



Benjamin L. Schuster

PARTNER, ELROD FRIEDMAN LLP

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Overview

About Ben Schuster

Ben Schuster is a partner at Elrod Friedman LLP. He practices in the areas of government, real estate and land use law. He represents public and private sector clients in transactional, governance and litigation matters.

Ben advises numerous municipalities and state agencies on a variety of matters, including zoning and land use, tax increment financing, environmental regulation and compliance, ordinance drafting, code enforcement, licensing and regulatory affairs, internal investigations, and First Amendment issues.

Ben also focuses a significant portion of his practice advising public sector clients on Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Open Meetings Act (OMA) and other governance issues. He has extensive experience representing public bodies before the Illinois Attorney General Office's Public Access Counselor, as well as in FOIA and OMA-related litigation. He also has lectured and written extensively on FOIA and OMA matters.

Ben is the Village Attorney for the Village of La Grange, and Deputy Village Attorney for the Village of Deerfield. He also provides general counsel services to the cities of Highland Park and Des Plaines, and the villages of Lake Bluff, Winnetka, Lincolnwood, Northbrook and Glencoe. He also provides special outside counsel services to the City of Chicago and the Teachers' Retirement System of Illinois.

Ben has significant experience representing private sector clients, ranging from Fortune 500 companies to small and mid-sized business on zoning matters and compliance with State and local regulations. He has assisted private sector clients in both the City of Chicago and the suburbs secure zoning, TIF financing, and other

land use approvals. He also has substantial experience assisting companies to comply with regulations across the country related to the sharing economy, such as short-term rental laws.

Ben is an experienced litigator in real estate and local government related litigation, including annexation, eminent domain, property ownership, and property maintenance disputes.

Chambers USA 2022 placed Ben in *Band 3* in Illinois, and included the following observation:

Ben “is excellent with agreements, contracts and handling complex Freedom of Information requests. He is responsive, always available and has a keen understanding of the law in this area.”

Credentials

EDUCATION

- The University of Chicago Law School, J.D., with high honors and order of the coif
- The London School of Economics and Political Science, Masters in Regional and Urban Planning, with merit
- Hamilton College, B.A., Government, with honors

BAR ADMISSIONS/LICENSES

- Illinois
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

MEMBERSHIPS

- Chicago Bar Association
- Illinois Local Government Lawyers Association

HONORS & AWARDS

- Chambers USA - America’s Leading Business Lawyers guide, Real Estate: Zoning/Land Use, *Band 3*, 2022
- Best Lawyers®, 2022 “Ones to Watch” in Real Estate

- The Chicago Bar Association's Leadership Institute

Publications

- Enforcement Under the Open Meetings Act | *Sunshine Laws, Illinois Municipal Law Series, Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education* | August 2020
- Suspension of the Open Meetings Act During the COVID-19 Emergency | *CBA Record* | May/June, 2020
- Responding to Freedom of Information Act Requests During the Coronavirus Emergency | *Elrod Friedman Alert* | March 18, 2020
- Legislature Legalizes Recreational Marijuana | *Alert* | May 31, 2019
- Illinois General Assembly Corrects Additional Juvenile Court Act Errors | *Alert* | December 31, 2018
- Illinois General Assembly Corrects Juvenile Court Act Error, But Further Review Needed | *Alert* | August 10, 2018
- Illinois General Assembly Amends State's Liquor Control Act | *Alert* | August 6, 2018
- Illinois FOIA Ruling: Public Bodies May Not Withhold Residents' Identities | *Alert* | February 23, 2018
- New Procedures for Handling Juvenile Police Records for Illinois Municipalities | *Alert* | January 3, 2018
- Illinois Supreme Court Reverses Attorney General Binding Opinion on Open Meetings Act Issues | *Alert* | July 25, 2017
- Illinois Attorney General Limits "Probable or Imminent Litigation" Exception Under Open Meetings Act For Closed Sessions | *Alert* | June 23, 2017
- Seventh Circuit Strikes Down Zoning Regulations and Age Restriction Governing Shooting Ranges | *Alert* | February 7, 2017
- Illinois AG Rules That Public Employees' Personal Emails Are Public Records | *Alert* | August 15, 2016
- Illinois AG Again Rules on Closed-Session Procedures and Personnel Exceptions | *Alert* | October 8, 2015
- Amendment to Illinois FOIA Impacts Requests for Records Available

Online | *Alert* | December 11, 2014

- Update on Recent FOIA and OMA Illinois Supreme Court and Attorney General Opinions | *Alert* | June 16, 2014
- Illinois Appellate Court Narrows Attorney General's FOIA Opinion on Communications on Elected Officials' Private Devices | *Alert* | July 24, 2013
- Local Government: Many Changes in the Open Meetings and Freedom of Information Acts for 2012 | *Alert* | January 9, 2012
- Fighting Disparate Treatment: Using the 'Class of One' Equal Protection Doctrine in Eminent Domain Settlement Negotiations | *Journal of Real Property, Trusts and Estates Law* | Summer 2010