

**19**  
**89** | **OVER**  
**TWENTY**  
**FIVE**  
**YEARS**

**Executive of the Month: Tsoukalas Curto of FDT:  
Concentrates her practice in land use, environmental and  
municipal law; Firm partner is co-chair of the renewable  
energy practice group**

March 06, 2018 - Long Island

Andrea Tsoukalas Curto,  
Forchelli Deegan Terrana, LLP

Uniondale, NY Andrea Tsoukalas Curto, a partner at Forchelli Deegan Terrana, LLP (New York Law School, 2000, cum laude) joined the firm in January of 2005 and concentrates her

practice in zoning, land use, environmental and municipal law matters. Tsoukalas Curto represents a wide variety of clients including local municipal boards, national corporate chains, local developers and small business owners in the development of commercial and residential properties. She also has substantial experience in land use litigation and appeals.

Tsoukalas Curto is general counsel to the Long Island Gasoline Retailers Association, a nationally recognized non-profit trade association with over 600 members. She also serves as counsel to the village of Kensington board of trustees, zoning board of appeals and architectural review board. Tsoukalas Curto was also recently appointed to serve on the village of Roslyn Harbor planning board which has jurisdiction over all site plans and subdivision applications in the village.

Tsoukalas Curto is admitted to practice before the New York State Bar. She is a member of the New York State Bar Association, Nassau County Bar Association, and Nassau County Women's Bar Association. She also served as the treasurer and is currently a director of the Nassau County Women's Bar Foundation, the charitable arm of the Nassau County Women's Bar Association. She is also a director of The Sophia Valsamos Foundation, a not-for-profit charitable organization formed with a mission to empower teenagers struggling with bullying, lifestyle choices, anxiety and depression.

Shown is former councilman Chris Coschignano presenting Tsoukalas Curto with a Town of Oyster Bay Town Board Citation recognizing her as an honoree of Long Island Business News' 40 Under 40 Awards.

She was recognized by the Long Island Business News with its 40 Under 40 Award (2012). Tsoukalas Curto was listed by the same publication as a "Who's Who in Women in Professional Service." She was given the "Long Island Outstanding Advocate for Children and Youth Award" (2012) by the John J. Byrne Community Center. The Queens Courier presented her with its "Top Women in Business Award" (2015), which acknowledges influential women in business whose achievements make a difference in the community. In 2016, she was

honored by Hofstra University with the “Outstanding Women in Law” award. The Long Island Press recently presented her with its “Long Island Power Women Award” (2017).

The New York Real Estate Journal recently sat down with Tsoukalas Curto for a question and answer session.

Q: What trends are you seeing that will impact real estate development?

A: The most significant trend I am tracking that can have an impact on real estate development is the emergence of renewable energy in both the public and private sectors. New York State has a target to source 50% of energy from renewables by 2030. Examples of renewable energy are combined heat and power (CHP), solar, wind and fuel cells. In January of 2017, LIPA approved the development of New York’s first offshore wind farm located off the east end of Long Island. The CEO of LIPA, Tom Falcone, has stated that PSEG customers on Long Island have saved \$735 million in electricity costs from the company’s energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. In response to this growing trend, our firm launched a renewable energy practice group last year to assist clients in determining and obtaining the renewable energy incentives available through New York State’s \$5 billion Clean Energy Fund which is administered by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

The partners of Forchelli Deegan Terrana, LLP.

Q: What are the most relevant zoning and land use trends of the past year?

A: My partners and I have worked on major hospital and campus expansions as well as the development of new urgent care facilities and medical offices. Major hospitals are merging and expanding to create larger campuses to provide broader services to patients, better training for medical students, and more opportunity for advanced medical research. On the other side of the spectrum is the urgent care facility that provides convenient walk-in access to medical care. These facilities have become a major trend throughout Nassau and Suffolk Counties as

more people prefer the convenience of urgent care over an emergency room.

The other trend that we have been seeing is the conversion of retail space to medical offices. There has been an increase in demand for medical offices along major thoroughfares to again provide convenient medical care to patients. All of these medical uses require approvals from various municipal boards. As land use attorneys, we appear before the various boards that have jurisdiction over these applications with a team of consultants and experts and explain how the use will be implemented and why it will not have a negative impact on the community.

Q: What are the most significant land use cases you've worked on?

A: One of the most significant land use cases I worked on was the expansion of the Islamic Center of Long Island. Although religious uses have a preferred status under zoning laws, this case was challenging because of the potential impacts on traffic and parking in the surrounding area. We had to resolve the community's concerns about the existing impacts of the mosque and potential future impacts of its expansion. This was accomplished through a series of meetings among representatives of the Islamic Center, the village and the community. The result of our efforts was a ribbon-cutting ceremony when the expansion was completed, which was attended by all of the stakeholders.

Another significant land use case in which I was involved was drafting and implementing development incentive zoning regulations for the village of Kensington. This involved the creation and application of specific regulations that were consistent with the state's enabling legislation permitting villages to make certain zoning modifications, and which were also consistent with Kensington's pattern of development. The legislation permitted the development of two parcels in Kensington which were vacant and unsightly for many years because of zoning impediments. The developed lots will not only be consistent with the overall development of the Village, but will also generate tax revenue.

Finally, I worked on one of the first "transit oriented development" projects in the village of Mineola. Mineola is a major intermodal transportation hub consisting of a LIRR train station, a bus depot, and taxi cab station. The project is a multi-story apartment building whose residents are within walking distance of a train, bus or cab as well as the downtown. This

highly successful project set the pattern for additional apartment buildings that have led to the revitalization of Mineola's downtown.

Q: What advice would you give to an attorney just starting a career in real estate?

A: Know your client's goals and expectations and understand the overlay of regulations that affect the property in interest. Real estate transactions have become much more complicated. In addition to standard transactional issues, real estate attorneys must have a working knowledge of zoning, environmental and land use regulations to adequately protect their client's property rights.

Q: What recent honor, achievement or recognition has meant the most to you and why?

A: I was recently honored by the Long Island Press with its Power Women in Business Award. I am most proud of this honor because it recognizes successful professionals who also give back to the community. For the past five years, I have been an officer of the Women's Bar Foundation, the charitable arm of the Women's Bar Association. The Foundation has a scholarship luncheon every spring to raise money for exceptional women in law school that need financial assistance. These women are very bright, but have little or no financial backing from their families. The foundation also hosts an annual golf outing to raise money for breast cancer awareness. Every dollar earned from this event is donated to organizations that directly benefit women with breast cancer. I am proud to be an officer of the foundation because we all work together towards a common good.

Q: What is your favorite quote?

A: "Fearlessness is not the absence of fear. It's the mastery of fear. It's about getting up one more time than we fall down," by Arianna Huffington.

This is one of my favorite quotes because I believe the most successful people accept failure as an integral part of their success and attack every challenge with the same veracity and fearlessness. It's an inspirational message that applies to all people in every profession.