



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 17-1805A, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Proposed initiation of litigation in the case of Marjorie Blaylock, Linda Byars and Richard Leachman v. Seville Condominium 8, Inc.; HUD Case No. 04-17-7756-8; PC Case No. 17-022 - alleged housing discrimination.

Recommended Action:

Approval to authorize outside counsel to initiate litigation on behalf of Marjorie Blaylock, Linda Byars and Richard Leachman through the existing agreements with Gulfcoast Legal Services, Inc. or Bay Area Legal Services, Inc. for legal services.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Summary:

In their April 12, 2017 complaint, complainants filed a charge of housing discrimination with the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights (PCOHR) alleging complainant Richard Leachman, an African-American, was subjected to unlawful housing discrimination on the basis of his race and all three complainants were subjected to interference, coercion and intimidation. Specifically, Respondent subjected complainant Richard Leachman to different requirements for approval for residency than those of his Caucasian counterparts and, after his arrival, Respondent subjected all three complainants to interference, coercion and intimidation. Following that investigation, on October 9, 2017, PCOHR issued a finding of reasonable cause to believe that complainant, Richard Leachman, was a victim of housing discrimination based on his race, in violation of Chapter 70 of the Pinellas County Code and the FHAA, including, but not limited to, 42 U.S.C. § 3604(a) and 42 U.S.C. § 3604(b). Additionally, PCOHR issued a finding of reasonable cause to believe that all three complainants were also subjected to interference, coercion and intimidation in violation of Chapter 70 of the Pinellas County Code and the FHAA, including, but not limited to, 42 U.S.C. § 3617. Attempts to conciliate the matter were unsuccessful. In accordance with Section 70-146 and 70-147 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 and if a timely election is not made to have the charge decided in a civil action, the County Attorney's office shall provide legal representation in an administrative hearing.

Background Information:

Both the Determination issued by the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights setting forth the facts and applicable law that led to the reasonable cause determination as well as the Final Investigative Report are attached.

Fiscal Impact:

Unknown.

Staff Member Responsible:

Jewel White, County Attorney
Brijesh Patel, Assistant County Attorney

Partners:

Office of Human Rights.

Attachments:

Determination dated October 9, 2017
Final Investigative Report dated October 9, 2017