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2024 Women in CRE: Andrea Gomes, Hinckley Allen

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Andrea Gomes
Partner

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What recent project, transaction, or accomplishment are you most proud of? I enjoy all of my work, but when the land use is mission based, I am particularly proud of being a part of the team. For example, I recently secured land use approvals for a behavioral health clinic in Hartford, Conn. for Root Center for Advanced Recovery, a private, nonprofit, behavioral health care organization providing mental health and substance use prevention and treatment throughout Connecticut. Root Center already had two clinics in the city at that time, but were looking to build a new, state-of-the-art clinic where its patients could receive treatment with dignity. Similarly, I recently represented Sager Development LLC in securing land use approvals for a new 65-unit affordable multifamily community in Farmington, Conn. This project was particularly rewarding as we obtained unanimous approval from the town plan and zoning commission after just two hearings, covering a regulation amendment, rezoning, and site plan approval for a Low Income Housing Tax Credit development. This community, located near UConn Medical Center, will provide much-needed affordable housing with 80% of the units designated as affordable, including 15 units administered by FAVARH, a local supportive housing organization for individuals with disabilities. This project was a win, not only for affordable housing, but also for thoughtful, community-centered land development.

What challenges have you faced as a woman in commercial real estate? Real estate, especially land use law, has traditionally been a male-dominated field, both in terms of practitioners, and the clients we represent. This disparity felt isolating at times, but rather than seeing it as a barrier, I viewed it as motivation. I wanted my voice to be heard and respected, and I was determined to become the go-to expert. To achieve that, I dedicated myself fully to mastering every aspect of land use law while building strong relationships across the industry. The challenges I faced as a woman in this space became the driving force behind my growth and success.

What is your vision for the future of women in commercial real estate? My vision for the future of women in commercial real estate is one where women not only have an equal seat at the table from the outset, but one where their voices and contributions are valued as essential. I hope to see a community that actively mentors all newcomers, regardless of gender, to ensure the next generation of professionals receives the guidance and knowledge necessary to succeed. This collaboration will create a stronger, more inclusive industry where the focus is on excellence and seamless client service. It's about passing down expertise, supporting each other, and ensuring that the momentum women have gained in this field continues to grow.

What advice do you have for young women aspiring to enter commercial real estate? My advice for young women entering commercial real estate is to dive in, build strong relationships, and seek out mentors. Networking is key, and organizations like CREW CT offer valuable opportunities to connect and grow. Be proactive about learning, and don't hesitate to take a seat at the table, or to ask

questions along the way. Gaining different perspectives is essential. I've found my role on the West Hartford Town Plan and Zoning Commission/Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Agency invaluable in understanding land use from all angles. Stay curious, advocate for yourself, and always focus on building both your expertise and your professional network.

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