Proskauer

Helping GrowNYC for Good

Proskauer for Good Blog on **October 10, 2017**

Most environmental organizations are primarily interested in undisturbed landscapes and waters, naturally occurring flora and fauna, and other non-urban natural resources. Proskauer has long been involved with an exceptional group called GrowNYC, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the environmental quality of New York City.

Founded in 1970 after the first Earth Day by Mayor John V. Lindsay, it was initially called the Mayor's Council on the Environment (formed the same year as the Federal Council on Environmental Quality). GrowNYC, as it is now called, has grown to become a leading driver of environmental programs aimed at New York City residents and visitors.

I have been involved with GrowNYC off and on since its beginning, I was appointed to the Mayor's Council by Mayor Lindsay and again later by Mayor Guiliani. Most recently I have served as the Chair of GrowNYC, appointed by Mayor Bloomberg and again by Mayor DiBlasio. While my own involvement has involved some lawyering, as Chair and as a director before that, I have had the great pleasure of guiding the organization's staff in the direct delivery of services to many neighborhoods, participating in volunteer activities such as building a school garden, developing policies to preserve regional farmlands where fresh fruits and vegetables are grown for delivery in underserved areas of the City, and teaching kids where real food comes from and how to prepare it for eating. And through the zero waste program, we provide education and training to apartment managers and residents about New York City's curbside recycling program. We also address energy conservation, noise reduction and other quality of life issues.

In addition to my years of service, many Proskauer lawyers have assisted GrowNYC with advice on matters ranging from nonprofit governance and tax issues to intellectual property and real estate issues, and from contractual relationships with City agencies to insurance, employment, and environmental law.

In 2016, GrowNYC opened its Farmhouse facility near its flagship Greenmarket in Union Square in Manhattan. We helped with leasing and construction law matters in connection with the development of this environmental education center and sustainability event space.

For the past few years, we have enjoyed taking Proskauer volunteers to Governor's Island where GrowNYC has an urban farm used for teaching children about a host of environmental issues immediately relevant to their urban surroundings.

Now we are assisting in the development of a 75,000 square foot wholesale marketplace for local farmers in Hunts Point in the Bronx. This facility will increase the farmers' ability to provide access to fresh healthy foods in underserviced New York communities, help the farmers get a better price for produce without using middlemen, and consumers will have a lower cost. The scale will allow for products that reflect local growing conditions and are not manipulated to meet standardization required for commodity markets.

While there are not many undisturbed landscapes left in New York City, preserving the City's environment is a meaningful form of public service. It is an honor personally, and on behalf of the Firm, to support GrowNYC in its work.

For additional photos, click here.

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