



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 16-554A, Version: 1

Subject:

Authority for the County Attorney to initiate litigation on behalf of Amanda Hebden in the claim of Amanda Hebden v. Ronald Anderson - HUD Case No. 04-15-0716-8; PC Case No. 15-035.

Recommended Action:

Approval of authority for the County Attorney to initiate litigation on behalf of Amanda Hebden in the claim of Amanda Hebden v. Ronald Anderson - HUD Case No. 04-15-0716-8; PC Case No. 15-035 - allegations of housing discrimination.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Summary:

On October 29, 2015, Amanda Hebden filed a charge of housing discrimination with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) alleging that she was subjected to housing discrimination by the Respondent, Ronald Anderson. 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.

In her complaint, Ms. Hebden alleged that she was subjected to unlawful housing discrimination by the Respondent on the basis of race. Specifically, Respondent subjected her African American roommate to different requirements for approval and, shortly after his arrival, Complainant was not allowed to renew her lease.

Following an investigation by the PCOHR, on December 9, 2015, the PCOHR issued a finding of reasonable cause to believe that Ms. Hebden was a victim of housing discrimination based on race, in violation of the FHAA, 42 U.S.C. § 3604(a). Attempts to conciliate the matter between the parties 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. Therefore, it is recommended that the Board authorize the County Attorney's Office to initiate such civil action through the existing contract with Gulfcoast Legal Services, Inc.

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

Background Information:

N/A

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Staff Member Responsible:

James L Bennett, County Attorney

Michelle A. Wallace, Sr. Assistant County Attorney

Partners:

N/A

Attachments:

Memo dated March 11, 2016, from Michelle Wallace to Paul Valenti - review of final investigative report/determination.