



**CERTIFIED MAIL**

Michael S. Gillis  
Fresh Start Sober Living  
P. O. Box 35272  
Charlotte, NC 28235

**RE: FAIR HOUSING ACT REASONABLE ACCOMODATION  
326 BASS LANE  
CASE NUMBER 2014-012**

Dear Michael S. Gillis:

At a special meeting on May 12, 2015, the City of Charlotte Zoning Board of Adjustment (“Board”) **granted** a reasonable accommodation under the Fair Housing Act (FHA) to allow four (4) additional residents at 326 Bass Lane for a total of ten (10) recovering alcoholics and/or drug addicts (considered members of a protected class under the FHA) to reside together in its sober living home in a residential neighborhood where the Zoning Ordinance definition of “family” limits the number of unrelated persons residing together in a single family dwelling to not more than six (6).

**The Board based its decision on the following findings of fact:**

1. The applicant is Fresh Start, Sober Living, LLC (“Fresh Start”), owner Michael Gillis (Represented by Laura H. Budd).
2. The proposed site is located at 326 Bass Lane, further identified as tax parcel 213-135-57.
3. The subject parcel is zoned R-4 (single family residential).
4. Fresh Start is a basic 12-Step sober living program for men and women who are recovering from alcoholism and/or drug addiction
5. Recovering alcoholics and drug addicts are considered disabled under the Fair Housing Act; therefore, the housing at 326 Bass Lane will be used by individuals who are members of a protected class under the FHA.
6. Under City of Charlotte zoning regulations, sober living homes are not considered group homes.
7. Charlotte’s Zoning Ordinance defines a family as “[a]n individual, or two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption living together as a single housekeeping unit; or a group of not more than six persons not related by blood, marriage or adoption, living together as a single housekeeping unit.”
8. The sober living home environment is intended to function as a supportive living arrangement that functions like a traditional single-family home.
9. The residents must: contribute to household chores, abide by house rules, be employed, and participate in either Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous.
10. The residents of sober living facilities are treated as the “functional equivalent” of a family and, therefore, in Charlotte, as many as six (6) recovering addicts may reside together in single-family neighborhoods with no additional regulatory restrictions.

11. The applicant has requested the City waive its definition of "family" which limits the number of unrelated persons residing together in a single family dwelling to not more than six (6) to allow thirteen (13) residents in its home at 326 Bass Lane .
12. An accommodation is necessary to make specific housing available to the recovering addicts at the 326 Bass Lane home owned by Fresh Start.
13. An accommodation to allow thirteen (13) residents is not reasonable or necessary.
14. Occupation of 326 Bass Lane by more than ten (10) adults would have an impact on parking, traffic, safety, noise, and other quality of life impacts on the neighborhood, similar to a higher density zoning district, which would undermine the legitimate purposes and effect of the Zoning Ordinance.
15. However, there are not many sober living homes near the home at 326 Bass Lane that would provide alternatives in housing choice for recovering addicts in that area as indicated by Government Exhibit #23.
16. Four (4) additional residents living at 326 Bass Lane would provide the residents of the Bass Lane sober living home an equal level of benefit as other single-family homes without providing a superior advantage which is not required under the FHA as indicated by Appellant Exhibit #11.

**Conditions:**

1. Fresh Start's compliance with this decision shall be met through resident attrition.
2. Reasonable accommodation shall terminate upon Fresh Start or its affiliates ceasing to use property as a sober living home in manner described at hearing.

**Conclusion of Law:**

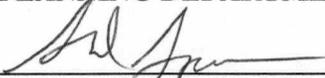
Based on the circumstances surrounding this reasonable accommodation request, an accommodation of four (4) additional residents to allow no more than ten (10) total residents would be reasonable, necessary, and would afford recovering addicts an equal opportunity to use and enjoy single-family housing at the Fresh Start home on 326 Bass Lane.

All applicable permits must be obtained from the Planning Department, which has been notified of this decision.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Loflin, Vice-Chairperson

**DECISION FILED IN THE  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Shad Spencer, Zoning Administrator

6-18-15  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

6/18/15  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Cc: Laura Budd  
Al Austin