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## Worsek & Vihon LLP

### Legal Solutions for Property Tax Issues

When a business owner was told that he owed eight years' worth of back-property taxes on vacant land, he turned to the law firm of Worsek & Vihon LLP for help. The local taxing authority claimed that taxes had not been paid on the site, but after diligent research, the lawyers at Worsek & Vihon learned otherwise.

"There were train tracks running through the middle of the parcel," says Richard Worsek, a partner in the Chicago-area boutique law firm. "The railroad had, in fact, paid the property taxes, but because the railroad did not own all of the land, the assessment records had gotten mixed up. We were able to wipe out the entire back-tax liability, saving our client \$230,000."

When it comes to commercial and industrial real estate, an overvaluation by assessing authorities can be financially devastating. Worsek & Vihon specializes in minimizing property tax liability, thereby helping clients avoid paying unnecessarily high property taxes, by challenging incorrect overvaluations. Many of the firm's lawyers gained

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*"Everybody's got to pay property taxes, but you ought not to pay more than your fair share."*

— Richard Worsek, Partner

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Edwin M. Wittenstein, Richard D. Worsek, Robert S. Vihon and Francis W. O'Malley

experience in the public sector prior to further honing their skills at Worsek & Vihon. That experience is imperative in prosecuting cases before assessors, boards of review, administrative agencies and courts.

"Attention to detail, understanding unique circumstances pertaining to each property and being able to convey these things to the trier of fact are paramount," says partner Rob Vihon. "Our legal briefs are highly detailed, so that anyone reviewing them will have no trouble understanding our arguments regarding why an assessment is erroneous."

Property tax liability issues can be complicated, especially when mixed-use facilities are involved. For example, a building with residential condominiums, offices and retail space can have a multiplicity of valuations. Likewise, when dealing with new construction in a multi-tiered project, the outstanding property tax obligation can vary as the residential portion of the project becomes occupied at a different time than the commercial space.

In practice since 1983, Worsek & Vihon has successfully dealt with virtually every kind of property tax issue, by not just reacting to problems after they occur, but often by preventing them in the first place. The firm frequently becomes involved during the planning phase of a project, assisting the owner with property tax projections. Worsek & Vihon also counsels and represents property owners in procuring tax incentives designed to encourage new construction or the acquisition of abandoned properties, enabling them to remain in Cook County, rather than relocating. Depending on circumstances, such clients can save hundreds of thousands of dollars per year in property taxes.

"Everybody's got to pay property taxes, but you ought not to pay more than your fair share," Worsek says.



Worsek & Vihon attorneys and professional staff

Photos: Diane Alexander White

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