



Whitney Elkins-Hutten of PassiveInvesting.com interviews [Michael Pansolini](#), who shares about his acquisition of the 18-unit Grand Central Mobile Home Community in Horseheads, New York. He explains how his institutional background and relationship with the local park owners played a role in executing his New York-specific strategy and sourced this off-market deal. Michael also discusses the ingredients of a good professional partnership, specifically when managing single-family homes within a mobile home park. Tune in to hear the full story and learn how you can master the mobile home park asset class.

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18-Unit Grand Central Mobile Home Community In Horseheads, NY With Michael Pansolini, Mobile Home Park Investing Expert

I'm excited to be joined again by [Michael Pansolini](#). Michael, welcome back to the show.

Thanks, I'm happy to be here, Whitney.

Michael's Background In The Mobile Home Community Space

Before we dive into Grand Central Mobile Home Community, eighteen units in Horseheads, New York, tell us a little bit about your background and where you are in the mobile home community space. Now, I know we usually talk about multifamily, but guys, mobile home parks do count as multifamily units. Tell us a little bit about yourself.

Absolutely. Your readers may remember from the last time I was on, but my history is I was an accountant for one of the Big Four accounting firms, PwC. I left to join Brookfield Asset Management, which is the second-largest asset manager in the world. I believe they're trending towards number one with their acquisition of Oaktree. I left and when I was at Brookfield, I was on the portfolio management team for about five years and I had a specific concentration in mobile home parks.

In the news right now, Brookfield's about to acquire YES Communities, likely. That will make them the largest mobile home park owner in the country, if not the world. We had quite a sizable portfolio of over 200 mobile home parks that I was a portfolio manager for. That entailed everything from acquisitions all the way through dispositions and everything in between, operating and managing the operator and any on-site operations as well. I got a real full spectrum of experience at Brookfield.

I was like, "Why am I doing this for anybody but myself?" I decided to leave and do it for myself and simultaneously start a mastermind called the MHP Pros alongside Ryan Narus, who is an owner of over 85 mobile home parks now and over 4,700 lots. The two of us combined our institutional experience on my side with his entrepreneurial experience to create this mastermind and it's been extremely successful.

We have over 100 students who have successfully purchased mobile home parks through our teachings and our mentorship. Combined with my own entrepreneurial experience building my portfolio as it stands now and this mastermind, I've lived and breathed mobile home parks, which as you say, I don't think it qualifies as multi but definitely residential and it has been unbelievable. I could not be happier. I'm really happy to share everything that there is to know about MHPs whether on this show, although it's deal specific, or within our community after the fact, but yeah, let's hone in on this deal. Very exciting.

Purchasing The Grand Central Mobile Home Community

Let's talk about Grand Central Mobile Home Community, eighteen units, Horsehead, New York. When did you close on the property and what was the purchase price?

We closed on October 25th of 2025 for \$525,000.

That puts it about how much a door or a plot?

I can't remember where we landed on there. It was interesting because there was actually a single-family home attached to the property and that skewed the valuation a bit by about \$100,000. Whatever 17 lots is divided into about 425,000, if we have a calculator handy. I think it was between \$20,000 and \$30,000 a lot, which is a great valuation.

Yeah, \$25,000 is what I penciled it out to be. When you did this acquisition, were you just acquiring the land and the improvement? Obviously, the single-family home, but were you acquiring the actual units on the premises, the homes themselves?

Sure. We actually had no park-owned homes outside of those single-family homes. There were, I think, three single-family homes that came with it, although we don't consider them single-family homes because they're so tiny they almost feel like mobile homes. In reality, no. Everything outside of three units were 100% owner-occupied or tenant-owned homes as we call them in the space. It was just the land and the land improvements that we were acquiring.

How did you find the deal? Did you find it through a broker? Were you sending out postcards, scouring the internet? How did you find it?

In New York state, and I think I may have touched on this before, but it's interesting because there's a lot of regulation, especially around mobile home parks. They're highly regulated, there's rent controls and rent caps and when that happened in 2019, all the fishermen that were in that state left to go fish elsewhere, let's put it that way. All of the park owners who were getting calls all the time weren't getting so many calls any longer.

What that led to was a reduction in basis for any additional parks that you could acquire. Of course, there's still brokered deals in New York but they're not at the best value. What you can tend to do is really pick up a lot of these lower lot count mobile home parks for cheap because you can call the owner and say, "I can't pay what I would pay in another state because I'm capped at 3% to 6% rent increases annually."

"In order for me to make a good deal, me to make some money, you to make some money since you've owned the park for 20 years, 30 years in some cases, and for your residents to keep status quo and not be have their rent raised like crazy, although it's often not possible in New York, let's come to a deal where everyone's happy. It's a great compromise." That's been our strategy in New York and that's exactly what we've employed in this market.

Once you're in the market, the leverage that you have is incredible. As Ryan says, it's legal insider trading. You know everyone in the town and you can effectively leverage those relationships to learn about other park owners and build relationships with them. That's the first thing we did. We went to the code enforcement team with whom we have a relationship. We said, "What parks are underperforming in the area? Where are there some absentee owners that we can maybe get in the ear of?"



Mobile Home Community: Once you are in the market, leverage your relationships to learn about other park owners and build relationships with them as well.

Just say, “We’re not pushy but if you would like to sell your park to us, we’re down the street. Come say hello. We can talk over coffee.” We’ve taken probably 4 or 5 owners in the area out to lunch at this point and sat down for hours at a time just sharing war stories about mobile home parks and getting to know them. Of course, over time we build that relationship and they’ve yielded great results.

We have 3 or 4 in the pipeline from that process and this one was one of those same stories. It was from that building of relationships with these local park owners and this one is literally a football field away as the crow flies from our existing asset. It was the perfect addition to the portfolio and it was just seller-financed through bootstrapping relationships in the area.

We talked about how you found the deal. How did you get to an offer with the current owner?

They’re so cagey about what they want for the deal and they often want you to come forth with the offer first is what I’ve noticed. My business partner taught me this and I thought it was incredible. It’s like every time you’re on the phone with one of these sellers, the first time you ask, they always say the same thing as like, “I’m not going to negotiate against myself. You tell me what it’s worth.”

If you ask the same question a different way three times, you end up getting a number one way or another, whether it’s a range or what have you. That’s what we did and we came in at the low end of the

range for a price on our LOI. He was like, "Absolutely not." I was like, "Okay, ball is in your court. What's a fair price?"

He wanted \$600,000, we wanted \$300,000. We came down all the way to \$525,000, which we thought was a fair price. You can see by the price per lot, it was truly I don't want to call it a steal, but it was good for that market. That was the general negotiation process we're seeing with every off-market seller of mobile home parks in the area.

Now, in this particular deal, you're buying the land and improvements, of course there were some additional single-family homes or microhomes or whatever we're going to call them on the premises. How does this differ from buying a park that has park owned homes?

This is one of the most difficult parts of this business and I'll always quote Ryan. I talk to him like four hours a day so he's always in my head, but if you're in the mobile home park business, you're in the mobile home business as well. You have to understand much like single-family home refurb, how to value like an ARV effectively as we call it in single-family homes.

Tweet: If you are in the mobile home park business, you are in the mobile home business as well.

What is your after-repair value of these homes or can they even be salvaged at all? Do they need to be completely demoed and thrown away and then a new home brought in in its place? When you think about buying a park-owned home community or a park with a lot of park-owned homes in it, you really have to have somebody on your team who understands those homes intimately and can look at one.

We can walk through and he can say, "Yes, it's salvageable. This is how much it's going to cost. We add that to the capex budget and this is how much we can pay the owner for it." When you look at a purchase price, often you'll separate what the land value is and the income from those tenant-owned homes. Those are the homes that are owned by the tenants themselves. A separate value that you attribute to the park-owned homes that you're acquiring as well.

We didn't have to do that in this case because all of the actual mobile homes that were on premise were tenant-owned. In the previous park that we that we purchased, I explained in the last episode that my business partner Tiernan Lao, who is a mobile home dealer, mobile home mechanic, was an expert at just quickly identifying what it was going to cost to repair all of these and what we should effectively pay for them. I say this all the time to my students, you need to maybe partner with somebody who has a construction background or maybe like a mobile home repair background or mobile home flip background and it will save you a ton of headaches in that regard.

Raising Earnest Money And Closing The Contract

Now, you got the property under contract for \$525,000. What kind of earnest money did you put down and how did you structure the closing of the contract?

It was a \$10,000 EMD and the seller was happy with that. We structured the contract 45 days of diligence, 45 days close. Most of that was because he was not amicable to seller financing. This may be another question for down the line, but we struggled to get financing pretty significantly and the reason was because like most mom-and-pop sellers in this area and in general, the accounting was really not there.

When the accounting's not there, then the banks don't have confidence and if you don't have a major track record in the area, especially with the credit unions and the local and regional banks that you're going to there. At this point, we hadn't. The last deal was purchased cash and this one was our first deal that we were going to have to finance so we hadn't built those relationships with lenders yet. They were just not interested.



Mobile Home Community: Without proper accounting or a major track record with credit unions, banks will not have confidence in you.

He was adamant, "I'm not doing seller financing, I want to cash out." He allowed us. I said, "Okay, let's see what happens." I spent the first 45 days going to every bank. I probably talked to fifteen banks and got a no from all of them. I said, "Can you give me a letter that says no?" They did. I sent all of those letters one by one to the seller.

He was like, "I will never sell this park unless I just do seller financing, unless I allow you some turnover time, unless I allow you to get the books and records in a place where the banks are going to trust you and allow you to refi." We structured a two-year seller note at 7% interest only in order for us to accomplish the initial business plan and then present that to banks over a two-year period.

Do you already have an idea who might carry out that refinance loan and so did you already know what boxes you needed to check or was this your plan that you're bringing to the seller?

Truthfully, the refinance plan is just based on the fact that I'm building a portfolio in the area and I believe in that portfolio and I think that in the next two years, I'll have 3 to 4 parks that I can package together at an attractive LTV and present to a bank. They will be much more likely at that point to lend to me just because there'll be other assets that can support that. That loan payment should be reduced in occupancy.

Although that's generally not the case for tenant owned homes as you may be aware, they have a 2.5% turnover ratio. Frankly, they're not hard to finance because the cashflows are just so consistent and the occupancy is always consistently over 95% with low turnover. A lot of banks don't understand it, so it's good to have a portfolio and some other assets that you can use as leverage as well in that negotiation process. To answer your question succinctly, there's not really a refi plan other than I know and I've talked to enough loan brokers to say this will be a creditworthy asset in just a few short years.

Now, what I do love about this process and I think most investors, whether they were initially trying to get a multifamily deal under contract, maybe even single-family, they immediately ask about seller financing. They get told no. How many people walk away? What would have been the worst-case scenario if the seller held on and still said, "No way," or, "I'm not going to do seller financing?" What would have been the worst-case scenario for you?

I haven't crossed this bridge yet in my own life, but in my Brookfield days, we would just go the bridge financing route because we had so much confidence in our business plan. At Brookfield, you have a parent company, Brookfield Asset Management and they were like, "Yeah, here's a 3% credit line," and it was super easy. When it comes to true bridge equity or bridge debt, it's more like 9% to 10%.

We just, at that point, probably would have renegotiated the purchase price to say, "We want to buy this park. No one else can buy it. You don't want to do seller financing and we can't afford a 9% loan at the current purchase price. Can you come down \$50,000, \$100,000 so we can get this deal done and still make it pencil with bridge debt? We could turn this around and really accomplish the business plan and then refi into traditional bank financing."

Learning Patience Through Due Diligence

Let's reverse order this and go back into due diligence. You get the property under contract. It sounded like you had 45 days due diligence, 45 days to close. What came up on due diligence?

Pretty much nothing, which was actually probably the first diligence period I've done where there were no surprises. We did try and get as many professionals in there as possible. We have a relationship with a local electrician who came out and gave us a laundry list of things that could be improved. We had the local commercial plumbing company come out and camera all the lines.

We took all that information and we presented it in an email to the seller. He said, "There's at least \$100,000 worth of repairs that need to be done from an electrical, from a water and from a sewer standpoint. What can you do for us?" His answer was absolutely nothing. We just moved forward with the deal anyway but it never hurts to ask. I think we knew the deal could pencil either way and that we had reserves for capex should those things actually occur.

The park was operating as it should. The sewer lines were all PVC. It was actually owned by the same sewage company that we called, the same plumbing company that we called to come out and check out

the lines, which tends to be the case in a small town. There are a lot of people who own a lot of things. They were like, "We know the park real well. The sewer system's built very well."

We did obviously validate that through the camera lines. Ultimately, there were no surprises in diligence. The biggest surprise to me was how difficult it is to deal with local attorneys in a small town on the seller side. The counterparty attorney was a nightmare. And we have the MHP attorney as he goes by, Fern Neiman, he's incredible. If you guys are ever getting involved in mobile home parks, he's your guy.

It's just a night and day difference between an attorney who knows what they're doing and is engaged versus an attorney who is on his way out, maybe 70-plus in a small town who just doesn't have that same sense of urgency. I'm not an arrogant person, but I am from New York and I have a little bit more of a sense of urgency.

The word arrogant was thrown out a couple of times to me. I want things done right. In any case, I think that was the biggest lesson coming out of it. It was like you need to be patient. For me, it was a lesson in these closing dates are extremely fungible and if it's not your fault, especially if it's the seller attorney's fault and he's the one causing the delay, you have a lot of leverage you can pull, especially if your contract is properly set up to account for it.

Tweet: Due diligence requires a ton of patience.

I was nervous and that's the reason I was getting antsy. It was like, "You guys are holding us up and the closing date's approaching. I can't get a hold of your attorney for six days and he keeps hitting reply instead of reply all so my attorney doesn't know what happened in the last seventeen messages." It was just a nightmare. Patience is a virtue is I think was the biggest diligence lesson here. Nothing really came from our physical onsite diligence, though.

Raising Capital And Building A Good Partnership

I remember when I went to grad school in New Orleans, it was like going to a different world. I felt like sometimes, the clock went backwards. I love the place, for sure, but it is something to get used to. Okay, so let's talk about, did you raise capital for this deal?

I did not for this deal. This deal was a low enough down payment that me and my business partner could do it ourselves. I was lucky enough to spend ten years in private equity and I did well enough to build my let's call it cash reserves. It's always been my plan to get to a point where I've exhausted my own capital into deals that I can cashflow significantly and that's my nest egg.

It's paying the bills every month, I can live without worrying about whatever living expenses I have. My future plan is to definitely raise capital as I did at Brookfield. In this case, my business partner flips mobile homes. Within six months of buying the first one, he had flipped another five and got his portion of the down payment and I had my reserves from my years at Brookfield, so I was ready to press play. In the future, I think in the next three deals we do, they're going to be, I think, a \$4.5 million deal, \$1.75 million deal and we're looking at a \$10 million portfolio right now. It's definitely on the horizon.

Two questions there. I don't think we discussed how much of a down payment that you put on the property. We do know that you brought \$10,000 earnest money to the deal, 7% interest only, but what were the other terms, like the down payment and the timeline here? The other follow-up to that.

It was \$150,000 down payment. We split that 50/50 between me and my business partner. What was the other question? I think that was the only question, correct?

The follow-up question to that is how did you structure the deal with your business partner?

I'll repeat this until the day I die. I think partnerships are the toughest part of any business because if you don't have a good relationship with your partner, if you feel like one's doing more than the other, if there's resentment that builds up over the years because of that inequity in the amount of work that's happening, it can end up really bad. There are always times where you feel like you're doing more.

Tweet: Partnerships are the toughest part of any business. Without a good relationship with your partner, resentment will build up over time.

In my opinion, it always evens out. I've seen that in my business partnership with Ryan for the MHP Pros. I've seen that in my business partnership with Tiernan on my businesses. Ultimately, you just have to have faith that your business partner is going to help you achieve the business plan with his skillset and you're going to help achieve the business plan with yours and it's never going to really truly be 50/50 but ultimately that's how you should structure partnerships.

Obviously, if there are three people, it's 33.3 repeating each, but if everyone has an equal stake in something, just like in a marriage, then they're just more motivated to help. I just don't like inequity in partnership values. Now, of course, if you're raising capital and you're doing investor relations and you've never even been on site and you've never dealt with operations, I think personally, your equity share in the GP, for instance, should be a lot less than that person who's doing the operations.

If you're a 50/50 operator, that's how you should structure your partnerships and that's what I'll always believe. Of course, someone can bring more equity and someone else can bring more skill and you can still come to 50/50. Ultimately, it is what's best for everybody because now just everyone feels like they're sharing in the spoils of their work and so far, that's worked out really well for me.

I hope to never report back the opposite, but so far, me and Tiernan have so much fun together. We just spent a week up there digging ourselves out of the snowstorm, just having so many laughs. We get Airbnbs up there together. He's in his late 20s, I'm in my early 30s so we get to ride around on backhoes and do fun stuff on site and we have a passion for it. I would recommend that to anybody. Just find yourself a partner that you can have a beer with, passes the beer test, and then also has his skills alongside that. You can have laughs and you can go get a drink or a coffee, but also, when you put your nose to the grindstone, both of you are doing so.



Mobile Home Community: Find yourself a partner you can have a beer with and have the right business skills alongside that.

Park-Owned Homes: The Biggest Landmine Often Missed

As we wrap up, if a first-time operator had to do this deal in front of them, what do you think would be the biggest landmine they would miss?

The biggest landmine they would have missed is likely the single-family home aspect of these parks. It's often said that POH in general is undesirable for a mobile home park and frankly, that's the case because of the operational capacity that exists there.

What's POH?

Park owned homes. That's the component you were talking about where you're buying the homes as well as the land they sit on. When you're dealing with a single-family home inside of a mobile home park, it's not as easy as just demoing the mobile home with a bunch of Sawzalls and some good old boys. It's on permanent foundation, it's very difficult to demo and it can be a nightmare to operate as opposed to these tenant-owned homes where you're not responsible for anything but the land underneath that home.

If you're getting into a position where you're buying a ton of POH, a ton of park-owned homes, or a bunch of single-family homes inside that portfolio, just be ready for the 10:00 PM phone calls about a leak, about a vent that's not working, about a gas leak, whatever the case may be. Ninety percent of the

issues we have on site are related to those single-family homes and I think that'll always be the case. For your multifamily readers, if you want to avoid those calls, either get a super or move over to mobile home parks. They're a lot easier.

Get In Touch With Michael

Great words of wisdom. Michael, thank you so much for sharing your insights with us here. If readers want to connect and learn more about you, what's the best way they can do so?

Sure, head over to TheMHPPros.com or can find me on LinkedIn, [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), any social media. I'm not hard to find. Otherwise, I've been pretty vocal lately on LinkedIn specifically about the benefits of mobile home parks. You can see my posts there almost every day and I look forward to connecting with you if you want to learn more about the asset type.

Ryan and I are great mentors and we have a great community of additional mentees who have become successful mobile home park owners, so it's not just about us anymore. Those guys are incredible and I learn from them as much as they learn from me. I'll see you in there, hopefully, and thanks for having me on, Whitney.

Thanks again for being with us here. We look forward to hearing about your future deals.

Thanks so much.

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