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Broker's lawsuit against Miami Heat president Pat Riley settled with jury out

 Adolfo Pesquera
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 Pat Riley, Douglas Ede and Ron Weil
 Photo by A.M. Holt

 Neil Linden and Pat Riley
 Photo by A.M. Holt

 Ron Weil
 Photo by A.M. Holt

NBA Hall of Famer Pat Riley ended his legal dispute with a real estate broker, settling out of court while a Miami trial jury was in recess.

Details of the accord were not disclosed, but land broker Randy Hill was seeking \$4.5 million to \$8.8 million for what he claimed was owed on a handshake deal with the basketball legend.

"All I can really say is that it was amicably resolved," said Ron Weil, a Miami solo practitioner representing Hill.

During closing arguments, defense attorney Neil Linden said that if the jury found in favor of Hill, damages should be no more than \$2.8 million out of consideration for Riley's true costs.

Deliberated for Hours

Following a two-week trial before Miami-Dade Circuit Judge William Thomas, the jury was given the case Thursday afternoon and deliberated for more than four hours before being sent home.

The jury was later informed they did not need to return

Friday morning, Weil said.

Requests for comment from Riley, who is president of the Miami Heat; his trial attorney, Neil Linden with Yoss LLP in Coral Gables; and Riley's estate attorney, John Aldrich of Bond Schoeneck & King in Albany, New York, were not returned by deadline.

The dispute stems from Riley's \$12.5 million purchase of a 700-acre parcel from the city of Fort Myers in 1998.

Hill, who had the rights to broker the sale of the scrub land, claimed he came to an oral agreement with Riley for a percentage on each parcel sold after the land was subdivided and improved.

Riley insisted there was no oral contract and no agreement for Hill to profit after arranging the sale to Riley and AGB LLC of Florida, the company Riley relied upon to pursue the project.

Hill remained involved a few more years, and the two later parted ways.

The project prospered during the boom years in the early part of the decade and is mostly developed into residential housing and a large retail center called The Forum at Fort Myers. Riley's gross sales came to \$77 million. But in a deposition, he asserted that carrying costs consumed most, if not all, of his profit.

Argued He Had a Contract

During trial, Hill argued he had a contract, and Riley breached it. Weil argued that it was undisputed that Hill had rights to sell the land and he was asking for compensation terms appropriate to such commercial transactions.

There was no written contract at the outset at the request of Riley's lawyers because they were shielding him from an unrelated 1999 lawsuit, Hill claimed.

Linden argued Riley never agreed to multimillion-dollar deals without a written contract, and he questioned why Hill waited until 2008 to file the lawsuit after two key participants died.

"You have not heard a single witness other than the plaintiff that he had an oral agreement," Linden said in closing. "There is not a single piece of paper, nothing that you've seen, nothing that you've heard. Why? Because it does not exist. The facts really are simple."

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