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Boutique Firms Lead NY Zoning, Permit Activity In August

By **Natalie Rodriguez**

Law360, New York (September 15, 2015, 5:44 PM ET) -- Two boutique real estate law firms together led about a third of the New York City zoning and permit applications in August, according to a report on city data released Tuesday.

Of the 31 new applications that went to the Department of City Planning or were filed with the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals during the month, real estate boutique Sheldon Lobel PC steered six of the matters, while attorney Eric Palatnik and his shop were at the helm of four matters, according to data released by New York Law School's Center for New York City Law.

Much of Sheldon Lobel's work centered on plans for "physical culture establishments," or health clubs, spas and similar facilities, according to the data. Working on behalf of Hamilton Plaza Associates, the firm applied to amend a special permit that would allow the Hamilton entity to build such an establishment on the third floor of 1-37 12th Street in Brooklyn, as well as secure certification for a waterfront public access and visual corridor on the property.

And alongside special permits to establish health clubs or spas at 100 W. 72nd Street in Manhattan and 157 Kent Avenue in Brooklyn, the boutique firm also represented the owner of Brooklyn's 7311 Third Avenue in applying for permission to enlarge the mixed-use building, according to the data.

Meanwhile, touching on the borough of Queens, the firm worked on a request to permit a development in a mapped street bed, or an area where the project will alter local maps. Local reports from earlier in the year indicate the site is a community garden where new owners plan to build an apartment building.

Palatnik's work, meanwhile, ran an even larger gamut of boroughs and ranged from a permit application for a Haven Spa in downtown Manhattan to a request to construct residences not fronting a mapped street in Staten Island. In Brooklyn, he advised on a special permit request to repurpose the former St. Mary's Hospital as a nursing home, while in Queens he represented an LLC in applying for a variance to permit a two-family dwelling.

While the boutiques saw their names pop up the most in August's charts on zoning and permit requests, however, it was heavyweights Greenberg Traurig LLP and Holland & Knight LLP that were called in on the month's two zoning text and map amendment applications — both for outerborough projects.

Greenberg Traurig, for one, represented 385 Gold Property Investors in applying for

changes that will help pave the way for a new 310,065-square-foot mixed-use development in Brooklyn that will include retail, office and 270 residential units, according to the data. The project address is 141 Willoughby Street.

Meanwhile, Holland & Knight advised Gleitman Realty Associates in applying for changes needed for the construction of a five-story residential building and smaller one-story commercial property in Queens.

Also handling notable applications last month was Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP partner Gary R. Tarnoff, who was listed as the representative for Liberty Theaters' variance request to enlarge, restore and reuse the former Tammany Hall property at 44 Union Square East and Harlem Commonwealth Council's move to construct a transportation facility not fronting a mapped street in the Bronx.

Real estate boutique Rothkrug Rothkrug & Spector LLP, meanwhile, worked on Atid Development's behalf to appeal the Board of Standards and Appeals' recent denial of a request to construct 10 buildings in a mapped street bed in Queens.

--Editing by Philip Shea.

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