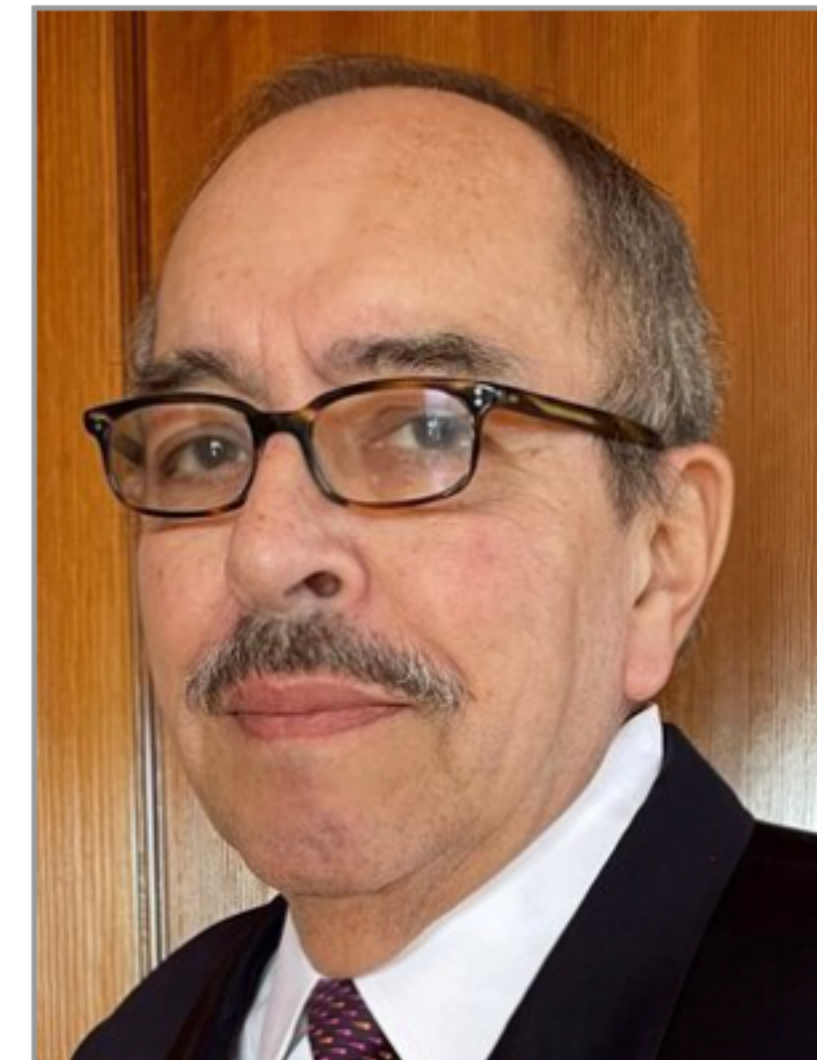


Ditchik & Ditchik Is Expanding Its Real Estate Tax Practice

By Andrew McIntyre / March 23, 2021, 3:55 PM EDT

[Ditchik & Ditchik](#) is expanding its New York real estate tax group with the addition of a lawyer who's slated to formally join the firm in the coming weeks, Law360 has exclusively learned.



Carlos M. Velazquez

Carlos Velazquez is joining Ditchik & Ditchik PLLC as senior counsel, after having worked for decades both for New York City and in private practice. Velazquez told Law360 on Tuesday that he's in the process of notifying his clients of the move, and expects to formally start at Ditchik & Ditchik shortly after April 1.

Velazquez's practice has two main prongs: helping clients with tax assessment appeals and assisting with litigation. He joins from his own firm, after having earlier in his career worked for 20 years at Pottish Freyberg Marcus & Velazquez LLP.

Velazquez said that while he's known lawyers at Ditchik & Ditchik for years, he started thinking about moving in earnest when an associate at his firm recently retired. At the new firm, he'll work in a leadership role alongside managing partner Joel Ditchik and partner Steven Tishco.

"I was working alone. It's difficult to work alone," Velazquez told Law360 on Tuesday. "Joel and I had been discussing legal issues for years."

For Velazquez, the move comes at the end of what's typically the busy calendar season for New York real estate tax lawyers who work in the assessment arena.

The city publishes its annual tax assessments in the middle of January, and owners have until March 1 to file an appeal. If, however, the property is valued north of \$1 million, owners are still bound by that March 1 deadline to appeal but have until March 24 to submit financial statements, given that financial statements are often more complex for buildings with higher values.

Velazquez said that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the New York City Tax Commission has been quick to pivot to an online format, putting conferences online and also doing direct face-to-face meetings virtually.

"There are four tax classes in New York, and sometimes properties fall very closely between two categories. There are hearings and meetings to discuss what the correct class is," he said. "Zoom has taken over and controlled everything."

Prior to going into private practice, Velazquez worked for the city. He was assistant corporation counsel in the certiorari and condemnation division of the city's law department from 1974 to 1981, and from 1981 to 1985 was counsel to the city's tax commission.

He joined Pottish Freyberg in 1985, made partner there in 1990 and left in 2005 to found his own firm, Carlos M. Velazquez & Associates LLP, where he has been since.

He helps clients with valuation disputes as well as exemption cases, and represents property owners, banks and hotels.

"I have a client base of some of the best property owners in the city," he said.

Ditchik & Ditchik, which is on Lexington Avenue in Manhattan, also lists two associates on its website. When Velazquez formally joins, the firm will have five lawyers.

Velazquez was admitted to the [New York Bar](#) in 1971.