

Town of Greenwich
First Selectman's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities
Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2018
9:15 a.m.
Hayton Conference Room

The meeting opened at 9:15 a.m.

Attendance:

1. Jodi Couture
2. Brita Darany von Regensburg
3. Joe Dowling
4. Florence Griffin
5. Alan Gunzburg, Co-Chair
6. Jim Heavey
7. Lise Jameson
8. Nick Mariani
9. Jazalyn Pruo
10. Lolli Ross
11. Kate Soboleva

Guest speaker: Gretchen Knauff, Executive Director, Disability Rights CT

Approval of Minutes:

A motion to accept the minutes of the July 16, 2018 meeting as written passed unanimously.

Disability Rights CT Presentation:

Gretchen Knauff, Executive Director, explained that Disability Rights CT was formed as a non-profit organization independent of state government to succeed the former office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities when it closed in June 2017. Disability Rights CT advocates, educates, investigates and litigates to advance and protect the civil rights of people with disabilities in CT. Gretchen explained the major programs under the auspices of the organization that includes information and referral, client assistance and several protection and advocacy services. Their staff is growing from a staff of 4 to eventually 14 and includes advocates and attorneys. Information materials were disseminated. The office may be contacted at 1-800-842-7303 and their web site reached at <https://www.disrightsct.org/>.

ADA Compliance Updates:

Recent elections went smoothly and there were no issues of people getting in and casting their ballots. No issues are expected in the upcoming November elections.

Update on ADA Celebration:

The event held at the new Byram Pool was well attended and very successful at showcasing the Town's commitment to making facilities accessible to all. Joe Siciliano was thanked for making the arrangements for the morning. Melissa Thomas shared her personal story of living with anxiety and depression that

was very moving and informative on behalf of our neighbors who live with invisible disabilities. The event met its goal of raising awareness of the mission and vision of this committee.

New Business:

The pending ban of plastic straws was discussed. While those present all agree this is an important environmental issue, this points to another example of how decisions are made without gaining perspective from all citizens including those who have disabilities. Plastic straws are necessary for many people who do not have sufficient motor control to drink from a cup or use alternative straws that are being suggested. Having access to this accommodation is an ADA issue.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will take place Monday, November 5, 2018 from 9:15 to 10:15am.

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