



Dennis G. Cowan

PARTNER

38505 Woodward Ave., Suite 100
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304
T: (248) 901-4029 | F: (248) 901-4040
dcowan@plunkettcooney.com

Practice Areas

Administrative & Regulatory Law

Banking, Bankruptcy & Creditors' Rights Law

Business Law

Cannabis Law

Crisis Response Team

Election Law

Election Law & Political Organization Compliance

Energy & Sustainability Law

Environment & Energy Law

Environmental & Regulatory Law

Government Relations, Public Policy & Regulatory Compliance

Governmental Law

Real Estate Law

Zoning & Land Use

Education

- Detroit College of Law, magna cum laude, J.D., 1984
- University of Massachusetts/Boston, magna cum laude, B.A.,

Dennis G. Cowan is a former managing partner of the firm who currently serves as Co-leader of Plunkett Cooney's Business Transactions & Planning Practice Group.

Mr. Cowan focuses his legal practice on obtaining governmental approvals for clients at the local, county and state levels. He has particular experience advocating on behalf of clients seeking zoning, site plan and other land use approvals. Mr. Cowan also represents clients before state administrative boards, as well as with the Michigan Attorney General's office. Additional areas of expertise include business and banking law.

In more than 30 years of practice, Mr. Cowan has been involved in some of the state's largest and most significant business deals. Whether assisting with a bid to build a casino in Detroit, securing approvals for multi-million-dollar developments in suburban communities or assisting the creative financing package that made Detroit's bankruptcy "Grand Bargain" possible in 2014, Mr. Cowan works tirelessly for his clients.

In December 2001, he completed 14 years of service on the Royal Oak City Commission. After six years as a City Commissioner, he was elected and served four consecutive two-year terms (1993 – 2001) as Royal Oak Mayor. As a result of his extensive experience as a public official, Mr. Cowan offers a unique perspective in advising clients on legal issues related to all levels of government.

1978

Admissions

Michigan, 1984

U.S. Federal Court, Eastern
District of Michigan, 1984

Representative Client Work

- Represented foundation clients in Detroit bankruptcy "Grand Bargain" transaction
- Represented and served as primary counsel for state-appointed Emergency Financial Manager on behalf of a southeast Michigan city
- Coordinated municipal approval efforts of \$350,000,000 hospital project
- Defended corporate clients during State Attorney General investigations
- Represented national gaming operator in Detroit casino bidding process
- Represented commercial landowners in annexation process and litigation
- Headed legal team in client effort to stop state-wide ballot proposal
- Amended county solid waste plan to facilitate client permitting for waste transfer station

Professional Affiliations

- State Bar of Michigan (Real Property Law, Corporation and Business Law, and Public Corporations Law sections)
- American Bar Association (State and Local Government Section)

Public Service

- Royal Oak Township State Financial Review Team, Member (2013)
- State of Michigan Building Authority (2002 – 2006)
- Mayor, Royal Oak (1993 – 2001)
- City Commissioner, Royal Oak (1987 – 1993)
 - Mayor Pro Tem (1989 – 1991)
 - Member, Chamber of Commerce Liaison Committee
 - Member, I-696/Woodward Developer Selection Committee
- Royal Oak Plan Commission, Member (1993 – 2001)
- Royal Oak Solid Waste/Recycling Committee, Chairman (1990 – 1991)

DENNIS G. COWAN Cont.

- Woodward Avenue Action Association, Vice Chairman (1999 – 2001)
- State of Michigan Site Review Board, Member

Community Involvement

- Oakland Community Health Network (Chairperson, 2023-2024; Board of Directors, 2021 - 2024)
- Walsh College Board of Trustees (2009 – 2014)
- Walsh College Foundation (2004 – 2012)
- Ticker Club, Inc. – Children’s Hospital of Michigan (Board of Directors, 1987)
- Notre Dame High School Alumni Association
- Oakland County Republican Party Chairman (2004-2008)
- Royal Oak Children’s Choir (Board of Directors, 2002 – 2005)
- Royal Oak Optimist Club
- Royal Oak Youth Assistance Committee
- Royal Oak Shrine High School Hockey Team Volunteer
- Boys’ and Girls’ Club of South Oakland County (Board of Directors, 1989 – 2001)
- Walsh College President’s Advisory Council (2002 – 2014)
- University of Massachusetts Alumni Association
- Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites

Publications, Lectures and Awards

- 2022 Industry Outlook, Panelist, Chaldean Chamber of Commerce luncheon, Doubletree Birmingham, MI, Feb. 9, 2022
- "Marijuana Retail: The Struggle is Real(ity)," Cannabis Summit , Co-presenter, MSU Management Education Center, Troy, Michigan, Dec. 7, 2021
- “Connecting the Region: Transit Development in the ‘D’;” Panelist; Detroit Regional Chamber’s 2015 Detroit Policy Conference; Motor City Casino-Hotel Soundboard; February 2015
- “Powering your Community’s Future/How to Ensure the Best Utility Infrastructure,” Michigan Municipal League Annual Convention, Dearborn, MI, September, 2002

Honors & Recognitions

- Best Lawyers in America® for Government Relations Practice, 2024

DENNIS G. COWAN Cont.

- Martindale-Hubbell's highest rating-AV Preeminent™ Peer Review Rated
- Michigan Super Lawyer in Land Use and Zoning, Michigan Super Lawyers, 2006 - 2011, 2013 - 2014
- Leading Lawyer in Land Use, Zoning & Condemnation Law, Leading Lawyers Magazine Michigan, 2015 - 2021
- Leading Michigan Business Lawyers, Leading Lawyers Magazine Michigan, 2021
- Top Lawyer Land Use & Zoning and Municipal Law, DBusiness Magazine, 2019 - 2020
- Hall of Fame Honoree, Michigan Lawyers Weekly, 2022
- Leaders in the Law honoree, Michigan Lawyers Weekly, 2020