



Legislation Text

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A Resolution of the Coral Gables Advisory Board on Disability Affairs requesting that the City of Coral Gables Commission reconsider the appointment of Justine Chichester to the Coral Gables Advisory Board on Disability Affairs.

The Board advises and provides input to City staff regarding matters affecting individuals with disabilities to support inclusion and full and effective participation of individuals with disabilities within the City of Coral Gables. The Board is made up of six (6) members to be confirmed by the Commission, with each Commissioner appointing one (1) member, and one (1) ex-officio member from the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce. Members of the Board must be permanent residents of the City unless such requirement is waived by the City Commission by a four-fifth vote of its memberships.

During the December 13, 2023, City Commission meeting there was a resolution requesting the approval of a residential waiver for Justine Chichester (nominated by Vice Mayor Anderson) to serve as a member of the Board for a two-year term, from June 1, 2023, and through May 31, 2025, and said resolution failed. The Board is requesting that the City Commission reconsider granting the residential waiver for Ms. Chichester to serve on the Board as Ms. Chichester's expertise in disability and accessibility issues would be a valuable asset to the Board.

Ms. Chichester is the Director of Development for Disability Independence Group ("DIG"). DIG is a nonprofit organization located in Coral Gables whose mission is expanding opportunities for participation, education, employment, and acceptance of persons with disabilities through advocacy, litigation, education, and training. In addition to her expertise in disability and accessibility issues, Ms. Chichester brings a unique perspective to the Board because she has been both an able-bodied person and a wheelchair user. This dual experience allows her to effectively advocate for equal access and inclusion for all individuals, regardless of their physical abilities.

The City is committed to fostering full and effective participation of individuals with disabilities within the City. Ms. Chichester's dual perspective as both an able-bodied person and a wheelchair user would enrich the Board's discussions and decision-making processes, ensuring that the needs and perspectives of individuals with disabilities are effectively represented and addressed. To that end, the City recommends that the Commission reconsider the granting of the residential waiver for Ms. Chichester.