

NEWS FROM **Long Island Business NEWS**

Where Business Gets Down to Business

Two Minutes With Ted Weiss

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The prince of Melville

A former high school gym teacher in Patchogue, Ted Weiss learned about commercial real estate from the ground up. After leaving education, his flooring company helped lay the foundation, or the carpet, for dozens of Long Island businesses. When he saw the increasing need for suburban office space, Weiss began acquiring buildings, eventually developing his own. Today, T. Weiss Realty is becoming a major player in the Melville office market. With his son Craig in the fold and the first tenants moving into his Melville Corporate Center III at 324 South Service Road, Weiss remains optimistic about the commercial market.

When did you first see Melville as an opportunity?

We have been very active in Melville for the last 15 years. Before that we had about six medical buildings in Nassau. My first foray into Suffolk County was in Farmingdale, where we had another medical building. When I compared the two counties, taxes were much easier on the eyes here in Suffolk County. We were able to see significant savings that we could bring to businesses by moving them across the border.

There were a lot of stars aligned when we first starting doing business in Melville. There were a lot of opportunities because we were in the middle of a downturn similar to where we are today.

What's changed along the 110 corridor from years past?

Melville had always been an industrial economy revolving around the defense industry. It had Republic, Grumman, Sperry, Fairchild and a few other smokestack industries. Those large corporate players supported hundreds of smaller businesses, which started to dissipate after Vietnam. Then there was a vacuum for a good 10 to 20 years where Melville had a lot of vacancies, had a lot of transitional properties. There was a need to redevelop into a different use and we helped fill that need.

Why does the Melville office market remain strong in shaky times?

We are located at the crossroads of Nassau and Suffolk counties. There's been a master plan that was initiated many years ago by the Town of Huntington to focus on industry for Melville. They

have stayed the course in making Melville the downtown of Long Island where there hadn't been a downtown before.

Today Melville is a magnet. The big corporations are coming in. Canon, Honeywell, major banks and insurance companies, they all want to be in Melville.

Should the government step in and build more workforce housing for employees of these companies?

It's a serious problem, but I'm a capitalist. The marketplace, in my opinion, will, over time, work itself out. We do have serious problems with housing for our next generation, but it will work itself out. And it is working itself out right now. We're going through something that is not unique. If you are 25 or 30 years old and not astute at history, then you might ask, "What the hell is happening?" But the truth of the matter is this is not unique. It's happened many times before, whether it was a dot-com, or whether it was railroads or oil, every time government gets involved we have issues. If we let the science of capitalism work through, it always works out.

When there aren't any properties you want to invest in, where do you turn?

I'd rather put my money in a CD than something with a four or five cap rate. That way I can sleep at night.

When you have a property, there is always a vacancy. You can't expect to have 100 percent occupancy. With real estate you can't sleep. You feed the alligators, you have issues and tenants go out.

Are you optimistic about the future of the office market here?

We have seen a continuous eastern migration from the boroughs out to Long Island and it hasn't just been housing, but growth in corporate space.

Long Island has become dynamic and corporate oriented because people want to work close to home, and Long Island couldn't be a better community to raise a family.