



NH Governor's Commission on Disability

## **ACCESSIBILITY SPECIALIST UPDATE 5.16.18**

### **ACCESS FOR ALL IS A CHALLENGE WITH HISTORICAL BUILDING RENOVATION**

**Concord, NH**--"It's a challenge, it demands creativity, and some issues are particular to New England." That's how Colleen Durkin-Blackburn describes her work as the Governor's Commission on Disability's Accessibility Specialist.

"There's a wonderful story that I like to tell about an historical building in Effingham, NH that I was involved in," said Durkin-Blackburn. "I was contacted by the historical preservation society, which was looking to make some renovations that included bathrooms and more. We worked together and they were able to make the renovations they desired."

Renovating a historical building has its challenges under any circumstance, but when it means bringing renovations into compliance with codes and standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act, it can be a huge task.

Colleen Durkin-Blackburn provides guidance about codes and suggests resources which may help decision making on everything from door widths to ramps, and more.

Sometimes, it takes a creative use of resources to make sure that all is compliant with current standards.

Think about it. Some historical buildings have out houses, wide plank flooring that's gouged, stairs made out of boulders, cobblestone pathways, and toilets with chain pulls. This is where Colleen's guidance may be useful.

"Equal access is our goal, and if I can assist through education in achieving that goal, then mission accomplished," said Durkin-Blackburn.

For questions regarding architectural accessibility contact: [colleen.durkin-blackburn@gcd.nh.gov](mailto:colleen.durkin-blackburn@gcd.nh.gov) or 603.271.2773.

#