



# Pinellas County

## Staff Report

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File #: 16-931A, Version: 1

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### **Subject:**

Authority for the County Attorney to engage Gulfcoast Legal Services, Inc., pursuant to an existing contract, to initiate litigation on behalf of Clive Morgan and Debra Morgan in the case of Clive Morgan and Debra Morgan v. Belleair Forest Garden Condominium Association, et al., HUD Case No. 04-14-0739-8; PC Case No. 14-035 - housing discrimination.

### **Recommended Action:**

Approval for the County Attorney to engage Gulfcoast Legal Services, Inc., pursuant to an existing contract, to initiate litigation on behalf of Clive Morgan and Debra Morgan in the case of Clive Morgan and Debra Morgan v. Belleair Forest Garden Condominium Association, et al., HUD Case No. 04-14-0739-8; PC Case No. 14-035.

### **Strategic Plan:**

N/A

### **Summary:**

In their May 28, 2014 complaint, Mr. and Mrs. Morgan filed a charge of housing discrimination with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) alleging they were subjected to unlawful housing discrimination on the basis of race. Specifically, Respondents denying their application to purchase a condominium. In accordance with the agreement between HUD and the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights (PCOHR), the Complaint was forwarded to PCOHR for handling and investigation. Following that investigation, on June 26, 2015, PCOHR issued a finding of reasonable cause to believe that Mr. and Mrs. Morgan were victims of housing discrimination based on race, in violation of the FHAA, 42 U.S.C. § 3604(b). Attempts to conciliate the matter were unsuccessful. In accordance with Section 70-146 of the Pinellas County Code, the County Attorney's Office is required to file a civil action on behalf of an aggrieved party seeking appropriate relief following a reasonable cause determination.

### **Background Information:**

A detailed memorandum setting forth the facts and applicable case law that led to the reasonable cause determination is attached.

### **Fiscal Impact:**

Unknown.

### **Staff Member Responsible:**

James L. Bennett, County Attorney  
Jason C. Ester, Senior Assistant County Attorney

### **Partners:**

Office of Human Rights

**Attachments:**

January 13, 2016 memo from Michelle A. Wallace, former Senior Assistant County Attorney, to Paul Valenti, Human Rights/EEO Officer.