



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 20-939A, Version: 1

Subject:

Proposed initiation of litigation in the case of Gregory Blais v. Bayway Isles - Point Brittany Three Corporation, Inc.; HUD Case No. 04-20-0295-8; PC Case No. 20-009 - alleged housing discrimination.

Recommended Action:

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

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Summary:

On January 17, 2020, Complainant Gregory Blais 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 basis of disability, 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's denial of Complainant's request to continue parking his truck, which he needed due to his disability, in a visitor's parking spot close to his residence. Although Complainant was subsequently evicted from the residence, PCOHR's investigation is based on the charges that occurred while he was still a lawful resident at the facility. Following the investigation, on May 5, 2020, PCOHR issued a finding of reasonable cause to believe that Gregory Blais was a victim of housing discrimination based on failure to reasonably accommodate, 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 is 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 5, 2020.

Final Investigative Report dated April 29, 2020.