

487-19
Amendment
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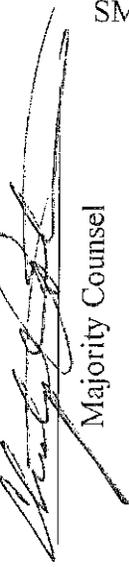
Amendment in the Nature of a Substitution – Item 487-19

Introduced by: Legislator Arnold W. Drucker

RESOLUTION NO -2019

A RESOLUTION TO DEVELOP AND ESTABLISH A FAIR HOUSING HOTLINE AND
SMARTPHONE APPLICATION TO COMBAT HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IN NASSAU
COUNTY

APPROVED AS TO FORM



Majority Counsel

2019 DEC -9 P 11: 27

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WHEREAS, on November 17, 2019 Newsday published the results of a three-year investigation into housing discrimination on Long Island entitled “Long Island Divided”; and

WHEREAS, Newsday sent twenty-five undercover investigators, also known as testers, to real estate brokers to meet with agents to purchase a new home; fifteen testers were minorities-Black, Hispanic and Asian, and ten testers were White; and

WHEREAS, according to the data in the Newsday report, black testers experienced disparate treatment forty-nine percent of the time-compared with thirty-nine percent for Hispanics and nineteen percent for Asian testers; and

WHEREAS, agents whose actions were captured on video revealed conversations advising the white testers not to consider home listings in specific majority minority or diverse neighborhoods and/or school districts as well as apparently discriminatory actions against minority testers such as directing them toward different neighborhoods than white testers, presenting them with fewer housing listings, selecting listings in majority minority areas, placing them under a higher level of financial scrutiny, and asking them to provide identification before showing a home for sale; and

WHEREAS, according to Newsday, “the investigation reveals that Long Island’s dominant residential brokering firms helped solidify racial separations”; and

WHEREAS, in light of the troubling results of the Newsday investigation, it is the judgment of this Legislature that the County must take effective action to facilitate the reporting of housing discrimination in the County in order to promote effective enforcement of Nassau County's Open Housing Law and vindicate the public policy of the County to eradicate discriminatory housing practices; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Chair of the Nassau County Human Rights Commission ("Commission"), in coordination with the Executive Director of the Commission, is hereby authorized, empowered, and directed to establish, maintain, and oversee the operation of a toll-free Fair Housing Hotline for individuals to receive fair housing information and to report discrimination to a trained professional in the Commission who will be able to provide immediate consultations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Chair of the Commission, in coordination with the Executive Director of the Commission, shall coordinate efforts with the County Executive to provide funding and resources to designate, develop, and create an implementation plan for the toll-free Fair Housing Hotline within the County no later than sixty days after adoption of this Resolution and the implementation plan shall include (i) a staffing plan for the individuals responsible for answering the hotline during the hours between nine o'clock a.m. to nine o'clock p.m. Monday through Friday and between nine o'clock a.m. and five o'clock p.m. Saturday, Sunday and holidays and who shall possess knowledge, training, and experience in fair housing laws; (ii) plans and procedures for receiving and responding to any enquiries made by callers; (iii) plans for developing a script to be used when receiving calls to the hotline; (iv) staff training plans on ongoing basis; (v) automated answering and voicemail message capabilities (vi) reporting procedures to the Commission regarding calls and enquiries made to the hotline; and (vii) protocols for the Commission to conduct follow-up regarding phone calls and enquiries; and be it further

RESOLVED, the toll-free Fair Housing Hotline shall be fully functional no later than ninety-days after adoption of this Resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED, the Chair of the Commission, in coordination with the Executive Director of the Commission, is hereby authorized, empowered, and directed to establish, maintain and oversee the operation of the smartphone application so that individuals will have access twenty-four hours a day to relevant information regarding fair housing laws, resources, online forms, and other documents essential to educating the public regarding reporting suspected housing discrimination and filing complaints; and be it further

RESOLVED, the Chair of the Commission, in coordination with the Executive Director of the Commission, shall compile information, resources, and web links garnered from the legal counsel to the Commission, federal, state and local agencies, nonprofits, for-profit organizations and advocacy groups regarding fair housing for inclusion in the smartphone application; and be it further

RESOLVED, in the event that it is not reasonably feasible for the smartphone application to be developed by the County in-house by County employees or contractors currently under

contract with the County to provide information technology services, the Nassau County Department of Information and technology and the County Attorney under the direction of the Chair of the Commission , in coordination with the Executive Director of the Commission, shall prepare and issue a request for proposals (“RFP”) for the smartphone application development and design; the content shall include but not be limited to: (i) a comprehensive directory of government agencies where a discrimination complaint can be filed, (ii) links to Nassau County government resources, (iii) links or web pages to the fair housing laws, (iv) a list of private, non-profit, fair housing enforcement organizations; (v) the Nassau County Fair Housing Hotline number; and (vi) links to state and federal websites and phone numbers; and be it further

RESOLVED, the smartphone application shall be designed for the Android operating system and the Apple operating system known as iOS; and be it further

RESOLVED, the Commission, in coordination with the Chair and Executive Director, shall be required to update content used in the smartphone application whenever there are changes made to the law or procedures for filing a lawsuit in state court or filing an administrative complaint with the State Division of Human Rights, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, or the Superintendent of Banks; and be it further

RESOLVED, the smartphone application developer shall provide developer updates as well as patches known as “bug fixes”, and be it further

RESOLVED, the Department of Information Technology, in coordination with the Commission’s Chair and Executive Director, shall cause the smartphone application to be fully operational and available for download within ninety days after the effective date of this resolution, and be it further

RESOLVED, the hotline and smartphone application shall also be designed to allow a person to anonymously provide tip information to assist in the investigation of alleged housing discrimination; and be it further

RESOLVED, it is hereby determined, pursuant to the provisions of the State Environmental Review Quality Review Act 8 N.Y.E.C.L. section 0101 et seq and its implementing regulations, Part 617 of the 6 N.Y.C.R.R. and Section 1611 of the County Government Law of Nassau County that the adoption of this resolution is a “TYPE II” action within the meaning of Section 617.5(c) (33) of 6 N.Y.C.R.R. and accordingly is of a class of actions which do not have a significant effect on the environment, and no further review is required.