



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 19-123A, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Proposed initiation of litigation in the case of Michael and Marinela Velasquez v. Highland Glen of Clearwater Homeowners Association, Inc.; HUD Case No. 04-18-2707-8; Pinellas County Case No.18-044 - alleged housing discrimination.

Recommended Action:

Approval and authorization for the County Attorney to initiate litigation on behalf of Michael and Marinela Velasquez through outside counsel retained for these legal services.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Summary:

In their May 30, 2018 complaint, Complainants Michael and Marinela Velasquez filed a charge of housing discrimination with the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) alleging they were subjected to unlawful housing discrimination on the basis of disability and national origin. HUD referred the complaint to the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights (PCOHR) for investigation and processing. Following the investigation, on October 26, 2018, PCOHR issued a finding of cause that Complainants were victims of housing discrimination based on national origin and handicap status, 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 § 3604(f). Attempts to conciliate the matter were unsuccessful. In accordance with Sections 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:

The Final Investigative Report as well as the Determination issued by the PCOHR setting forth the facts and applicable law that led to the reasonable cause determination are attached.

Fiscal Impact:

Unknown.

Staff Member Responsible:

Jewel White, County Attorney
Brijesh Patel, Assistant County Attorney

Partners:

Office of Human Rights

Attachments:

Final Investigative Report dated October 23, 2018.
Determination dated October 23, 2018.