

# Norwich: Pardon Team wants level hiring practices

## Group to make presentation to City Council

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By **MICHAEL GANNON**

**Norwich Bulletin**

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The city's hiring practices and the future construction of so-called active adult senior citizen housing complexes figure to be prominent Monday night at the City Council meeting.

Before its regular 7:30 p.m. meeting, the council will hear a presentation from the Connecticut Pardon Team. Founded by former Alderman Jacqueline Caron, the group helps reformed ex-convicts apply for pardons. On Monday, the group will participate in Think Outside the Box, an effort to encourage employers to look at an applicant's qualifications as well as a criminal record.

"We're not asking employers not to do background checks," Caron said Friday. "We're asking them to look at a person's qualifications before asking them to check off that box on the application asking if you've ever committed a crime. We're asking for a level playing field. Because if you've turned your life around, if your last problem was 20 years ago, right now it doesn't matter. If you check that box, you won't get an interview."

The council also will consider an ordinance proposed by Alderman Jon Jacaruso to remove portions of the zoning code that give great leeway to developers seeking multi-unit active adult housing, even zoning otherwise not approved for multifamily projects.

Jacaruso said it is more than a coincidence the measure comes on the heels of some controversial development applications, including one for 185 units at Hansen and Scotland roads.

"I've been thinking about this for a while," he said. "The applications sort of brought it to the forefront to handle sooner rather than later. I scratch my head at the notion that people can buy a house in a neighborhood with a certain character, and with the current ordinance, the saturation factor can change dramatically right next door to you."