

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
COUNTY DEPARTMENT, CHANCERY DIVISION

TINA VELASCO, individually and on behalf
of other persons similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

BELMONT GROCERIES, LLC D/B/A
RICH'S FRESH MARKET,

Defendant.

Case No. 2023 CH 01077

Honorable Clare J. Quish

Judge Clare J. Quish

DEC 18 2024

Circuit Court - 2160

**AGREED ORDER GRANTING PRELIMINARY APPROVAL
OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT,
CERTIFYING SETTLEMENT CLASS, APPOINTING CLASS REPRESENTATIVE,
APPOINTING CLASS COUNSEL, AND APPROVING NOTICE PLAN**

This matter coming before the Court on Plaintiff's Unopposed Motion for and Memorandum in Support of Preliminary Approval of Class Action Settlement, good cause being shown, the Court being fully advised in the premises and having considered the papers filed by Plaintiff and reviewed *in camera* the Settlement Administrator's notice proposal,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

1. Terms and phrases in this Order shall have the same meaning as ascribed to them in the Settlement Agreement.

2. Plaintiff has moved the Court for an order preliminarily approving the settlement of the Action in accordance with the Settlement Agreement, which, together with the documents incorporated therein, sets forth the terms and conditions for a proposed settlement and dismissal of the Action with prejudice. The Court having read and considered the Settlement Agreement, the preliminary approval papers, and the Settlement Administrator's notice proposal, and having heard the parties, being fully advised in the premises, hereby preliminarily approves the Settlement Agreement in its entirety subject to the Final Approval Hearing referred to in this Order, certifies the Settlement Class defined below for settlement purposes only, appoints Class Counsel and the Class Representative, and approves of the Notice plan.

CERTIFICATION OF THE SETTLEMENT CLASS

3. For purposes of settlement only, the Court certifies the following Settlement Class as defined in the Settlement Agreement:

All individuals who used a hand-scanning timeclock while working for Defendant at any time from February 2, 2018 to August 1, 2022.

Excluded from the Class are (1) any Judge or Magistrate presiding over this action; (2) any officer or director of Defendant; (3) counsel for either party; (4) the family members, employees, and staff of anyone within exclusion (1), (2), or (3); and (5) the legal representatives, successors, or assigns of any excluded persons.

4. The Court finds, subject to the Final Approval Hearing referred to below, that the Settlement Agreement is fundamentally fair, adequate, and reasonable, and, for the purposes of settlement only, that the Settlement Class satisfies the requirements of 735 ILCS 5/2-801 to 807, specifically that: the Settlement Class is so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable; there are questions of common fact and law common to the class (*e.g.*, whether Defendant collected, captured, or otherwise obtained Plaintiff's and the Settlement Class's biometric identifiers or information, as defined by 740 ILCS 14/10; whether Defendant properly informed Plaintiff and the Settlement Class of its purposes for collecting, using, and storing their biometric information, 740 ILCS 14/15(b); whether Defendant obtained any written releases to collect, use, and store Plaintiff's and the Settlement Class's biometric identifiers or information, *id.*; whether Defendant disclosed Plaintiff's and the Settlement Class's biometric identifiers or information; whether Defendant obtained Plaintiff's and the Settlement Class's consent to the disclosure of their biometric identifiers or information; whether Defendant developed a written policy, made available to the public, establishing a retention schedule and guidelines for permanently destroying biometric information, 740 ILCS 14/15(a)); and whether Defendant intruded upon Plaintiff's and the Settlement Class's seclusion; which predominate over any questions affecting only the individual members; Class Counsel and the Class Representative will fairly and adequately protect the interest of the Settlement Class; and a class action is an appropriate method for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy.

PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF THE SETTLEMENT

5. For purposes of settlement only: (a) J. Dominick Larry of Nick Larry Law LLC is appointed Class Counsel for the Settlement Class; and (b) Tina Velasco is named Class Representative of the Settlement Class. The Court finds that Mr. Larry is competent and capable of exercising the responsibilities of Class Counsel and that Plaintiff Velasco will adequately protect the interests of the Settlement Class defined above.

6. The Court finds that, subject to the Final Approval Hearing, the Settlement Agreement is fair, reasonable, and adequate, is likely to be approved under 735 ILCS 5/2-801 to 807, and is in the best interests of the Settlement Class set forth above. The Court further finds that the Settlement Agreement substantially fulfills the purposes and objectives of the class action, and provides substantial relief to the Settlement Class without the risks, burdens, costs, or delay associated with continued litigation, trial, and/or appeal. The Court also finds that the Settlement Agreement (a) is the result of arm's-length negotiations between experienced class-action attorneys; (b) is sufficient to warrant notice of the settlement and the Final Approval Hearing to be disseminated to the Settlement Class; (c) meets all applicable requirements of law, including 735 ILCS 5/2-801 to 807; and (d) is not a finding or admission of liability by the Defendant or any other parties.

NOTICE AND ADMINISTRATION

7. The Court approves, as to form, content, and distribution, the Notice plan and all forms of Notice to the Settlement Class as set forth in the attached Exhibits A and B thereto, with Spanish translations of Exhibit A and B, and Polish and Ukrainian translations of Exhibit B, and finds that such Notice is the best practicable under the circumstances, and that the Notice complies fully with the requirements of Illinois law. The Court also finds that the Notice constitutes valid, due, and sufficient notice to all persons entitled thereto, and meets the requirements of Due Process. The Court further finds that the Notice is reasonably calculated, under all circumstances, to apprise members of the Settlement Class of the pendency of this

Action, the terms of the Settlement Agreement, and the right to object to the settlement and to exclude themselves from the Settlement Class. The Parties, by agreement, may revise the Notice in ways that are not material, or in ways that are appropriate to update those documents for purposes of accuracy or formatting for publication.

8. The Court approves the request for the appointment of Eisner Advisory Group, LLC as Settlement Administrator under the Settlement Agreement.

9. Pursuant to Section 4 of the Settlement Agreement, the Settlement Administrator is directed to send direct notice via U.S. Mail in accordance with the Notice Plan called for by the Settlement Agreement.

EXCLUSION

10. Members of the Settlement Class who wish to exclude themselves from the Settlement Class may do so if, on or before the Objection/Exclusion Deadline of 11:59 p.m. CT on March 14, 2025, they comply with the exclusion procedures set forth in the Settlement Agreement and Notice. Any members of the Settlement Class so excluded shall neither be bound by the terms of the Settlement Agreement nor entitled to any of its benefits.

11. To be valid, any request for exclusion must (a) be in writing; (b) identify the case name *Velasco v. Belmont Groceries, LLC*, Case No. 2023-CH-01077; (c) state the full name and current address of the person in the Settlement Class seeking exclusion; (d) be signed by the person(s) seeking exclusion or their authorized representative; and (e) be postmarked for delivery by mail to the Settlement Administrator before the Objection/Exclusion Deadline. Each request for exclusion must also contain a statement to the effect that "I hereby request to be excluded from the proposed Settlement Class in *Velasco v. Belmont Groceries, LLC*, Case No. 2023-CH-01077." A request for exclusion that does not include all of the foregoing information, that is sent to an address other than that designated in the Notice, or that is not postmarked or delivered to the Settlement Administrator within the time specified, shall be invalid and the persons

serving such a request shall be deemed to remain Settlement Class Members and shall be bound as Settlement Class Members by this Settlement Agreement, if approved. Any person who properly requests exclusion from the Settlement Class shall not (a) be bound by any orders or Final Judgment entered in the Action, (b) receive a Settlement Payment under this Settlement Agreement, (c) gain any rights by virtue of this Settlement Agreement, or (d) be entitled to object to any aspect of this Agreement or Final Judgment.

OBJECTIONS

12. Any Settlement Class Members who have not timely filed a request for exclusion may object to the fairness, reasonableness, or adequacy of the Settlement Agreement, or to a Final Judgment being entered dismissing the Action with prejudice in accordance with the terms of the Settlement Agreement, or to the attorneys' fees and expense reimbursement sought by Class Counsel, or to the requested incentive award to the Class Representative as set forth in the Notice and Settlement Agreement. At least 14 days prior to the Objection/Exclusion Deadline, Papers supporting the Fee Award shall be filed with the Court and made available upon request to Settlement Class Members. Settlement Class Members may object on their own or may do so through separate counsel at their own expense.

13. To object, Settlement Class Members must sign and file a written objection on or before the Objection/Exclusion Deadline of 11:59 p.m. CT on March 14, 2024. To be valid, the Class Member must present the objection in writing, which must be personally signed by the objector and must include: (a) the Settlement Class Member's full name and current address; (b) a statement that he, she, or they believes himself, herself, or themselves to be a member of the Settlement Class; (c) the specific grounds for the objection; (d) all documents or writings that the Settlement Class Member desires the Court to consider; (e) the name and contact information of any and all attorneys representing, advising, or in any way assisting the objector in connection with the preparation or submission of the objection or who may profit from the pursuit of the

objection; and (f) a statement indicating whether the objector intends to appear at the Final Approval Hearing (either personally or through counsel, who must file an appearance or seek *pro hac vice* admission). All written objections must be filed with the Court and postmarked, emailed, or delivered to Class Counsel and Defendant's Counsel no later than 11:59 p.m. CT on the Objection/Exclusion Deadline. Any Settlement Class Member who fails to timely file a written objection with the Court and notice of his, her, or their intent to appear at the Final Approval Hearing in accordance with the terms of this Section and as detailed in the Notice, and at the same time provide copies to Class Counsel and Defendant's Counsel, shall not be permitted to object to this Settlement Agreement at the Final Approval Hearing, and shall be foreclosed from seeking any review of this Settlement Agreement or Final Judgment by appeal or other means and shall be deemed to have waived his or her objections and be forever barred from making such objections in the Action or any other action or proceeding.

14. To be valid, objections must be filed with the Court and postmarked, emailed, or delivered to Class Counsel (J. Dominick Larry, Nick Larry Law LLC, 1720 W. Division St., Chicago, IL 60622, nick@nicklarry.law) and to Defendant's counsel (John C. Ochoa, Amundsen Davis, LLC, 150 N. Michigan Ave, Suite 3300, Chicago, IL 60601, jochoa@amundsendavislaw.com) at or before 11:59 p.m. CT on the Objection/Exclusion Deadline. In addition, any objections made by a Settlement Class Member who is represented by counsel must be filed through an approved e-filing vendor.

15. Settlement Class Members who fail to file and timely serve written objections in compliance with the requirements above and the Settlement Agreement shall be deemed to have waived any objections and shall be foreclosed from making any objections (whether by appeal or otherwise) to the Settlement Agreement.

16. The Final Approval Hearing shall be held before this Court via Zoom on **April 24, 2025 at 10:30 a.m.**, and in person in Courtroom 2301 of the Richard J. Daley Center, 50 W. Washington St., Chicago, Illinois 60602, to determine (a) whether the proposed settlement of the Action on the terms and conditions provided for in the Settlement Agreement is fair, reasonable, adequate and should be given final approval by the Court; (b) whether a judgment and order of dismissal with prejudice should be entered; (c) whether to approve the payment of attorneys' fees and expenses to Class Counsel; and (d) whether to approve the payment of an incentive award to the Class Representative. The Court may adjourn the Final Approval Hearing without further notice to members of the Settlement Class.

17. Class Counsel shall file papers in support of their requested Fee Award and the Class Representative's incentive award (collectively, the "Fee Petition") with the Court on or before February 28, 2025. Defendant may, but is not required to, file a response to Class Counsel's Fee Petition with the Court on or before March 14, 2025.

18. Plaintiff shall file her papers in support of final approval of the Settlement Agreement, and in response to any objections, with the Court on or before March 28, 2025. Plaintiff's motion for final approval shall include copies of all opt-outs and objections.

FURTHER MATTERS

19. If the Settlement Agreement fails to become effective, is overturned on appeal, or does not become final for any reason, the parties shall be restored to their respective positions in the Action as of the date of the signing of the Settlement Agreement.

20. *Res Judicata.* Final Approval of this Settlement will settle and resolve with finality on behalf of Plaintiff and the Settlement Class, the Action and the Released Claims against the Released Parties by the Releasing Parties in the Action. As of the Effective Date, the Settlement Agreement and the above-described Release of the Released Claims will be binding on, and will have res judicata preclusive effect in, all pending and future lawsuits or other

proceedings maintained by or on behalf of Plaintiffs and all other Settlement Class Members who do not validly and timely exclude themselves from the Settlement, and their respective predecessors, successors, affiliates, spouses, heirs, executors, administrators, agents and assigns of each of the foregoing, as set forth in the Settlement Agreement, and the Released Parties may file the Settlement Agreement and/or the Final Approval Order in any action or proceeding that may be brought against them in order to support a defense or counterclaim based on principles of res judicata, collateral estoppel, release, good faith settlement, judgment bar or reduction, or any other theory of claim preclusion or issue preclusion or similar defense or counterclaim.

IT IS SO ORDERED, December 18, 2024.

Prepared by:

s/ J. Dominick Larry
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Tina Velasco

With consent from:

s/ John C. Ochoa
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Attorney for Defendant
Belmont Groceries, LLC

ENTERED: Judge Clare J. Quish

DEC 18 2024

Circuit Court = 2160

Judge Clare J. Quish
DATE: December 18, 2024

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| Judge Clare J. Quish (312) 603-3733 ccc.chancerycalendar14@cookcountyil.gov Zoom Meeting ID: 953 7174 9534 Zoom Password: 253498 Zoom Dial-In: (312) 626-6799 |
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