

PARTNER

# Katherine Garrahan

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## OVERVIEW

Katherine Garrahan is a seasoned real estate lawyer focused on helping commercial, nonprofit and institutional clients, primarily in MetroWest and Central Massachusetts, facing difficult land-use, zoning and permitting challenges. Kathy regularly provides creative, problem-solving counsel and representation to developers, owners of shopping centers and office buildings, banks, nonprofits and other clients, from mid-range to big corporate, in key areas of the real estate process, including:

- Real estate development
- Land-use planning, zoning and permitting
- Conveyancing, and
- Leasing

Kathy's experience bridges many sectors, including schools, clinics and specialty facilities. "Clients appreciate that I'm a people person, a team player, and take the time to explain what negotiated agreements, statutes, regulations and bylaws mean for their businesses and projects," Kathy notes, "qualities that help...especially when my client has undertaken a technically complex project, or is involved in a politically sensitive or potentially contentious matter."

Her land use advocacy includes due diligence, obtaining local and state permitting and licensing approvals, handling negotiations and drafting agreements concerning real property purchases, sales, leases and financing. She frequently appears on behalf of her clients before local and state authorities and municipal boards and commissions. Kathy says, "I've helped clients in places from A to W – Ashland, Auburn, Framingham, Natick, Southborough, Oxford, Westborough and Worcester!"

In addition to being in the public arena, her work in nonprofit housing development includes financing programs of state and federal agencies, such as the Executive Office of Communities and Development, Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs of the Federal Home Loan Bank and zoning work related to M.G.L. c. 40A, §3 (nonprofit educational uses).

## Honors

*Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly* selected Kathy for listing in the 2015 "Top Women of Law." She was also selected for

inclusion in the 2012, 2013 and 2014 *Massachusetts Super Lawyers Rising Stars*

## Before Bowditch

Prior to her career as an attorney, Kathy worked as a social worker, public administrator and consultant in government and healthcare industries in Massachusetts and New York City – including program administration, budget forecasting and planning – and headed up the fiscal affairs department of a state agency. In addition, she co-founded a successful nonprofit private elementary school in MetroWest.

During law school, Kathy worked as a Northeastern University Co-op student at Bowditch & Dewey and came back to the firm as an attorney upon graduation. She was a member of Northeastern University’s National Health Law Moot Court Team, a Law Clerk at a Providence-based law firm (Fall 2003), a Judicial Intern to the Honorable Bruce Selya, First Circuit Court of Appeals (Spring 2003), and a Legal Intern at the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Massachusetts (Fall 2002).

## Besides work

“I like to spend a lot of time outdoors...walking trails year-round.” Kathy gets to the ocean when she can and enjoys kayaking local lakes and rivers. “I take great satisfaction in being an ambassador for all that MetroWest and Massachusetts have to offer.”

## EXPERIENCE

### Getting a permit in a complex design, planning and zoning case

A large, regional developer needed to get permit approval to close the acquisition of a site in MetroWest, a former big-box retail facility slated for mixed-use commercial and residential reuse. “While there wasn’t a lot of opposition,” Kathy explained, “it was an oddly-shaped site and needed a creative site plan and design.” Kathy quarterbacked a team comprising civil, traffic and stormwater engineers and architects to address key issues, such as traffic and pedestrian accommodations. “I enjoyed being part of a team of professionals tackling difficult challenges. In this case, that included conforming the design to a local Overlay District.” The permit was issued, and the project has ramped up for construction.

### Complicated jurisdictional and environmental issues in a permitting process

When a global corporation was developing a new, MetroWest headquarters campus, it ran into a thorny jurisdictional issue. A key part of the project, a large parking garage containing offices and training center, straddled two town lines. “This meant two complex sets of hearings and applications,” Kathy noted. “There was also an environment compliance component, because of the development’s proximity to a wetlands.” Kathy and a team of engineers and environmental experts successfully addressed state and federal regulatory factors, and the permits were issued.

## AFFILIATIONS

### PROFESSIONAL/COMMUNITY

- Board Member, Foundation for MetroWest
- President, Board of Directors, MetroWest Legal Services
- Board of Directors, MetroWest Medical Center
- General Counsel, MetroWest Chamber of Commerce
- Director, Clerk, and Leadership in Diversity Awards Steering Committee Member, Alliance for MetroWest Unity, Inc.
- Co-Founder, Board of Visitors Member, and former Trustee, Summit Montessori School

- Volunteer, Framingham Medical Reserve Corps
- Member, New York State Bar Association
- Member, Department of Developmental Services, Citizen Advisory Board (Middlesex West)
- Member, Real Estate Bar Association, MetroWest Bar Association, Boston Bar Association and American Bar Association

## PREVIOUS

- Past Chair, Vice Chair for Economic Development and Public Policy, and Director, MetroWest Chamber of Commerce
- Former Trustee, Summit Montessori School

## ARTICLES & TALKS

### ARTICLES

- “[Municipal adaptations, collaborations are key to community resilience](#) ,” Massachusetts Municipal Association, July 28, 2020
- “[Broader State authorization, municipal flexibility needed to help businesses survive](#) ,” *Worcester Telegram*, June 4, 2020
- “New Concerns for Real Estate Brokers and Attorneys in Making Representations,” Bowditch & Dewey, April 26, 2013
- “Massachusetts Stretch Building Code Update,” Bowditch & Dewey, October 21, 2009

### TALKS

- “[A Checklist For Adjusting Your Brewery for Phase II](#) ,” Massachusetts Brewers Guild Webinar, June 9, 2020

## BAR + COURT ADMISSIONS

- Massachusetts
- New York

## EDUCATION

- J.D., Northeastern University
- M.P.H., Columbia University
- M.S., Columbia University School of Social Work
- B.A., College of the Holy Cross