



Robert Heicklen, Stonegate Real Estate

December 22, 2020 - Spotlights

Name: Robert Heicklen

Title: Broker/Owner

Company Name: Stonegate Real Estate

What was your most notable project, deal, or transaction in 2020?

Selling a five-acre, off-market site in Watermill, NY that has never once been offered for sale or hit the market. It was in the heart of the pandemic and it was very cool how it happened. My partner Anthony got a call from his client who planned on building their vacation home there and had no intentions of selling. Before they hung up the phone I called a buyer who I knew would buy it without hesitation and pay a premium. 22 days later, we closed virtually and let's just say everyone involved walked away happy.

What was the most challenging part of working during the pandemic?

Most of my business is done in person, networking and furthering relationships. Going on site tours, shopping new store experiences and eating out is a big part of canvassing as well and that all came to a screeching halt March 18th. It is extremely hard to conduct business virtually only, and it caused a lot of delays and uncertainty with a good portion of our deals.

What aspects of working from home did you enjoy most?

Absolutely none of it. I have never been a homebody and always thrived in the wild. Doing deals walking to a lunch, knocking out emails on the train, and my alone time in the car driving home from my office is when I often get most of my own work done.

What was your greatest professional accomplishment in 2020?

Our company's growth organically. We have transacted in multiple cities, every borough of NY, added to our roster and expect to close out 2020 200% better than 2019. Our team stepped up to the plate and proved to our clients why they choose to work with us and for me there is no better accomplishment.

What are your predictions for commercial real estate in 2021?

I think on a macro level retail is going to be severely impacted especially in secondary and tertiary markets. People are going to be uncomfortable for a while shopping and dining out in crowded places which will take a long time to rebound with or without a vaccine. Most purchases are done

with emotion and justified with logic. Now, I think the narrative has changed and purchases are made with logic first followed by necessity and fear. Online shopping and delivery services have also become so efficient it's scary! I think if the vaccine proves to be effective, office can see an uptick in activity and it definitely needs it, but this is all uncharted territory and unfortunately the last eight months has proven anything can happen. As brokers this is when our clients need us the most and I am ready for war. I expect 2021 to be busier than ever for us and praying we get through it safely!

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