



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 20-1352A, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Proposed initiation of litigation in the case of Anthony Knaver v. Bruce A. Mills; HUD Case No. 04-20-9950-8; PC Case No. 20-007 - alleged housing discrimination.

Recommended Action:

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

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Summary:

On December 19, 2019, Complainant Anthony Knaver filed a charge of housing discrimination with the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights (PCOHR) alleging Complainant was subjected to unlawful housing discrimination on the bases of handicap and retaliation through discriminatory terms, conditions, privileges, or services and facilities, failure to make reasonable accommodation and other discriminatory acts under the Fair Housing Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 3601, et seq.). Specifically, Respondent threatened to evict Complainant because of the presence of his emotional support animal after several repair requests were made by Complainant. Although Complainant and his roommates subsequently terminated the lease and left the residence, PCOHR's investigation is based on the violations of the Fair Housing Act that occurred while Complainant was still a lawful resident at the dwelling. Following the investigation, on May 14, 2020, PCOHR issued a finding of reasonable cause to believe that Anthony Knaver was a victim of housing discrimination based on denial of a reasonable accommodation, which is in violation of Article II, Division 3 of Chapter 70 of the Pinellas County Code and the Fair Housing Act, as amended. 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.

Background Information:

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

Fiscal Impact:

Unknown.

Staff Member Responsible:

Jewel White, County Attorney
Diriki T. Geuka, Assistant County Attorney

Partners:

Office of Human Rights

Attachments:

Determination dated May 14, 2020.

Final Investigative Report dated May 14, 2020.