

December 9, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

I have worked with the Law Office of Dennis M. Nolan, P.C. for the last four years as part of Charter One Bank's efforts to minimize real estate tax expense in the greater Chicagoland area. The Bank has 100+ locations in Chicago, including everything from small branch banks to the former headquarters of an acquired financial institution. I have overall responsibility for site selection, purchase/lease transactions, construction and property management of all Bank facilities that covers a Midwest/nine state footprint. I have neither the time nor the expertise to keep our real estate tax bills at the absolute minimum; therefore, outsourcing of the real estate tax appeal process was a "no-brainer". Having said that, I have dealt with no one better than Dennis and his staff in providing real estate tax appeal services to Charter One Bank.

Dennis has a no nonsense approach to this job and understands that I have to have a read on what is taking place during the appeal process, especially in Chicago where tax increases on a triennial basis can literally double. He analyzes our entire Chicago portfolio, using excellent judgment on which properties tax bills should be appealed. His billing documentation is straight forward and understandable, and he periodically provides a list of tax appeals in process. Our conversations are short and professional in nature. I have the utmost confidence that Dennis is acting in the Bank's best interest, as if he were a Bank employee. If/when I have a question or issue that needs to be resolved, he is attentive to my needs and returns phone calls immediately. The best way to show the impact of Dennis and his staff's work is to point out that he saved the Bank over \$650,000 and \$300,000, in 2004 and 2005 respectively, in annual tax payments as a result of his work (these numbers, for the most part, can be multiplied by three for the normal triennial assessment process). Additionally, Dennis pursues vacancy factor issues and illegal tax rate assessments annually to ensure that the Bank is made whole at every level. The use of Dennis and his staff in the tax appeal work has brought the Bank positive results as well as peace of mind.

Sincerely,



Philip J. Mucenski
Senior Vice President
Corporate Real Estate
Charter One Bank