

Stephen D. Rees is one of Sarasota's premier land use and real estate development lawyers, having practiced in the Sarasota/Bradenton area for over 30 years. Mr. Rees primarily concentrates his practice in the areas of land use, zoning, planning and project development. He advises clients in every phase of land use, planning and development, from due diligence on real property, to acquiring the property and obtaining necessary governmental approvals for its development, through formation of the condominium or homeowners association and preparation of declaration documents, sale of units in the development and transition of the association from the developer to the new owners. His breadth of experience gives the firm's clients a competitive edge in formulating plans and structuring projects that involve complex land use, zoning and development issues.

Mr. Rees' area of expertise encompasses many aspects of real estate law, including negotiating, drafting and enforcing real property purchase contracts, examining title and issuing title insurance, and representing clients in real estate closings. He also advocates the rights of clients in real property litigation and in contested matters of code enforcement and administrative law. On a regular basis, Mr. Rees appears before City, County, Regional and State Boards, Departments and Agencies on behalf of his clients.

In the area of land use, zoning, planning and development, Mr. Rees advises clients in matters involving Development of Regional Impact (DRI) preparation and filings, DRI Binding Letters, Florida Quality Development preparation and filings; comprehensive plan amendment preparation and filings; Zoning Code and Regulations interpretations and amendment preparation and filings; rezoning and special exception preparation and filing; environmental permitting preparation and filing; and Code Enforcement Board hearings.

Mr. Rees is a recognized authority in many legal matters involving land use, planning, zoning and development, and he shares his knowledge and experience with the legal community and the public in many ways. He has written numerous articles and made presentations at continuing legal education seminars in his field over the course of his career. He is also actively involved in development issues in the Sarasota/Bradenton area and frequently participates in roundtable discussions and community dialogue with government officials responsible for setting land use policy. Community leaders and government officials often seek his input on matters such as affordable housing and proposed zoning modifications. Mr. Rees has been involved in recommending changes to legislation and local rules affecting land use and zoning and has helped set the course of land use development in Sarasota and the surrounding area throughout his career.

Mr. Rees joined Icard Merrill after law school in 1972 and is currently Senior Counsel of the firm. He is a graduate of Brown University and an honors graduate of the University of Florida School of Law. He is a member of the Florida Bar, the American Bar Association and the Sarasota County Bar Association.

Practice Areas

Land Use, Planning, Zoning And Development

Administrative Law - State and Local

Governmental Law

Real Estate

Real Property Litigation

Code Enforcement

Environmental Law

Education

Brown University

University of Florida School of Law (honors)

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