



James B. Heffernan

Shareholder; Commercial Real Estate Co-Chair

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OVERVIEW

Jim Heffernan is a seasoned attorney representing local, national, and international clients, with a particular emphasis on commercial real estate developers. They provide comprehensive counsel across all aspects of corporate and real estate law, including property acquisitions and dispositions, complex development projects, and a full spectrum of zoning and permitting matters.

Jim has extensive experience guiding clients through state and local zoning processes, securing land use entitlements, navigating permitting requirements, and representing clients before municipal boards and regulatory agencies. They advise on rezoning applications, special permits, variances, site plan approvals, and compliance with environmental and building regulations—ensuring that projects move forward efficiently and in full compliance with applicable laws.

In addition to their zoning and permitting work, Jim counsels clients on leasing for both landlords and tenants, joint venture development agreements, construction contracts, and a wide range of commercial and private financing transactions. They also regularly support individuals and small businesses with company formation, capital structuring, contract negotiation, restructuring, and business permitting.

Jim's industry experience spans multifamily, retail, industrial, hospitality, entertainment, and technology sectors, allowing them to deliver strategic, business-oriented solutions tailored to each client's objectives.

Jim also serves as co-chair for the Real Estate Advisory Committee for ULI Boston/New England, working with cities and towns throughout the region on technical assistance panels to address complex land use and development challenges.

Having lived and worked in Beijing, China, Jim brings a nuanced cultural perspective to cross-border transactions and provides valuable guidance to U.S. and foreign businesses

Services

[Business, Corporate & Securities](#)

[Commercial Lending](#)

[Commercial Real Estate](#)

[Energy, Renewables & Regulated Industries](#)

[Investment Management & Private Funds](#)

[Real Estate Development](#)

Paralegal

Shayla Foley

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navigating international business environments. Jim is proficient in both written and spoken Mandarin, and conversational in Spanish, Italian, and French.

AWARDS & HONORS

"Exclusive Featured Attorney" Representing Boston Premier Real Estate Lawyers
2022-2024

"New England Super Lawyer" by Thomson Reuters Super Lawyers, 2022-2025

"Super Lawyers New England Rising Star" for Real Estate by Thomson Reuters, 2013-2021

Boston Magazine's Top Lawyers, 2021-2025

"Boston Rising Star" by National Law Journal, 2015



REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

- Represented a regional developer of self-storage facilities in a \$8 million dollar development in Boston, including joint venture formation, equity raise, financing, and acquisition.
- Represented an operator of privately owned marinas in Massachusetts in the \$20 million sale of its business and real estate.
- Represented several privately funded real estate holding companies with the acquisition of Class B+ office buildings, for both office use and conversion to residential.
- Represented a national operator of apartment buildings with the acquisition of properties in Great Barrington and Easthampton, Massachusetts.
- Represented a national operator of Planet Fitness gyms with various leases along the east coast.
- Represented a group of independent gym operators with various leases in the Boston area, including franchising assistance.
- Represented an area small business in a dispute and mediation against its commercial landlord.
- Represented a landowner with the successful request for Reasonable Modifications under Title II of the American with Disabilities Act in the Town of Belmont, Massachusetts, including successfully defending against an abutter's appeal.
- Represented a regional developer in the development, management and sale of Brunswick Station in Brunswick, Maine, which included mixed use of apartments, offices, and retail/restaurants.
- Represented a regional bank in the \$40 million dollar acquisition financing for a prominent building in Chinatown, Boston.
- Represented Emerald Place Development Company in the \$76 million dollar sale of a 238-unit apartment building in Lunenburg, Massachusetts.
- Represented Navem West Broadway in the development, construction, conversion to condominium, and sale of a 44-unit condominium building in South Boston, Massachusetts.
- Represented a large regional bank in the \$13 million dollar refinancing of apartment buildings in Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Represented a Chinese investor in a joint venture with a local developer for the acquisition and development of a \$120 million mixed use development in Roxbury, Massachusetts.
- Represented a joint venture development of 16 condominium units in South Boston.

- Represented a local developer in their \$7 million dollar acquisition of a ground lease development in Quincy, Massachusetts.
- Represented a regional developer in their \$10 million sale of a light industrial property in Portland, Maine.
- Represented a restaurant tenant with a complex lease regarding a boutique hotel located in downtown Boston.

ARTICLES & TALKS

- [Chinese Investment in Boston Commercial Real Estate Expected to Continue](#), by James B. Heffernan, New England Real Estate Journal, March 2016

EDUCATION

- Georgetown University Law Center, J.D., 2007; Executive Editor, Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics.
- Boston University, B.A., *cum laude*, 2004

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Massachusetts

COURT ADMISSIONS

- District Court for the District of Massachusetts

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

- Jim lived in Beijing, China, where they learned to speak Mandarin Chinese and worked for the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.
- Jim lives with their wife and two boys in Canton, Massachusetts. They regularly take their family camping in the summer and skiing in the winter.
- Jim is a volunteer head coach and a board member to Canton Youth Soccer Association.