

THE REAL DEAL

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Spinola bids colleagues farewell

Elected officials and industry salute longest-serving president of city's most powerful trade organization at glittering REBNY affair



For nearly three decades, Steven Spinola has worked hundreds of rooms in Albany, Washington and New York City on behalf of the real estate industry, and at the Real Estate Board of New York's 119th annual banquet in mid-January, the room was unequivocally in the palm of his hand.

The crowd in the New York Hilton ballroom broke into thunderous applause as REBNY Chairman Rob Speyer presented the outgoing president of the city's most powerful trade organization with the Harry B. Helmsley Distinguished New Yorker Award.

"Steve Spinola has been the most important person in the history of REBNY," Speyer said. "He has made us a force to be reckoned with in the city, in the state, and it's literally transformed the landscape of our industry."

"My stepping down as your president only ends one chapter in the very impressive, continuing history of the Real Estate Board of New York," Spinola said. "Together we have accomplished much. Great challenges remain and REBNY could not be in better hands."

He vouched for his successor, John Banks, saying the Con Edison lobbyist "brings to this position all of the skills necessary to lead our great industry."

Spinola addressed such industry titans as Mary Ann Tighe, Jerry Speyer, Burt Resnick, Jonathan Mechanic and Dan Tishman. The political elite also attended, including Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen, Public Advocate Tish James, City Planning Chairman Carl Weisbrod, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and council members Daniel Garodnick, Jumaane Williams and David Greenfield. Mayor Bill de Blasio made a brief cameo and Senator Chuck Schumer dashed in at the end.