

Press Release

Assistant Miami-Dade County Attorney Dennis A. Kerbel Joins Akerman as Florida Land Use and Entitlements Practice Chair

May 2, 2024

Akerman today announced that Dennis A. Kerbel has joined the firm after more than 21 years with the Miami-Dade County Attorney’s Office, having served as chief of its Zoning, Land Use, and Environment Section since 2015. Kerbel joins Akerman’s national Real Estate Practice Group as chair of its Florida Land Use and Entitlements Practice.

Kerbel joins a team of 27 accomplished land use lawyers and planners in Florida—a number of whom have vast local government experience, including Neisen Kasdin, former mayor of Miami Beach and a past vice chair of the board of directors for the Miami Downtown Development Authority; former Broward County Attorney Joni Armstrong Coffey; and Spencer Crowley, who serves as Miami-Dade County Commissioner for the Florida Inland Navigational District and is a former chair of the City of Miami’s Waterfront Advisory Board. In Fort Lauderdale, the team includes Steven Tilbrook, former Economic Development Coordinator for the City of Fort Lauderdale. Additionally, James Porter, in Tampa, formerly served as the Chief Assistant County Attorney for the Hillsborough County Attorney’s Office.

Kasdin, co-managing partner of Akerman’s Miami office, said: “Dennis is a dedicated public servant and one of the most accomplished land use lawyers in

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Florida, including handling land use appeals and litigation. He has been at the center of many important land use regulations and policy issues that have advanced Miami-Dade County as a leader in urban development and innovation. We are thrilled to add a lawyer of his caliber to lead the Florida arm of our national land use team.”

Kerbel is a litigator with experience in federal and state courts at both the trial and appellate levels. He handles a broad variety of cases, including comprehensive plan challenges, zoning appeals, enforcement actions, and inverse condemnation and other federal civil rights claims.

As former chief of the Zoning, Land Use, and Environment Section of the Miami-Dade County Attorney’s Office, Kerbel represented and advised Miami-Dade County on planning, zoning, environmental, platting, impact fee, historic preservation, and code enforcement matters, as well as drafting significant land use and environmental legislation adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, advising the Board of County Commissioners, the Planning Advisory Board, and several community zoning appeals boards on public hearings involving land use matters, and defending a variety of challenges to County land use decisions in state and federal courts and administrative tribunals. During his career with the County, he also handled civil rights and animal services matters, including defending the County and its police and correctional officers against claims of federal civil rights violations.

“Dennis has served on the regulatory enforcement side of land use law and litigated at every stage and in various tribunals throughout Florida,” said Eric Rapkin, chair of Akerman’s Real Estate Practice Group. “His vast knowledge and experience will be a significant benefit to our clients who are regularly challenged throughout the application, permitting, and development process of their projects.”

Kerbel received his A.B. *magna cum laude* from Harvard University and his J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Law School, where he served as a senior editor of the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*.

With nearly 160 real estate lawyers and development professionals nationally, Akerman has one of the country's largest legal teams in the real estate industry. Lawyers within the Miami Land Use and Development team are responsible for leading the creation of Miami's Downtown Master Plan and the Miami 21 Zoning Code and for advancing groundbreaking client projects: Brickell City Centre, Faena District, Little Haiti, Miami's Design District, Miami World Center, Midtown Miami, Lauderdale Marine Center, Pier 66, and Wynwood, among others.

About Akerman

Akerman LLP is a top 100 U.S. law firm recognized among the most forward-thinking firms in the industry by *Financial Times*. Its more than 700 lawyers and business professionals collaborate with the world's most successful enterprises and entrepreneurs to navigate change, seize opportunities, and help drive innovation and growth.

Akerman's Real Estate Practice Group offers comprehensive and fully integrated project counsel services to clients across the United States and Latin America. With substantial industry experience and local market insights, the firm represents clients in complex real estate transactions and financings, development and redevelopment projects, public-private initiatives and litigation. Recognized as a national tier one law firm for real estate law by *U.S. News - Best Lawyers*, the group advises investors, developers, builders, lenders, retailers, owners and corporate end users, often in high profile matters.