

Village of Tinley Park

News Release



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Village Board to vote on DOJ settlement

The Tinley Park Village Board on Tuesday will vote on a settlement agreement with the Department of Justice (DOJ) and former Planning Director Amy Connolly related to the 47-unit multifamily residential building known as “The Reserve” that Buckeye Community Hope Foundation had proposed to construct at the northeast corner of 183rd Street and Oak Park Avenue.

The DOJ filed a lawsuit against the Village in November 2016 alleging it violated the Fair Housing Act when the Reserve project was put on hold.

“Although these kinds of things are never easy, I should stress that the agreement is in the best interest of the Village and its residents,” Village Manager Dave Niemeyer said.

“This was a business decision to reduce the risk and costs of litigation, which could easily go over a million dollars from this point forward, with an uncertain outcome for both cases.”

The settlement agreement with the DOJ is not a consent decree, which is the predominant outcome in fair housing actions brought by the United States government that place court oversight on municipalities during the term of the decree. There will be no court oversight of the Village from this settlement agreement, the terms of which will last for three years.

The settlement agreement states the Village will have to approve a Fair Housing policy and designate a new Fair Housing Officer.

The Village also admits to no liability or wrongdoing in this agreement.

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In terms of financial responsibility, the Village will agree to pay a \$50,000 civil liberty penalty to the federal government. In addition, the Village's insurer, the Illinois Risk Management Association (IRMA), will pay a \$360,000 settlement to Connolly, with \$85,000 of that coming from the Village's IRMA excess reserve fund that is set aside for cases like this.

The two settlement agreements are related. The DOJ required that the Village settle with Connolly as part of the resolution of the dispute with the DOJ.

"This was a difficult process for the Village and its residents, but I'm glad it will be behind us so we can move forward," Niemeyer said.

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