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Brook Farm Group's Juliana Capalbo on the outlook for multifamily



by **Jim Tatum**

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Juliana Capalbo

Every month, we reach out to multifamily industry leaders in order to gain their perspective on the market. This month, we talked with Juliana Capalbo, the new director of operations and finance for Brook Farm Group, an Atlanta-based national multifamily development company. She has 15 years of professional experience and will oversee the firm's operations, including accounting, information technology, human resources, and investor reporting. In addition, she will be actively involved in both asset and portfolio management as well as capital markets activity.

Most recently, Capalbo served as an outsourced COO/Director of Accounting and Finance Manager for more than 35 startup clients across various industries, including residential and commercial real estate and private lending, providing growth strategies and business development to the client management teams as well as establishing systems and processes to scale effectively.

Prior to that, she held multiple roles in both Portfolio Management and Finance at Waypoint Residential, overseeing asset and property management, reporting, information flow, and corporate accounting. During her tenure, the company doubled in size with investment activity totaling over \$3.0 billion across more than 22,000 units.

A Magna Cum Laude graduate of Fordham University, Capalbo is a CPA licensed in the state of New York.

Given the current headwinds, how is multifamily positioned for growth?

Despite the uncertainty in the economy and the rising costs of capital, demand for multifamily continues to outpace supply as investors continue to target high-growth areas, particularly in the Sunbelt states. Rent growth is expected

to remain healthy as demand continues to outpace supply. The significant increase in interest rates is most certainly creating a more challenging financing environment, but we're responding to those adjustments through more conservative underwriting and by reducing the amount of leverage in each transaction. This means some transactions have been paused or declined, but several opportunities remain attractive.

As a team, we adhere to a highly structured and detailed due diligence and underwriting process and focus on integrating changes in the macro economy as well as the submarkets we are actively targeting. We are committed to a robust risk mitigation process that ensures attractive returns and provides strong downside protection for our investors.

Tell us about your experience and background.

As a first generation American, I grew up valuing a strong work ethic and recognizing the benefits of investing in real estate to provide cash flow and appreciation over time. Seeing my parents work around the clock in the family restaurant business and their self-managed real estate portfolio inspired me to learn how to scale any business in a manageable and meaningful way. I also learned how to identify what a smart investment looks like and how to maximize its potential. Ironically, when I started my career during the market crisis in 2008, I quickly saw the consequences of companies operating without the safeguards of strong ethical decision-making. I also had the honor to work for Peter G. Peterson, the founder of Blackstone, where I saw how effective one can be when acting with a great deal of knowledge and integrity.

What is your role in implementing Brook Farm Group's strategy?

My top priority is creating a strong operational foundation for the company's operations and portfolio management. I am also bringing my experience as a CPA to create systems and processes that will allow the company to grow and make the data-driven decisions needed for long-term success.

I will also be actively involved in capital raising initiatives and overseeing investor relations, with a focus on ensuring that the economics of each deal align with our investment objectives. So, my role is both qualitative and quantitative, working with our entire team to help strategize and make decisions that influence the types of developments we build to support local communities.