

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND**

ALISON ASSANAH-CARROLL, individually
and on behalf of all others similarly situated

Plaintiff,

v.

LAW OFFICES OF EDWARD J. MAHER P.C.,
et al

Defendants.

Case No.: 1:20-cv-02376-ADC

**ORDER GRANTING PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF NOTICE, SETTLEMENT
WITH DEFENDANTS AND SETTING A FINAL APPROVAL HEARING AND
OTHER DATES**

Upon consideration of the Plaintiff's Consent Motion For Preliminary Approval of a Settlement Class, Appointing Plaintiff as Class Representative, Appointing Plaintiff's Counsel as Class Counsel, Approving Notice to the Class and Setting of Final Approval Hearing and Other Dates filed herein and the pleadings, motions and memorandums filed in this action, the Court finds that the Motion should be and hereby is **GRANTED**.

The Court has reviewed the requirements under Rule 23 (c)(1) of the Fed. R. Civ. P. and finds that the proposed settlement class meets the requirement for certification under that section. The class is numerous, consisting of at least 151 members. There are common issues as to whether the Defendants' actions and inactions were in violation of state and federal laws when it leased dwellings and collected rent without a rental license. The Plaintiff's claims are typical and there is no dispute that they were not treated any differently by the Defendants.

Further, the Court finds that the Plaintiff and her Counsel will adequately

represent the Settlement Class. Plaintiff has no interests adverse to the other class members. Therefore, the Court appoints Plaintiff as Class Representative.

Similarly, the Court finds their counsel, Ingmar Goldson and Joseph Mack, to be adequate as Class Counsel. In appointing Class Counsel, I have considered the factors set forth in Rule 23 (g). These factors include the work counsel has done in identifying or investigating potential claims in the action, arguing the certified questions to the Maryland Supreme Court, counsel's experience in handling class actions, other complex litigation, and claims of the type asserted in the action, counsel's knowledge of the applicable law, and the resources counsel will commit to representing the class, all of which favor appointment of these class counsel.

Further, the Court finds that certification of a class action for settlement purposes under Rule 23 (c)(1) is an appropriate and superior method to resolve the claims in this action. The claims relate to collection activities and pursuit of individual claims by class members is unlikely. The class action also sets forth common issues of fact that predominate over any other potential issues in this action.

Accordingly, the Court certifies the following class of persons under Rule 23 (c)(1) for settlement purposes only:

Any and all leaseholders, including the named Plaintiff, who resided in Temple Gardens apartment building at 2601 Madison Avenue in Baltimore, MD from August 1, 2019 through and including July 31, 2020 ("Unlicensed Period") and were legally responsible under the lease for payment of rent during the Unlicensed Period ("Leaseholders").

The claims to be addressed by the class are:

all causes of action, suits, claims and demands, in law or in equity, for damages, statutory damages, expenses, costs, and counsel fees arising out of the practices alleged in the Complaint (including MCDCA claims, MCPA claims, and FDCPA claims)

The Court further finds that the proposed Settlement of this action as reflected in the Class Action Settlement Agreement and Release is a fair and reasonable compromise of the disputed claims herein given liability is not certain and the relief obtained is substantial.

The Court approves the manner of notice and proposed notices to class of this Settlement; specifically the Notice of Class Action Settlement (the "Class Notice") provided to the Court by the Plaintiff. The Class Notice shall be printed and mailed to the last known addresses of the class members for which addresses are known no later than 15 days after entry of this order and it shall contain the following dates and information:

Deadline for election to be excluded: 45 days from the day Notice is mailed

Deadline for objections to be filed: 45 days from the day Notice is mailed

A Final Fairness Hearing concerning this Settlement shall take place on


Tuesday, August 1, 2023 beginning at 11:00 a.m. in Courtroom 3D
of this Court.¹

Plaintiff's Motion for Final Approval of this Settlement, Petition for Class Counsel Compensation, together with affidavits regarding notice and elections shall be filed with the Court at least seven (7) days prior to the final fairness hearing.

The Court further approves the Settlement Agreement provided to this Court by the parties. This Order is subject to further consideration based on any objection posed by the Class following the distribution of Notice of the Settlement.

¹ Parties requested this date to be at least 70 days from entry of this Order.

BY THE COURT:

 10 May 2023

A. David Copperthite
United States Magistrate Judge

cc: All Counsel of Record via ECF