

PREDETERMINATION SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

CP# 01-20-74632
HUD# 07-20-3708-8

PARTIES TO THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

RESPONDENTS

WILLOWBROOK TOWNHOMES ASSOCIATION
HOA Management Solutions, LLC
2183 NW 86th Street, Suite A
Clive, Iowa 50325-5584

WILLOWBROOK TOWNHOMES ASSOCIATION BOARD
HOA Management Solutions, LLC
2183 NW 86th Street, Suite A
Clive, Iowa 50325-5584

COMPLAINANTS

ANGELA & MARK BISHOP
797 SE Waterview Circle
Waukee, Iowa 50263-8382

and

IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION
400 East 14th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Description of the Parties: Complainants allege that Complainant Angela Bishop is a person with a disability who has an assistance animal. The symptoms of her disability are mitigated through gardening and that her assistance animal is a part of that therapy, which include having the animal outside while she is gardening. A tie-out for her assistance animal would facilitate this, as Ms. Bishop is not able to hold the animal's leash while engaging in gardening. Respondent denied Complainants' request to waive the policy prohibiting tie-outs as an accommodation for Ms. Bishop's disability. Complainants allege Respondents' refusal to waive their "dog tie-out" policy for an assistance animal constitutes a failure to make a reasonable accommodation and has resulted in different terms and conditions of homeownership based on disability.

Terms of Settlement: A complaint having been filed by Complainants against Respondents with the Commission under Iowa Code Chapter 216 and there having been a preliminary inquiry, the parties do hereby agree and settle the above-captioned matter in the following extent and manner:

Acknowledgment of Fair Housing Laws

1. Respondents agree there shall be no discrimination, harassment, or retaliation of any kind against Complainants or any other person for filing a charge under the "Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965" (ICRA); or because of giving testimony or assistance, or participating in any manner in any investigation, proceeding or hearing under the ICRA; or because of lawful opposition to any practice forbidden by the ICRA. Iowa Code § 216.11(2).

2. Respondents acknowledge the ICRA makes it unlawful to discriminate in the terms, conditions or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling or in the provision of services or facilities in connection with the dwelling because of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, disability, or familial status.
Iowa Code § 216.8(1)(b).

Respondents acknowledge that the Federal Fair Housing Act, as amended, makes it unlawful to discriminate in the terms, conditions or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling, or in the provision of services or facilities in connection therewith, because of the person's race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, national origin, or disability.
42 U.S.C. 3604(b), 3604(f)(2) §.

1.

4. Respondents acknowledge the FHA and ICRA make it unlawful to discriminate against another person in the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling or in the provision of services or facilities in connection with the dwelling because of a disability.
42 U.S.C. 3604(f)(2)(a) (§ 804(f)(2)(a) of the Fair Housing Act); Iowa Code § 216.8A(3)(b)(1).

5. Respondents acknowledge their obligation under the FHA and ICRA to allow assistance animals as a reasonable accommodation when necessary to permit an individual with a disability equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. See Iowa Code §§ 216.8B, .8C.

Assistance animals are often referred to as service animals, emotional support animals, therapy animals, companion animals or support animals. Under the FHA and ICRA, an assistance animal is “not a pet. It is an animal that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Assistance animals perform many disability-related functions, including but not limited to, guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to sounds, providing protection or rescue assistance, pulling a wheelchair, fetching items, alerting persons to impending seizures, or providing emotional support to persons with disabilities who have a disability-related need for such support.” *Service Animals and Assistance Animals for People with Disabilities in Housing and HUD-Funded Programs*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, FHEO Notice: FHEO-2013-01, April 25, 2013, at 2; Iowa Code § 216.8B.

After receiving a request, housing providers must consider the following:

1. Does the person seeking to use and live with the animal have a disability (a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities)?
2. Does the person making the request have a disability-related need for an assistance animal? (afford a person with disabilities an equal opportunity to use or enjoy the dwelling).

A request for accommodation can be denied if the accommodation would impose an undue financial and administrative burden or if it would fundamentally alter the essential nature of the housing provider's services. “The determination of undue financial and administrative burden must be made on a case-by-case basis involving various factors, such as the cost of the requested accommodation, the financial resources of the provider, the benefits that the accommodation would provide to the requester, and the

availability of alternative accommodations that would effectively meet the requester's disability-related needs." Joint Statement of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice, *Reasonable Accommodations Under The Fair Housing Act*, May 17, 2004, at 7.

"The request may also be denied if: (1) the specific assistance animal in question poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation, or (2) the specific assistance animal in question would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation. Breed, size, and weight limitations may not be applied to an assistance animal. A determination that an assistance animal poses a direct threat of harm to others or would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others must be based on an individualized assessment that relies on objective evidence about the specific animal's actual conduct — not on mere speculation or fear about the types of harm or damage an animal may cause and not on evidence about harm or damage that other animals have caused. Conditions and restrictions that housing providers apply to pets may not be applied to assistance animals." FHEO-2013-01 at 3.

Respondents acknowledge they will consider each occupant or prospective occupant's situation and accommodation request individually to determine if the requested accommodation is reasonable. The parties acknowledge that if the disability is not known or obvious, Respondents may make a reasonable inquiry and request documentation from a health care provider that verifies the occupant/prospective occupant's disability, without seeking or collecting information regarding the nature of the disability. In addition, Respondents may make reasonable inquiry and request documentation from a health care provider that verifies the occupant or prospective occupant's need for the accommodation, i.e., the relationship between the person's disability and the need for the requested accommodation.

Assistance animals cannot be subjected to monthly pet fees since they are not considered pets under the FHA and ICRA. Iowa Code § 216.8B(2). Housing providers cannot require special tags, equipment, certification or special identification of assistance animals.

Voluntary and Full Settlement

6. The parties acknowledge this Predetermination Settlement Agreement is a voluntary and full settlement of the disputed complaint. The parties affirm they have read and fully understand the terms set forth herein. No party has been coerced, intimidated, threatened or in any way forced to become a party to this Agreement.

7. The parties enter into this Agreement in a good faith effort to amicably resolve existing disputes. The execution of this Agreement is not an admission of any wrongdoing or violation of law. Nor is the execution of this Agreement an admission by Complainant that any claims asserted in her complaint are not fully meritorious.

8. The parties agree the execution of this Agreement may be accomplished by separate counterpart executions of this Agreement. The parties agree the original executed signature pages will be attached to the body of this Agreement to constitute one document.

9. Respondents agree the Commission may review compliance with this Agreement. And as part of such review, Respondents agree the Commission may examine witnesses, collect documents, or require written reports, all of which will be conducted in a reasonable manner by the Commission.

Disclosure

10. Because, pursuant to Iowa Code § 216.15A(2)(d), the Commission has not determined that

disclosure is not necessary to further the purposes of the ICRA relating to unfair or discriminatory practices in housing or real estate, this Agreement is a public record and subject to public disclosure in accordance with Iowa's Public Records Law, Iowa Code Chapter 22. See Iowa Code § 22.13.

Release

11. Complainant hereby waives, releases, and covenants not to sue Respondents with respect to any matters which were, or might have been alleged as charges filed with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Department of Housing and Urban Development, or any other anti-discrimination agency, subject to performance by Respondents of the promises and representations contained herein. Complainant agrees any complaint filed with any other anti-discrimination agency, including the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Department of Housing and Urban Development, which involves the issues in this complaint, shall be closed as Satisfactorily Adjusted.

Relief in the Public Interest

12. Members of the Willowbrook Townhomes Association Board will receive training on the requirements of State and Federal Fair Housing Laws within 90 days of their receipt of a Closing Letter from the Commission. Respondents also agree all future members of the board who are involved in the management or operation of residential properties will receive training on the requirements of State and Federal Fair Housing Laws within 30 days of their date of hire. The training will include an overview of fair housing laws, but will emphasize the law regarding how to handle requests for reasonable accommodations from individuals with a disability. The training shall be conducted by a qualified person, approved by the Commission or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Respondents also agree to send documentation to the Commission verifying the fair housing training has been completed within ten (10) days of completing the training.

Relief for Complainants

13. Effective with the signing of this agreement, Complainants will be granted a reasonable accommodation within the following parameters. Complainants will be permitted to place the assistance animal outside Complainants' home, on a tie-out. Complainants will be with the animal at all times, while it is on the tie-out. Complainants will ensure the handling of animal waste is done in accordance with local ordinances and community rules.

Within seven days of receiving a Closing Letter from the Commission, Respondents agree to send a letter to Complainants, confirming the granting of the accommodation. Respondents will send a copy of this letter to the Commission within the same time frame.

Reporting and Record-Keeping

14. Respondents shall forward to the Commission objective evidence of the successful completion of fair housing training in the form of a Certificate or a letter from the entity conducting the training within ten (10) days of the completion of the training, as evidence of compliance with Term 12 of this Agreement.

15. Within seven days of receiving a Closing Letter from the Commission, Respondents agree to send a copy of the Reasonable Accommodation letter to the Commission, as evidence of compliance with Term 13 of this Agreement.

All required documentation of compliance must be submitted via email or U.S. Mail to:

Dean Meester

Iowa Civil Rights Commission
Grimes State Office Building
400 East 14th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
dean.meester@iowa.gov
Telephone: 515-281-3001

Willowbrook Townhomes Association, RESPONDENT

Date

Willowbrook Townhomes Association Board, RESPONDENT

Date

Angela Bishop, COMPLAINANT

Date

Mark Bishop, COMPLAINANT

Date

Elizabeth Johnson, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

Date