

CAUSE NO. 2023-02423

COCHRAN, QUEEN	§	IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF
	§	
	§	HARRIS COUNTY, T E X A S
	§	
DARTS REAL ESTATE	§	125th JUDICIAL DISTRICT

ORDER OF REFERRAL FOR MEDIATION

This case is appropriate for mediation pursuant to TEX. CIV. PRAC. & REM. CODE § 154.001 *et seq.* **MORENO, NOE**, is appointed Mediator in the above case, and all counsel are directed to contact Mediator to arrange the logistics of mediation.

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Mediation is a mandatory, non-binding settlement conference, conducted with the assistance of the Mediator. Mediation is private, confidential, and privileged from process and discovery. After mediation, the Court will be advised only that the case did or did not settle. The Mediator shall not be a witness, and the Mediator's records may not be subpoenaed or used as evidence.

Fees for the mediation are to be agreed upon by the parties and the Mediator, and divided and borne equally by the parties unless agreed otherwise. Fees shall be paid by the parties directly to the Mediator, and shall be taxed as costs. Each party and counsel will be bound by the Rules for Mediation printed on the back side of this order.

Named parties shall be present during the entire mediation process, and each corporate party must be represented by a person with authority to negotiate a settlement. The mediation must be completed within 60 days prior to the trial setting. If no agreed date can be scheduled, then the Mediator shall select a date, and all parties shall appear as directed by the Mediator.

Referral to mediation is not a substitute for trial and the case will be tried as assigned if not settled. Any disputes as to fees may be submitted to the Court.

Signed May 4, 2023.



Judge KYLE CARTER

RULES FOR MEDIATION

1. **Definition of Mediation.** Mediation is a process under which an impartial person, the Mediator, facilitates communication between the parties to promote reconciliation, settlement or understanding among them. The Mediator may suggest ways of resolving the dispute, but may not impose his own judgment on the issues for that of the parties.
2. **Agreement of Parties.** Whenever the parties have agreed to mediation, they shall be deemed to have made these rules, as amended and in effect as of the date of the submission of the dispute, as part of their agreement to mediate.
3. **Consent to Mediator.** The parties consent to the appointment of the individual named as the Mediator in their case. The Mediator shall act as an advocate for resolution and shall use his best efforts to assist the parties in reaching a mutually acceptable settlement.
4. **Conditions Precedent to Serving as Mediator.** The Mediator will only serve in cases in which the parties are represented by attorneys. The Mediator shall not serve as a Mediator in any dispute in which he has any financial or personal interest in the result of the mediation. Prior to accepting an appointment, the Mediator shall disclose any circumstance likely to create a presumption of bias or prevent a prompt meeting with the parties. In the event that the parties disagree as to whether the Mediator shall serve on the basis of any of the foregoing conditions, the Mediator shall not serve.
5. **Authority of Mediator.** The Mediator does not have the authority to decide any issue for the parties, but will attempt to facilitate the voluntary resolution of the dispute by the parties. The Mediator is authorized to conduct joint and separate meetings with the parties and to offer suggestions to assist the parties achieve settlement. If necessary, the Mediator may also obtain expert advice concerning technical aspects of the dispute, provided that the parties agree and assume the expenses of obtaining such advice. Arrangements for obtaining such advice shall be made by the Mediator or by the parties, as the Mediator shall determine.
6. **Mediator Cannot Impose Settlement.** The parties understand that the Mediator will not and cannot impose a settlement in their case and they agree that a settlement, if any, must be voluntarily agreed to by the parties. The Mediator, as an advocate for settlement, will use every effort to facilitate the negotiations. The Mediator does not warrant or represent that settlement will result from the mediation process.
7. **Authority of Representatives.** PARTY REPRESENTATIVES MUST HAVE AUTHORITY TO SETTLE AND ALL PERSONS NECESSARY TO THE DECISION TO SETTLE SHALL BE PRESENT. The names and addresses of such persons shall be communicated in writing to all parties and to the Mediator.
8. **Time and Place of Mediation.** The Mediator shall fix the time of each mediation session. The mediation shall be held at the office of the Mediator or at any other convenient location agreeable to the Mediator and the parties, as the Mediator shall determine.
9. **Identification of Matters in Dispute.** Prior to the first scheduled mediation session, each party shall provide the Mediator and all attorneys of record with an Information Sheet and Request For Mediation on the form provided by the Mediator, setting forth its position with regard to the issues that need to be resolved.
10. **Privacy.** Mediation sessions are private. The parties and their representatives may attend mediation sessions. Other persons may attend only with the permission of the parties and with the consent of the Mediator.
11. **Confidentiality.** Confidential information disclosed to a Mediator by the parties or by witnesses in the course of mediation shall not be divulged by the Mediator. All records, reports, or other documents received by a Mediator while serving in that capacity shall be confidential. The Mediator shall not be compelled to divulge such records or to testify in regard to the mediation in any adversary proceeding or judicial forum. Any party that violates this agreement shall pay all fees and expenses of the Mediator and other parties, including reasonable attorney's fees, incurred in opposing the efforts to compel testimony or records from the Mediator.

The parties shall maintain the confidentiality of the mediation and shall not rely on, or introduce as evidence in any arbitral, judicial, or other proceeding: a) views expressed or suggestions made by another party with respect to a possible settlement of the dispute; b) admissions made by another party in the course of the mediation proceedings; c) proposals made or views expressed by the Mediator; or d) the fact that another party had or had not indicated a willingness to accept a proposal for settlement made by the Mediator.
12. **No Stenographic Record.** There shall be no stenographic record of the mediation process, and no person shall tape record any portion of the mediation session.
13. **No Service of Process at or near the site of the Mediation Session.** No subpoenas, summons, complaints, citations, writs, or other process may be served upon any person at or near the site of any mediation session upon any person entering, attending, or leaving the session.
14. **Termination of Mediation.** The mediation shall be terminated: a) by the execution of a settlement agreement by the parties; b) by declaration of the Mediator to the effect that further efforts at mediation are no longer worthwhile; or c) after the completion of one full mediation session, by a written declaration of a party or parties to the effect that the mediation sessions are terminated.
15. **Exclusion of Liability.** The Mediator is not a necessary or proper party in judicial proceedings relating to the mediation. Neither Mediator nor any law firm employing Mediator shall be liable to any party for any act or omission in connection with any mediation conducted under these rules.
16. **Interpretation and Application of Rules.** The Mediator shall interpret and apply these rules.
17. **Fees and Expenses.** The Mediator's daily fee shall be agreed upon prior to mediation and shall be paid in advance of each mediation day. The expenses of witnesses for either side shall be paid by the party producing such witnesses. All other expenses of the mediation, including fees and expenses of the Mediator, shall be borne equally by the parties unless they agree otherwise.