

Deal clears way for housing

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The federal housing-discrimination lawsuit by the NAACP against the Town of Huntington is over.

The Huntington Planning Board unanimously approved a settlement last night, ending a lengthy legal battle over a proposed Melville development. The town board approved the same settlement Tuesday night.

"I think it's fair to all parties . . . and allows affordability to many in the Town of Huntington, Suffolk County, Nassau County and on Long Island to have ownership in a nice complex," said Paul Mandelik, the planning board's chairman.

Chris Campbell, the Manhattan attorney who represents the Huntington NAACP chapter, which filed a lawsuit on the matter more than 12 years ago, had

said NAACP officials would not sign the agreement unless the planning board voted to approve the settlement. If the board failed to OK the settlement, trial was set to begin today, after a day's delay to allow the vote.

The agreement calls for construction of a "limited equity cooperative" with 117 units of affordable housing on Ruland Road, according to a statement issued after the town board voted on the resolution Tuesday.

"I feel great that we have done what we set out to do, except for getting the shovel in the ground," said Ulysses Spicer, second vice president of the Huntington chapter of the NAACP.

Trial was scheduled to begin yesterday in U.S. District Court in Central Islip. Attorneys for the town and NAACP provided the judge with the settlement information yesterday afternoon.

Under the settlement's terms,



JOHNNY MILANO

the town board agreed to take the necessary zoning action to allow construction of the proposed development with 72 one-bedroom, 39 two-bedroom and six three-bedroom units.

They are to be available to people earning 50 percent to 80 percent of the Nassau/Suffolk median income. For a single person, that ranges from \$37,100 to \$59,300 in annual income; for a family of four, \$52,950 to \$84,700, the town said.

Purchasers would be selected by lottery from a waiting list and they would pay the equiva-

lent of two months of maintenance costs as a down payment. No mortgage or other type of financing is required.

The settlement designates Peter Florey of Levittown as developer for the site. Florey was in contract to buy the property last year, but that agreement expired and was extended after a failed settlement in December.

Florey said last night that his next steps will include securing financing for the development. He said he is now working with various public agencies, banks and investors.

Attorneys for the NAACP and the group's Ulysses Spicer celebrate yesterday's vote.

■ **Video:** newsday.com/li

The dispute began in 2002. The current lawsuit, filed in 2011 by the Huntington NAACP and the Fair Housing in Huntington Committee, claims the original development proposal discriminated against minorities and families because it was designed around one-bedroom for-sale units instead of multi-bedroom rental homes to attract families.