

**Commission for Accessibility  
Meeting Agenda  
Monday, September 9, 2024 5:00PM**

**Via Zoom** (access information below). Should someone need a special accommodation in order to participate in this meeting please contact Karen Gaudian at 203 807-4524.

**Policy: Commission for Accessibility meetings will be conducted under Roberts Rules of Order and all participants are expected to conduct themselves with dignity and treat all those present with respect, empathy and civility.**

Commission for Accessibility Chairman, Don Ciota, is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting hosted by Tony Philips, Town ADA Coordinator.

Topic: Ridgefield Commission for Accessibility

Time: This is a recurring meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89849746946?pwd=am1LeU11REdmU1U1N2lBakJ2QWU3UT09>

Meeting ID: 898 4974 6946

Passcode: 924263

Find your local

number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89849746946?pwd=am1LeU11REdmU1U1N2lBakJ2QWU3UT09>

**5:00 PM. Call to Order**

**Approval of Minutes:**

June 10, 2024

## **Public Comment**

### **The Process of Handling a Complaint in the Case of a Compliance-Based Disability Rights Law.**

**Origination:** a) Direct; b) Referral

**Initial Response:** Supportive, empathetic, non-judgmental, and in the case of a referral, confirmation of receipt and contact with source. Orally or in writing, repeat the details of the complaint back to the source to ensure you have correctly understood what is being described.

**Research:** Try to identify where the nature of such a complaint may be addressed in these laws. In the case of an Americans with Disabilities complaint, it may be helpful to determine whether the complaint is a Title II, state and local governments, or a Title III, public access, which includes private businesses open to the public. Such feedback can provide the source with a perspective that may assist in their seeking a resolution. Since we are not lawyers and do not offer legal advice, such information is for information only.

#### **Recommendations:**

a) Direct Contact. Compliance-Based Laws are laws which invite community discussion. The removal of physical barriers may be required, but sometimes there are alternate means of compliance that can satisfy all parties. Do not

assume an adverse reaction to a complaint, especially if the initial contact is done professionally and tactfully. An example of a letter of complaint appears below.

- b) Town Contact. The Town of Ridgefield has knowledgeable resources in the ADA Coordinator and the Commission for Accessibility who can assist individuals and businesses in obtaining information regarding compliance.
- c) Department of Justice. The DOJ is the only entity that enforces ADA compliance. A complaint can be made directly without any requirement for utilizing the recourses listed in a and b above. Complaints may be made online or in writing without having to use an attorney.

**Conclusion.** This Commission, in addition to its charter assigned role of providing advice to the Board of Selectman, can supply relevant information to help educate and inform both residents and businesses in insuring accessibility. It is a resource that that is meant to accomplish this end through discussion, mutual respect and cooperation.

**Here's a letter template addressing an ADA Title II complaint, ensuring a respectful but firm tone:**

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**[Your Name]**

[Your Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

[Email Address]

[Phone Number]

**[Date]**

**[Business Owner/Manager Name]**

[Business Name]

[Business Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

Dear [Business Owner/Manager Name],

I am writing to formally address a concern regarding a lack of accessibility at [specific location of the facility] that has affected my ability, as a person with a disability, to fully participate in [describe the everyday activity, e.g., dining, shopping, or attending an event] at your establishment. While I understand the complexities involved in managing a business, I want to emphasize that accessibility is a fundamental right protected under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

During my recent visit on [date], I encountered [describe the specific barriers, e.g., the absence of a ramp, inaccessible restrooms, lack of accessible seating, etc.]. As a result, I was unable to fully enjoy the services offered, which left me feeling excluded and unable to engage in what should have been a routine, everyday activity.

I trust that this was not your intention, but I must emphasize that the lack of appropriate accommodations poses a significant barrier to individuals with disabilities. Title II of the ADA requires public accommodations to ensure equal access for everyone, and noncompliance not only affects individuals like myself but also risks further exclusion of a substantial portion of the community.

I respectfully request that you address this issue as soon as possible to ensure your establishment meets ADA standards. By making the necessary changes, you not only comply with the law but also demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity and respect for all members of the community.

Please inform me of the steps you plan to take to resolve this matter. I would be happy to discuss any specific details that might help guide you in addressing this issue. I appreciate your attention to this concern and hope to see the necessary improvements made in the near future.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response. {A timeframe can be added here.}

Sincerely,  
[Your Full Name]  
[Your Contact Information]

{a cc can be added as an option}

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This letter communicates your concern clearly while maintaining professionalism, encouraging the business to take action while referencing their legal responsibilities under ADA Title II.

## **Adjourn**

### **Meeting Dates for 2024:**

October 7

November 18

December 6