

December 11th- Land Planning

SPEAKERS:

[Karla L. Chaffee](#) is a member of Robinson+Cole's Real Estate + Development Group and is based in the Boston office, focusing on a variety of land use and environmental matters. Karla's interest in RLUIPA began in law school when she co-authored, "[Six Fact Patterns of Substantial Burden in RLUIPA: Lessons for Potential Litigants](#)," (with Dwight Merriam) published in Albany Government Law Review (Spring 2009). Karla has continued to write and speak on RLUIPA and has represented clients in several federal proceedings, including RLUIPA, First Amendment, and Equal Protection claims. In addition to her RLUIPA practice, Karla has litigated complex environmental matters, defending claims under Massachusetts Chapter 21E. Karla's transactional experience includes pre-acquisition and pre-financing due diligence, environmental risk assessment and risk mitigation. She also represents clients seeking local zoning approvals and counsels them on the impact of proposed or recently enacted land use legislation, as well as on land use trends across the country.

Karla is also a proud member of Robinson+Cole's Pro Bono Committee and is dedicated to maintaining pro bono work as part of her practice. Her pro bono clients include individuals and families seeking asylum in the United States. She has also represented nonprofit organizations in obtaining tax-exempt status and has served as legal counsel in a zoning appeal for a nonprofit association created to support and protect a national park.

Diana Neeves, a member of Robinson+Cole's Environmental, Energy + Telecommunications Group, focuses her practice on environmental, energy, telecommunications, and utilities law.

Litigation

Ms. Neeves handles litigation related to environmental and land use matters. She represents clients in disputes brought under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and handles litigation involving asbestos contamination and exposure. Ms. Neeves' litigation experience involves federal and state environmental enforcement actions and lawsuits between private parties.

Ms. Neeves also helps defend municipalities nationwide in cases involving the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), and she regularly writes for the firm's blog on the topic, RLUIPA Defense (www.rluipa-defense.com).

Environment and Energy

Ms. Neeves regularly works with clients on the clean-up of contaminated properties, including Superfund sites. She assists clients with federal and state administrative compliance, including environmental remediation. Ms. Neeves helps represent a client who owns property which was contaminated by a previous owner, and she has been working with the state environmental agency to coordinate site clean-up.

Ms. Neeves is part of the firm's Utilities Group, which serves utility and energy clients on regulatory and environmental matters. She provides a range of transactional and compliance services. She helps clients navigate all local, state and federal permitting requirements, and works to ensure they are in compliance with all regulations. Ms. Neeves has recently been working with clients on energy and conservation matters in hearings before the New York State Public Service Commission.

Land Use

Ms. Neeves provides guidance to clients seeking local zoning approvals. She counsels them on meeting requirements for land development and securing necessary municipal and state permits to do so.

Pro Bono

Ms. Neeves is one of several Robinson+Cole attorneys involved in a pro bono project to combat poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking in Namibia, Africa by strengthening the country's legislative framework. During law school, as part of the New York State Pro Bono Scholars Program, Ms. Neeves was a Pro Bono Scholar in the Criminal Law Special Litigation Unit of the Legal Aid Society.

Prior to joining Robinson+Cole, Ms. Neeves was a judicial honors extern for U.S. District Judge Laura Taylor Swain of the United States District Court, Southern District of New York. She also worked as a legal intern for an organization focused on water quality and related issues. She received a fellowship grant to provide nonprofit environmental legal services.

John Peloso, a member of Robinson+Cole Business Litigation and Real Estate Litigation Groups, is a trial lawyer who represents companies, municipalities, and individuals in a wide range of matters. At the administrative, trial, and appellate levels, Mr. Peloso counsels clients and litigates business and real property disputes, including real estate, land use, environmental, securities, and tax matters.

Real Estate Litigation

In the area of real estate litigation, Mr. Peloso represents institutional, municipal, and individual clients in disputes involving title, zoning, wetlands, land use, the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), eminent domain, foreclosure, and other real property rights. He also represents clients in all aspects of commercial lease, purchase and sale (PSA), and other real estate transactional disputes.

In the area of RLUIPA litigation, in the past year, Mr. Peloso has obtained favorable resolutions for municipalities in New York and New Jersey involving large scale (eight figure) RLUIPA claims. He is a regular contributor to the firm's [**RLUIPA Defense**](#) blog.

Tax Litigation

In the area of tax litigation, Mr. Peloso represents institutional and individual clients in real and personal property tax valuation and classification proceedings at the regulatory, administrative, and trial levels. In this regard, he has dealt with specialized issues involving, among other things, class action tax appeals,

the valuation of high-tech software and wireless communications equipment, contingency fee tax audits, special use property (including military facilities), and the impact of environmental conditions on the valuation of real property.

Mr. Peloso has a consistent record of obtaining favorable resolutions for clients involving valuation disputes between the taxpayer and the municipality concerning, among other things, commercial office buildings, Section 8 CHFA valuation issues, high-tech equipment valuation, and special use properties.

Environmental Litigation

Mr. Peloso represents institutional as well as individual clients in environmental litigation matters, most notably Superfund cases and proceedings involving state and federal regulatory agencies. Mr. Peloso has litigated multi-million dollar environmental matters, including serving as lead counsel for a Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) action related to a Rhode Island Superfund site.

Business Litigation

Mr. Peloso handles a wide range of business litigation matters. He has litigated matters involving securities fraud (individual, class action, and derivative actions), broker-dealer regulation, software franchise and licensing, partnerships, limited partnerships, closely held corporations, noncompetition agreements, creditors' rights, insurance, and probate issues.

Personal Injury and Asbestos Litigation

Mr. Peloso has also defended over forty personal injury and asbestos cases on behalf of corporations and manufacturers.

Pro Bono

Mr. Peloso is committed to doing work on a pro bono basis. Among other engagements, he has assisted Habitat for Humanity with housing matters and assisted the Wildlife Center of Fairfield County with general corporate matters.

Prior to joining Robinson+Cole, Mr. Peloso was a member of the litigation department at White & Case LLP in New York City, where he concentrated his practice in complex commercial, property, and securities litigation.

Dwight H. Merriam founded Robinson & Cole's Land Use Group in 1978. He represents land owners, developers, governments and individuals in land use matters. Dwight is a Fellow and Past President and of the American Institute of Certified Planners, a former Director of the American Planning Association, a former chair of APA's Planning and Law Division, and a former chair of the American Bar Association's national Section of State and Local Government Law. He teaches land use law at the University of

Connecticut School of Law and at the Quinnipiac University Law School and has published over 200 articles and nine books and including *Inclusionary Zoning Moves Downtown*, *The Takings Issue*, *The Complete Guide to Zoning*, and *Eminent Domain Use and Abuse: Kelo in Context*. He is the co-editor of Rathkopf's *The Law of Zoning and Planning* and a co-author of the leading casebook in the field, *Planning and Control of Land Development*.

Daniel R. Mandelker, Stamper Professor of Law, Washington University in Saint Louis, is a leading scholar and teacher in land use law, environmental law, and state and local government law. He was the principal consultant and contributor to the American Planning Association's model planning and zoning legislation project. He was also the principal consultant to a joint American Bar Association committee that prepared a model law for land use procedures that was adopted by the ABA House of Delegates. He recently published a handbook on free speech law for on premise signs, a coauthored fourth edition of his APA report on *Street Graphics and the Law*, and a coauthored new edition of his law school casebook in *State and Local Government*. Additionally, he received the ABA's State and Local Government Section Daniel J. Curtin Lifetime Achievement Award.