

Norwich: Proposal could help ex-cons get city jobs

Council will hold hearing Monday

By MICHAEL GANNON

Norwich Bulletin

Posted Nov 15, 2008 @ 03:00 AM

For the City Council, it will be a bookkeeping detail. For ex-convicts, it could mean a new future.

The council Monday will set a date for a public hearing on a measure that would tweak the city's hiring process. It would move the question on past criminal convictions toward the end of the hiring and interview process.

"It allows people to consider a person's qualifications before just rejecting them," said Jacqueline Caron, the former Norwich alderwoman who founded the Connecticut Pardon Team. Caron and others are asking the city to adopt the Thinking Beyond the Box initiative.

"Sometimes people make mistakes," Caron said. "Sometimes they can turn their lives around. If you don't have a job, you are in violation of your parole or probation. And if you're on parole or probation, it can be impossible to get a job."

Caron said anyone with an interest in changing the existing ordinance will have an opportunity to speak at Monday's council meeting.

"But it is also imperative that they attend the public hearing when it is set," she said.

In other business scheduled for Monday:

The council will take up a measure to eliminate the Economic Development Commission. City Manager Alan Bergren said it is simply a matter of cleaning up Norwich's books.

"It's defunct and hasn't been manned for years," Bergren said, noting that the mayor's office

is in charge of economic development now.

The city earlier this year disbanded the Administration, Planning & Economic Development Committee. Since then, Mayor Benjamin Lathrop has held a series of public meetings with business and community leaders on subjects that included the Norwich Hospital property and Norwichtown Mall.

Independent economic development efforts include those by Rose City Renaissance, the Norwich Community Development Corp. and the Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce.

If you go

What: Norwich City Council regular meeting

When: 7 p.m., Monday

Where: Council Chambers, third floor, Norwich City Hall