represent, from regional to international companies, who are developing, acquiring and constructing new projects throughout New England. We have seen a tremendous increase in work, especially in the solar project sector, either with new companies building or acquiring new projects, or existing clients with large real estate portfolios that are either converting them to solar farms or leasing out large areas for the construction of rooftop solar projects. With a new administration in Washington with new priorities and support for renewable energy sources, this appears to be an industry with great promise for continued success and growth at least in the near future and Hinckley Allen is excited to be heavily involved with, and at the forefront of, these types of projects.

What are your predictions for commercial real estate in 2021? The long term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic remain to be fully realized and appreciated. I think it will be a long, slow recovery and only those companies which have been nimble enough to adapt to new ways of running their core businesses will see the other side of it. The retail industry, in particular, was struggling before the pandemic. That industry's problems were only exacerbated by the social restrictions imposed upon it. However, even before the pandemic hit, many successful shopping centers were already beginning to shift away from the traditional model of having big box anchor store retailers, towards providing either more entertainment driven destination spots and unique experiences, or other non-traditional uses, such as medical office uses. I think we will continue to see a rise in the number of new medical facilities as the anchor tenants in many shopping centers. The essential nature and the importance of this industry have only been amplified during the current pandemic. Over the past couple of years, I have seen a significant shift from the traditional big box retailers in shopping centers towards, instead, multi-story medical office buildings, and, in that time, have been involved with a handful of new, major shopping center developments that have such medical office buildings as the crown jewel tenant. The medical industry is not reliant upon a strong economy in order to succeed and has a strong customer base that will only continue to grow with an expanding and aging population, making it, on the whole, a fairly reliable and creditworthy tenant. For these reasons, I think we will see the continued expansion of medical office uses in 2021.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540