

MEDIA RELEASE: Pinehurst Village Council settles in fair housing discrimination case

The NC Justice Center, Fair Housing Project of Legal Aid of North Carolina and private law firm filed complaint against the village for rejecting a proposed housing development based on race and income

RALEIGH (June 17, 2014) — The Pinehurst Village Council agreed last week to the settlement of a housing discrimination case filed against the Village of Pinehurst that included making the zoning changes necessary for an affordable development project to move forward.

The North Carolina Justice Center, Fair Housing Project of Legal Aid of North Carolina, and Relman, Dane & Colfax, a law firm based in Washington, DC, represented claimants in the case against the Village of Pinehurst and the Pinehurst Village Council. The complaint alleged that a violation of fair housing laws occurred in April 2013 when the council rejected plans for Pinehurst Senior Apartments, a 56-unit senior affordable rental housing community.

The complaint alleged that the Pinehurst Village Council's actions violated the Federal Fair Housing Act and the North Carolina Fair Housing Act, based on the race and economic status of the occupants of the proposed development.

"We are very pleased that the Pinehurst Village Council has agreed to work with the developers to address the affordable housing needs of low-income seniors in and around Pinehurst," said Lauren Brasil, Staff Attorney with the Fair Housing Project of Legal Aid of North Carolina.

The settlement includes paying \$90,000 to the fair housing claimants and their attorneys, and an agreement to permit construction of the Pinehurst Senior Apartments. The settlement also requires compliance with all applicable fair housing laws including the Federal Fair Housing Act and the North Carolina Fair Housing Act.

"It is important that local governments understand that their decisions regarding affordable housing developments are covered by the state and federal Fair Housing Acts," said Jack Holtzman, Senior Staff Attorney at the NC Justice Center.

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