



AROUND THE DOME

Lansing Meetings Set BOMA Agenda

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances”.

We are all familiar with the first amendment to the United States Constitution when it comes to freedom of religion or free speech, but less so when we discuss the redress of grievances. So the dictionary definition of redress that follows might be helpful: *redress v. 1. To set right, remedy or rectify. 2. To make amends for. n. 1. Satisfaction for wrong done; reparation. 2. Correction. [<OFr. redresser.]*

A Building Owners and Managers Association of Metropolitan Detroit (BOMA) delegation, with the assistance of Scofes & Associates Consulting, Inc. (S&A) had two important meetings in Lansing this month to address our grievances with the State Government. First was a meeting with Patricia L. Halm, Chairwoman of the Michigan Tax Tribunal. BOMA strongly supports common-sense reform to improve efficiency and expediency in the Michigan Tax Tribunal. BOMA supports efforts to implement a system to encourage case management by the Tribunal and enforceable accountability. The Tribunal has a current backlog as long as five years that has hamstrung many property owners from re-investment in jobs and development by tying up million of dollars in disputed property tax. The meeting with Chairwoman Halm was productive and will hopefully lead to future meetings with Governor Jennifer Granholm, to help resolve the backlog issue.

The second meeting was with Michigan Deputy State Treasurer, Scott Schrager to discuss the many tax inequities facing commercial real estate in Michigan. BOMA supports changes to the Michigan Business Tax (MBT) that will treat real estate consistent with other businesses and fosters a positive business climate. The MBT currently has a negative effect on the value of commercial real estate. The discussions with The Department of Treasury included deducting Common Area Maintenance from the MBT surcharge, exempting foreclosure credits from the MBT, and the best way to address the WPW decision on capping the growth of Taxable Value of real estate. The meeting has opened the door for potential legislation to address many of the MBT grievances.

The "Around the Dome" newsletter is written monthly by BOMA's Michigan lobbying firm Scofes & Associates Consulting (S&A) for BOMA members to be aware of key issues in Lansing. In addition, S&A is monitoring top issues identified by the Government Affairs Committee. If you have comments on the newsletter or BOMA issues, please direct them to GAC Chairs Gregory McDuffee at Gregory_McDuffee@DWJBA.com, John Sier at John.Sier@Kitch.com or Janet Langlois at JLanglois@bomadet.org.

We welcome your comments and questions on BOMA advocacy issues.