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PRESS RELEASE

Litigation in the Northern Michigan town of Bay View is set to close with the parties reaching an agreement with the Department of Justice this week. Members of the community who sued in 2017 and Bay View's Board signed off on a consent decree proposed by the Justice Department on Monday, after nearly two years of litigation and negotiation. The deal will see the Federal Government overseeing future housing transactions in Bay View for five years, with Bay View required to report on its processing of applications to join the resort community.

Central to the deal is an Order requiring Bay View to permanently cease considering religion in any of its dealings with future homeowners. According to the Order, Bay View's advertisement and application materials will prominently state that it does not discriminate, and its bylaws and articles must be altered. Among the other changes are Orders to strike provisions that ensure Methodists form of a majority of the community's association.

Members of the group that sued expressed their pleasure that the long road to resolution has finally arrived and implements the groups' goal of preserving Bay View's 4 Chautauqua pillars—arts, education, recreation and religion, while bringing Bay View into compliance with fair housing laws. Their joint statement reads: "We are pleased with these results and joyfully look forward to putting this lawsuit behind us all. It was a last resort for our group, and one we reached for only after we had exhausted every other opportunity. Our message has always been one of tolerance, inclusion and love for one's neighbor, and we know that Bay View will be stronger than ever as it aligns with federal and state law."

Sarah Prescott of Salvatore, Prescott & Porter reports that the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan is expected to enter the parties' jointly approved order, or "consent decree," negotiated with Department of Justice lawyers in coming weeks. At that point, the Department will receive annual reporting information to ensure compliance with federal fair housing laws, to ensure fidelity to the required changes. "I am pleased that Bay View has moved forward in this way and proud to have represented a fine group of loving and lovable Bay View residents. What I hope people will take from this is that change came from these inspiring people, not from the outside. As I came to see, Bay View is a place with remarkable, intellectually honest and curious, generous and kind people. It is special, and I see why they wanted to fight for it."

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