



Executive of the Month: Always thinking a step ahead, John Lore of Capital Fund Law Group, leads his firm to success

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Capital Fund Law Group team at an event they sponsored in November 2019, CyberSecurity & Financial Services, hosted at Axos Bank in NYC

John Lore

New York, NY The New York Real Estate Journal (NYREJ) sat down with John Lore of Capital Fund Law Group, our executive of the month, for a question and answer session.

NYREJ: Tell us how you got your start in the legal field.

Lore: My legal career started in the investment funds division of a large international law firm, Akin Gump, in both New York and Moscow and I have been focused on advising private funds throughout my career. As an incoming associate, I initially accepted an offer to join the firm's intellectual property division in Palo Alto, after spending two summers with the group focused on international IP litigation. However, during my final weeks as second-year law school summer associate in Akin's Palo Alto office, I had a lunch meeting with one of the investment funds partners, Abrar Hussein (now the CEO of private equity firm Frost Capital), who was temporarily in the Palo Alto office en route to joining the firm's Abu Dhabi office.

During that initial lunch meeting with Abrar and our subsequent conversations, I became enamored with the exciting world of private equity and eventually reached out to the firm's investment funds group. The rest is history.

NYREJ: What made you decide that real estate was going to be an area of focus when you started your own firm?

Lore: Within the private equity space, real estate funds occupy a unique role and often draw on skills outside of mainstream private equity sponsors. Real estate fund managers often come from a real estate background, rather than a finance background and need legal advisors that can help bridge the knowledge gap when structuring early fund decisions.

Knowing this, it led me to realizing that the firm I was setting up could be a valuable resource for those interested in starting real estate funds.

NYREJ: We talk a lot about these times being challenging; what would you say are some of the opportunities for those endeavoring to start a real estate fund today?

Lore: These are indeed unprecedented times. With that, however, comes opportunity. Generally, real estate specific funds have inherent capital raising advantages over less concrete asset classes and can use that to their advantage.

A fund manager that is well-positioned for success will have a buttoned-up plan, both from a business perspective and an investment management perspective. The most successful real estate funds are those that can exhibit to investors they have a robust management team, reputable service providers, and a strong capital raising strategy.

NYREJ: I understand you are intrigued by how fast technology moves. How would you say your firm embraces technology?

Lore: As a firm that sees a large volume of innovation-oriented emerging investment managers, we spend much of our time navigating the various regulatory and technological frameworks needed to

facilitate innovative investment strategies.

Our firm takes a portfolio-oriented approach toward exploring innovation trends. At the heart of that focus is the concept of semantic capital, or the ability of an enterprise to re-contextualize business and technological capacities within an enterprise architecture to add value within an investment ecosystem.

NYREJ: You were an early authority on blockchain. Do you see the real estate industry embracing both blockchain and digital assets?

Lore: We have been at the forefront with respect to blockchain and digital assets. We saw this as a real opportunity early on as more people throughout the world sought to democratize currency. And while digital assets are in their infancy, we do believe that fund managers need to understand the aspects involved with launching a domestic or offshore digital-asset hedge fund, especially regarding real estate.

In fact, we have authored numerous industry publications, including eBooks, white papers, and blog posts dedicated to helping emerging managers understand various aspects of forming hedge funds and other alternative funds in this space. With real estate being one of the largest industries for Capital Fund Law Group, we certainly do see the marriage of real estate and digital assets. Our attorneys make it a priority to stay abreast of digital-asset regulatory developments, market trends and technology developments and are poised to give advice as needed.

NYREJ: While 2020 taught us that we cannot really make plans, if you had a five-year plan for Capital Fund Law Group, what would it be?

Lore: Our clients typically come to us with strong expertise on the investment side of fund management and look to us for guidance for designing operational elements of the fund. Our focus has always centered on advising and educating emerging managers on the business, legal and regulatory aspects of launching a fund. We plan, over the coming years, to widen our focus as we expand our services within the real estate fund ecosystem. We feel well-equipped to combat challenges in the years ahead, especially as our firm navigated 2020 quite well—despite the twists and turns this year has brought to the global economy.

NYREJ: To date, what has been the most rewarding project you have worked on?

Lore: I would have to say that founding Capital Fund Law Group and watching it grow has been the most rewarding project that I have worked on—and continue to work on. We carved out a niche for fund managers that might not otherwise meet the profile for big law firms. We are proud of the funds that we helped set up for a successful launch. We look forward to continuing along this trajectory.

NYREJ: Throughout your career, what would you say has been the most helpful advice and from whom was it given?

Lore: Early on in my career, I was told by a partner I worked with to always think a step ahead. This is advice I carry with me each day. It especially comes into play regarding digital assets. We were, and continue to be, early players in the legal space concerning this asset class. As the digital-asset space continues to develop, we are well-positioned to make a positive impact with an industry that is continually growing. A rule of thumb with securities law, and any legal field in general, is that if you open your mouth, you have to open it all the way. For emerging managers, this is a good rule to live by. You cannot reverse a statement made, so you are wise to make sure that statement is compliant and truthful.

NYREJ: When you think about the team you assembled; what characteristics does each person have in common?

Lore: Each team member has integrity, comes equipped with the ability to be flexible and has a passion for the law. Christopher Rogers, a partner who focuses on tax-related issues, is a true student of the law and it shows every day in the work he produces and the level of dedication he provides to our clients. Our director of client development came to us from a law enforcement background, bringing with her a unique skill set. She has truly flourished in her role within the corporate world. Each member of our Capital Fund Law team is diverse and valuable, giving 110% each day to our clients and the firm. I am truly fortunate to surround myself with some of the best people this industry has to offer. It makes coming to work each day quite rewarding.

NYREJ: What is one thing that people would be surprised to learn about you?

Lore: There are a couple of things not many people know about me. One, I speak Russian (hence, making life a bit easier when I lived in Moscow while at Akin Gump) and two, I am an avid mountain biker. Growing up in Utah, it was something I learned and became passionate about. I found some great paths in Connecticut and New York and I find this to be a great way to stay healthy and alleviate stress.