

# Steven J. O'Melia

## Partner

### Waterloo Region

#### OFFICE

519.593.3289

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## Industries & Expertise

#### INDUSTRIES

Government | Municipal, Planning & Land Development | Real Estate

#### EXPERTISE

Arbitration & Mediation | Administrative & Public Law | Municipal, Planning & Land Development | Real Estate | Transactions & Leasing

## Biography

#### BAR ADMISSION

Ontario, 1991

#### EDUCATION

- Mediation Program for Lawyers, Harvard Law School, 2001
- LL.B., Queen's University, 1989
- B.A. (Economics, Honours), Western University, 1986

#### LANGUAGES SPOKEN

English

Steve O'Melia focuses his practice on municipal, planning/development, and expropriation law, representing both public and private sector clients. Steve frequently appears before municipal councils, committees, and administrative tribunals such as the Ontario Land Tribunal. He has successfully represented clients before all levels of the Ontario Court on municipal law matters. As a Law Society of Ontario certified specialist in Municipal Law (Local Government/Land Use Planning and Development), Steve brings extensive experience to his work for clients. After beginning his legal career in the Toronto office of a large national law firm, Steve held increasingly senior in-house legal positions with local and regional municipalities throughout the Greater Toronto Area. Since his return to private practice in Waterloo Region, he has represented numerous municipalities, school boards, conservation authorities, private companies and individuals, providing practical advice on municipal governance, land use planning and development, and expropriations.

Steve has been the Vice-Chair of the City of Waterloo and City of Markham Committees of Adjustment, and has served on a number of community boards. He was among the first appointments to the Law Society of Ontario's Municipal Law Specialty Committee, and was the inaugural recipient of the International Municipal Lawyers Association Canadian Scholarship. He has contributed to legal literature, covering topics ranging from municipal elections to expropriations to property development, displaying his in-depth understanding of complex legal issues throughout his career.

As an active member of professional associations such as the Canadian and Ontario Bar Associations, Law Society of Ontario, and the International Municipal Lawyers Association, Steve has a strong network in the legal community. His consistent recognition by Lexpert Canada (Property Development) and The Best Lawyers in Canada (Municipal Law) and involvement in legal education programs (including AMCTO and Conestoga College) showcase his commitment to staying informed and sharing knowledge within the field.

## Industry involvement

### Recognition

- *The Best Lawyers in Canada* – Municipal Law, 2014-2025; Expropriation Law, 2021-2025; Commercial Leasing Law, 2021-2025; Administrative and Public Law, 2022-2025
- *The Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory* – Property Development, 2014-2024
- Certified Specialist, Municipal Law (Local Government/Land Use Planning and Development)
- Past Member, Law Society of Ontario Municipal Law Specialty Committee
- Associate Faculty Member, Conestoga College Municipal Law Clerk Program
- Course Instructor, AMCTO Certification Program
- Past Instructor, Law Society of Ontario Bar Admission Course
- Inaugural Recipient, International Municipal Lawyers Association Canadian Scholarship
- Past Member of the Executive, Canadian Bar Association, Municipal Law Section

## **Thought leadership**

- “Municipal Bonusing: What’s Permitted and What’s Not,” 2006
- “Changes Planned for the Ontario Municipal Board,” 2005
- “Municipal Election 2003: The ‘Lame Duck’ Period,” 2003
- “Municipalities and Their Growing Role in Assessment Litigation,” 2003
- “Freedom of Expression and Sign By-Laws in Canada—Where are We Now?” 2002
- “Is the Writing on the Wall for Sign By-laws in Canada?” 2002
- “Do Not Disturb: Expropriations and the Planning Approvals Process,” 1997
- “What is the Municipal Role? Responsibilities and Resources for Dealing with Contaminated Sites,” 1996
- “Municipal Regulation of Propane Storage Tanks: An Explosive Issue,” 1995
- “The Expert Witness,” 1991

## **Notable Matters**

- Has appeared as counsel in more than 300 Ontario Land Tribunal (formerly known as the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal and the Ontario Municipal Board) proceedings
- Counsel to the Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board at the Commission of Inquiry on Proceedings Involving Guy Paul Morin
- Counsel to a number of municipalities, police and fire services at coroner’s inquests
- Successfully defended prominent municipal politicians in response to alleged violations of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* and *Municipal Elections Act*
- Act as counsel to conservation authorities in prosecutions for unlawful development under the *Conservation Authorities Act*
- Has represented municipalities and school boards on Development Charge and Education Development Charge by-laws and appeals

## **Community roles**

- Past Vice Chair, City of Waterloo Committee of Adjustment
- Director, K-W Habilitation Services
- Past Vice Chair, Town of Markham Committee of Adjustment
- Incorporating Lawyer and Founding Director, The Community Safety Village of York Region

## **Memberships & affiliations**

- Member, Canadian and Ontario Bar Associations
- Member, Law Society of Ontario

- Past Member, Law Society of Ontario Municipal Law Specialty Committee
- Member, International Municipal Lawyers Association
- Member, Ontario Expropriation Association
- Past Trustee and Member, Waterloo Law Association