

PARTNER

# Robert E. Longden

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## OVERVIEW

Bob Longden is a commercial real estate lawyer who represents business and institutional clients – primarily for projects in central Massachusetts – in land use matters, re-zonings and transactions. These include acquisition, financing and development of commercial and industrial properties, construction and permanent financing and leasing.

Clients seek Bob’s help in obtaining permits and approvals from federal, state and local authorities for the development and use of real estate. He has particular expertise in appearing before zoning boards of appeals and planning boards. Bob also assists clients in the formation of joint ventures, limited liability companies and other real estate entities.

His clients comprise shopping center owners, real estate developers, private schools and institutions of higher education. Regardless of the type of client or assignment, Bob is known for his creative problem solving and for taking time to listen to his clients and understand their issues and needs. “Clients come to us for our practical knowledge, deep expertise and candid advice.”

## Besides work

Bob loves to spend time with friends and family. “My wife and I are planning to travel to St. Lucia in the winter and a Danube cruise in the spring...then the western states.” Summer? “Maine.”

## EXPERIENCE

### Successfully making the case for a building expansion

A railroad company wanted to expand an existing freight terminal in order to help build its passenger service. The proposal stirred push back from an abutting neighborhood, which feared a potential increase in odors, noise and truck traffic. As Bob put it, “I appeared and presented on behalf of my client before state and local regulators. I also held public meetings with neighbors, explaining what the project would look like...especially during construction.” In addition, Bob detailed the steps his client would take to mitigate any impacts. “I negotiated with the state and local governments to fund various neighborhood improvements, such as parks.” All of the approvals were granted, and the project moved forward.

### Obtaining approval for a non-profit’s proposed change in use

A national non-profit wanted to establish a residential treatment center for people with chemical dependency, its second in Massachusetts. “The company proposed to renovate and adapt an existing commercial structure,” Bob described, “and the

neighbors were concerned about the change in use.” Bob pointed out to the town that the Americans with Disabilities Act and the federal Fair Housing Act forbade discrimination against the patients by denying use or imposing restrictive conditions. After prolonged public hearings, approvals were granted and the local permits were issued. “We also negotiated several conditions, such as limiting the outpatient census.”

## Using the Dover Amendment to keep a construction project on schedule

A private school began construction of a new athletic field in the fall of 2015. Shortly after work began, the city government issued a cease and desist order, claiming that Bob’s client needed to obtain a special permit for earth excavation before work could continue. Appealing the cease and desist order or obtaining the special permit would have delayed construction, resulting in substantial damage to the project due to erosion and winter conditions. According to Bob, “I convinced the Building Commission and the City Law Department that the new athletic field was a use protected by the Dover Amendment and that the school was not required to obtain a special zoning permit. I was able to get the City to revoke the cease and desist order within 14 days of issuance, and construction moved forward.”

## AFFILIATIONS

### PROFESSIONAL/COMMUNITY

- Board of Trustees, Assumption College

### PREVIOUS

- Former Trustee, Massachusetts Bar Foundation; Life Member
- Former Trustee, Worcester County Bar Foundation; Life Member
- President, Worcester County Bar Association (1994-1995)
- President, Worcester County Bar Foundation (1995-1996)
- Member, Massachusetts Bar Association House of Delegates (1999-2002)
- Member, Executive Committee, Worcester County Bar Association (1991-1995)
- Former President, Legal Assistance Corporation of Central Massachusetts
- Former President, Elm Park Center for Early Childhood Education, Inc.
- Former President, Rainbow Child Development Center, Inc.

## ARTICLES & TALKS

- “Development Projects Link Colleges, Community: Upgrading Neighborhoods, Expanding Campuses,” Banker & Tradesman, August 30, 2015

## BAR ADMISSIONS

- Massachusetts

## EDUCATION

- J.D., *cum laude*, Suffolk University Law School; Editor, Suffolk University Law Review
- B.A., *cum laude*, Boston College

