

# Michael R. Christopher

## Attorney

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When many attorneys are faced with the reality that it is necessary to work with elected and appointed government officials in order to resolve their clients' problem, their reaction often is "working with judges and other lawyers is my job but it's not about dealing with politicians." But, as a former local elected official and an experienced attorney since 1972, Michael understands that legal and political issues are inseparable. He has an extensive law practice representing both corporate and individual clients with a focus on real estate development, zoning and annexation issues, as well as local government relations.

### Clients

Michael's development clients have included Menard, Steve Brown Apartments, Hammes Company, Welton Properties, and Schmidt's Auto. He also works on behalf of "the little guy who is fighting City Hall."

### Client Recommendation

"Michael was so great to work with. For a number of years, we have worked with him to extend our towing contract with the City of Madison. In 2010, we started Green Cab – an all-hybrid taxi cab fleet in Madison. We could not have started this business without him. He knows how to get things done." -  
*John Schmidt, Schmidt's Auto*

### Notable Representations

A typical example of the type of matter that Michael is involved in was the controversial Edgewater Hotel project in Madison. As the attorney for the developer for this \$98 million project, Michael faced complicated issues of zoning, tax incremental financing and historic preservation. He worked closely with City Council members to persuade three-quarters of them to support the project.

Other recent examples of his success in obtaining governmental approval for his client's project include Green Cab – the first all-hybrid taxi cab company in Madison and to obtain the licensing for the Institutes for Discovery project – a 300,000 square foot facility on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. In addition to these 2010 projects, Michael has had a number of other recent successes:

- Mediated a land use dispute between the City of Eau Claire and a number of surrounding Towns.
- The development and approval of a \$73 million mixed use project in Madison.
- Negotiated numerous tax incremental financing agreements on behalf of municipalities and developers including the Fitchburg Technology Park in Dane County.
- Negotiated a landmark Cooperative Inter-Governmental Agreement among three municipalities in Dane County.
- Lobbied for the construction of a Dane County Justice Center on behalf of the Dane County Bar Association.

## Articles/Presentations

Michael has made presentations to the U.W. Business School regarding the real estate entitlement process and to contractors, developers and elected officials at numerous seminars. He has written several articles that identify the legal and business issues relating to green development, including an article that was featured in a recent issue of *Wisconsin Lawyer* entitled, "Going Green without Going in the Red – Opportunities and Risks Associated with Green Development." He has also written a number of articles that address the subject of real estate mediation to resolve land use disputes between municipalities.

## Expertise

- Real Estate Development
- Land Use and Zoning
- Government Relations
- Municipal Law
- Mediation

## Education

- B.A., Queens College, New York City
- J.D., University of Wisconsin Law School

## Admissions

- State Bar of Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin

## Affiliations

- Board of Governors - State Bar of Wisconsin
- Lawyers Assistance Program - State Bar of Wisconsin
- Dane County Bar Association
- Dane County Court Commissioner
- Wisconsin Association of Mediators

## Honors

- "Top Lawyers" *Madison Magazine*
- *Best Lawyers® - Best Lawyers in America* - Land Use & Zoning Law, Real Estate Law

## Community

- Alderperson, City of Madison
- Downtown Madison Inc. - Board of Directors
- Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission
- Madison Police & Fire Commission
- Substance Abuse Counselor - In Training
- Wisconsin Judicial Council
- Horizon High School - Board of Directors