

Norwich Commission on Persons with Disabilities  
2018 Summary of Activities

December 5, 2018

**Meetings**

As of this writing, the Commission has met ten times, January – October. A November Special Meeting was cancelled because of weather. A Special Meeting for December is scheduled for the thirteenth of the month.

**Activities in 2018**

The Commission worked closely and collaboratively with the City's ADA Coordinator, Brigid Marks; Mayor Peter Nystrom and his assistant, Bonnie Cuprak; and Ryan Thompson, Director of Public Works. Specific activities/initiatives include:

- Advocacy for improved structural accessibility (for example, lifting of sidewalk signs to comply with height requirements; identification and planned remediation of sidewalk conditions)
- Participation in REV UP, a national voting rights project, through public education, including radio appearances, local presentations, and distribution of material on voting rights;
- Drafting of and adoption by the City of effective communication policies that will assist the City in complying with its ADA obligations to people with sensory and speech disabilities;
- Hosting of two guest speakers at meetings: Julie Menders of Otis Library and Ryan Thompson;
- Drafting of a By-laws change that will allow, under limited circumstances, phone attendance at meetings (change not yet formally adopted);
- Production of new brochure
- Organization of Disability Awareness Week in October (see Summary - Appendix A for details). In preparation for this week, the Commission conducted substantial outreach, including an appearance on the radio; significant newspaper coverage; staffing of a booth at Taste of Italy; and attendance at the weekly Veterans' Coffeehouse. The City Council issued a proclamation establishing the second week of every October Disability Awareness Week in Norwich.

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**Calendar/Goals for 2019**

The Commission has submitted its 2019 calendar to the City Clerk's office for public posting. The City will establish its 2019 goals at its December meeting and will submit these goals to the City as an addendum to this Summary.

In conclusion, the Commission thanks the City Of Norwich for its exceptional support of our many activities that further municipal compliance with Title II of the ADA.

Respectfully submitted,

Elanah Sherman, Chair

**Norwich Commission for Persons with Disabilities**  
**2018 Summary of Activities, Appendix A**

**Disability Awareness Week**  
**Otis Library, 261 Main St., Norwich, CT 06360**  
**Tuesday, October 9 – Saturday, October 13, 2018**

**Tuesday, October 9**

**“Lunch & Learn: The ABCs of ADA,”** 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM, Community Room

This workshop on the Americans with Disabilities Act will be presented by longtime ADA advocate/educator Elanah Sherman. Learn the structure of the ADA and how to identify discriminatory situations through the lens of the law. Pizza will be served!

**Wednesday, October 10**

**“Resource Fair,”** 12:00 PM – 6:00 PM, Community Room

Representatives from community organizations and public agencies will be available to discuss their services and provide material.

**“Special Needs Trusts,”** 6:30 PM – 7:45 PM, Community Room

Stuart Hawkins, founder of Futures Planned, LLC and the parent of an adult child with disabilities, will address the many complexities involved in establishing a special needs trust.

**Thursday, October 11**

No events, but consider attending the non-partisan Candidates' Forum sponsored by the CT Cross-Disability Alliance at the Red Lion Hotel in Cromwell! For more information, contact Elanah at [elanahs@gmail.com](mailto:elanahs@gmail.com) or 860-614-7200.

**Friday, October 12**

**“Municipal Roundtable,”** 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM, Community Room

Norwich officials will discuss current ADA compliance initiatives and answer questions on next steps in creating a model ADA community.

**“Jazz in the Stacks,”** 7:30 PM – 9:00 PM, Otis Atrium

Concert by Blue Soul Jazz Unit, featuring Greater Hartford's Ricky Alfonso on trumpet. Funded by Eastern CT Savings Bank.

**Saturday, October 13**

**“Legislative Panel,”** 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM, Community Room

Area legislators talk about key disability-related legislation from this past session and address topics likely to come up in 2019. Want to submit a question?

Contact Elanah at [elanahs@gmail.com](mailto:elanahs@gmail.com) or 860-614-7200.

**“Woof and Work! A Service Animal Demonstration,”** 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM, Community Room

At this family event, service animal owners show what an educated animal can do (and why)!

Note: The exhibit **“Character and Characters: The Disability Rights Movement in Eastern Connecticut, 1980 – 2000,”** will be on display in the Community Room from October 2 – October 31. This exhibit, first installed in the library in 2010, celebrates the many Eastern Connecticut residents who contributed in vital ways to the establishment and protection of civil rights for people with disabilities.

All events are free! For material in alternative format, please contact Elanah Sherman at [elanahs@gmail.com](mailto:elanahs@gmail.com) or 860-614-7200. For sign language interpretation, please contact Julie Menders before October 2 at [jmenders@otislibrarynorwich.org](mailto:jmenders@otislibrarynorwich.org) or 860-889-2365, x 128.

Disability Awareness Week is sponsored by the Norwich Commission on Persons with Disabilities, with the essential support of the City of Norwich Office of the Mayor, Eastern Connecticut Savings Bank, Norwich Public Utilities, and Otis Library.