



CITY COMMISSION on VETERANS AFFAIRS MEETING MINUTES

MAY 21, 2018 at 3:00 PM

2805 E COMMERCE ST, SAN ANTONIO, TX 78203
CLAUDE BLACK COMMUNITY CENTER

Commission Present:	Richard Delgado, Jr., Chairman, <i>Mayoral</i> ; James J. Devno, <i>District 2</i> ; John A. Rodriguez, <i>District 3</i> ; Juanita Sepulveda, <i>District 4</i> ; Alfredo Dominguez, Vice Chairman, <i>District 6</i> ; Ramon Gonzales, <i>District 7</i> ; James Pobanz, <i>District 8</i> ; Timothy A. Farrell, <i>District 9</i> ;
Commission Absent:	Cris Vieyra, Jr., <i>District 1</i> ; Matthew Scott, <i>District 10</i>
Staff Present:	Maj. Gen. Juan Ayala (ret.), <i>Director of Military and Veterans Affairs</i> ; Lt. Col. Karen Rolirad (ret.), <i>Deputy Director of Military and Veterans Affairs</i> ; SFC Edward Brown (ret.), <i>Senior Management Analyst, Office of Military and Veterans Affairs</i> ; Cecily Hope Pretty, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
Others Present:	William “Cruz” Shaw, <i>District 2 Councilmember</i>

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Richard Delgado, Jr. called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Delgado led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Roll Call

Chairman Delgado called the roll, noting the absence of Commissioners Vieyra and Scott.

Citizens to be Heard

No citizens were present to speak.

Information Items

Message from District 2 Councilman William H. “Cruz” Shaw III

Councilmember Shaw welcomed Commissioners to the Claude Black Community Center and provided an overview of the facility’s services. He expressed the importance of communicating the availability of services and thanked the Commission for their work to share information with veterans. He asked for continued cooperation to help the local community.

No action was required.

Update for Hidden Heroes Ceremony

Lieutenant Colonel Karen Rolirad thanked everyone for their assistance with the Hidden Heroes Ceremony. She stated that the event was well-attended with several service providers available. She noted that staff planned to organize a similar event annually and Councilmember Brockhouse had expressed interest in hosting at the Alicia Treviño Lopez Senior Center again in Fall 2018.

Major General Juan Ayala expressed his satisfaction with the role of the Commission in organizing the event. He stated that he communicated with City Leadership to indicate that the Commission should be given more responsibility and independence. He noted the high level of initiative and collaboration among current Commissioners following discussion by previous City Leadership to sunset the Commission. He stated that he would provide a video of the Hidden Heroes Ceremony to the Mayor to demonstrate the Commission's success as an Advisory Board.

Commissioner Timothy A. Farrell asked of the previous Mayor's concerns about the Commission. Gen. Ayala replied that there were issues reaching a quorum and communication between Commissioners and Councilmembers was lacking.

Commissioner Juanita Sepulveda asked for attendance information to set future goals for improvements and expressed concern that the event was not sufficiently advertised. Gen. Ayala stated that they would increase notifications and online information for future events.

No action was required.

Update Commission Ordinance and Bylaws

Chairman Delgado stated that he received a draft version of updates to the Commission bylaws based on recommendations from Commissioners, OMVA Staff, and the City Attorney's Office. He noted that an Ordinance authorizing the changes would go before the full City Council for approval.

Gen. Ayala asked Commissioners to speak to their Councilmembers regarding the Ordinance and encourage them to approve it. He expressed the importance of the updates and noted that they required approval by the Governance Council Committee prior to City Council consideration.

Chairman Delgado stated that the updates would include the ability to select alternates, to create business cards, and to communicate through social media outlets.

Commissioner Farrell asked if the Ordinance was still open for revisions. Chairman Delgado replied that it was finalized but issues of great importance could be considered if necessary. Commissioner Farrell expressed the importance of balancing prescriptive legal protections with flexibility to meet community needs.

No action was required.

Approval of the Minutes of March 19, 2018

Chairman Delgado stated that he had not received the minutes for review. Commissioner Sepulveda moved to review the minutes of the City Commission on Veterans Affairs meeting of March 19, 2018 at the following meeting. Commissioner Farrell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by those present.

Information Items

Vacant Seat

Chairman Delgado encouraged Commissioners to generate applicant interest in the vacant District 5 vacancy.

No action was required.

Announcements – New Business

Coordinating Events

Chairman Delgado expressed his support for the Commission coordinating events. He asked for advance communication regarding events the Commission may be interested in attending. He noted his disappointment that the Commission was not mentioned as a resource during the Hidden Heroes Ceremony and asked that it be recognized when members attended veteran-related events.

Gen. Ayala encouraged Commissioners to communicate with their Councilmembers to ensure the Commission is mentioned at events.

Commissioner Farrell spoke of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation and their role in supporting the military community. He asked for a list of Dole Fellows and Hidden Heroes Ceremony attendees so the Commission could collaborate with them on future efforts.

No action was required.

Debrief on District 9 Veterans Town Hall

Commissioner Farrell thanked Gen. Ayala, Col. Rolirad, and Chairman Delgado for attending the District 9 Veterans Town Hall. He stated that uniting the veteran community and veteran service providers was a priority for Councilmember Courage. He highlighted the activities of TXServes as a clearinghouse for military and veterans' affairs services. He noted that their system streamlined service provision by utilizing the same online application for all service providers. He stated that the Good Samaritan Veterans Outreach & Transition Center (VOTC) at St. Philip's College also provided service referrals through in-person interactions for those who preferred not to use a computer. He noted the importance of being able to make effective referrals to said organizations as well as the ability to track individuals through the conclusion of service provision. He stated that feedback from the Town Hall indicated support for panel discussions in addition to presentations.

Commissioner Sepulveda expressed the importance of consistency in talking points among Commissioners and noted her support for future panel discussions to improve the quality of community interactions.

No action was required.

Providing Number of Veterans Served

Chairman Delgado expressed the importance of tracking the number of interactions with veterans to connect them with services and following up to ensure their needs are met. He stated that Commissioners should meet with their Councilmembers during months without Commission meetings and prepare a report on subjects discussed and desired goals or outcomes. He suggested a Commission Retreat to plan for the remainder of the year and to set long-term goals.

No action was required.

Debrief Military Appreciation Weekend

Col. Rolirad stated that attendance was steady at events on both days of Military Appreciation Weekend. She noted difficulty with press coverage due to conflicting Tricentennial Events on May 5th which may have impacted attendance. She stated that scheduled events and performances were executed well. She noted large attendance at Military Appreciation Weekend Events at the Alamo. She stated that she received positive feedback from Tricentennial Leadership as well as the Duke and Duchess of Bejar. She noted the high level of professionalism among participating Military Officers for ensuring compatibility and cohesion between all participating branches and groups.

Gen. Ayala commended Col. Rolirad for her efforts over the previous year to ensure a successful weekend. He noted 121 press reports covering the weekend's activities.

No action was required.

1st Annual Veterans Day 2018 Resource Fair & Block Party

Chairman Delgado stated that the 1st Annual Women Veterans Day would be held on June 15, 2018 at Koehler Pavilion. He noted that Commissioner Sepulveda had been instrumental in organizing the event. He stated that giveaways would be available while supplies lasted. He noted RSVPs from 400 female veterans and encouraged Commissioners to provide assistance. He thanked Gen. Ayala and Col. Rolirad for assisting in the venue rental.

Col. Rolirad provided an overview of other upcoming events in Summer 2018 such as the Army International Ball, American Spirit Relay Run, and Military Medicine Month.

No action was required.

Announcements – Reports

Districts

Commissioner James Devno stated that he met with three veterans who were in need of services and spoke of referrals to VOTC. He noted that he kept in contact with his Councilmember, who was supportive of the Commission.

Commissioner John A. Rodriguez stated that he met with five veterans and was able to follow through on service provision. He invited Commissioners to the Harlandale Independent School District Memorial Day Ceremony and the Medal of Honor Recipient Remembrance Ceremony. He reminded Commissioners that they served as representatives of their Councilmembers and should conduct themselves accordingly.

Commissioner Sepulveda stated that she had served 86 females and 17 males through the PTSD Foundation of America with referrals to TXServes and follow-ups to ensure registration. She noted that her foundation assisted veterans with transport to Houston for necessary services. She stated that they provided financial counseling through partner organizations. She noted outreach to local high school to provide education regarding Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. She highlighted her foundation's Military and Veteran Events in June 2018.

Commissioner Ramon Gonzales stated that he interacted with 27 veterans and family members for homelessness prevention and housing services.

Commissioner James Pobanz stated that he could not provide exact numbers because he was employed in veteran services provision. He expressed concern with the level of coordination with his Councilmember and stated he would continue working to push service projects forward.

Commissioner Farrell stated that he served 27 attendees at the District 9 Veterans Town Hall and noted efforts to get them through the clearinghouse process. He stated that Councilmember Courage's goal was to be more attuned to the needs of military and veteran families in District 9. He noted that they would develop an outreach, contact, and tracking strategy. He stated that Councilmember Courage organized a District 9 Veterans Advisory Council to increase feedback from various demographics. He noted that they would utilize existing Neighborhood Associations to set up presentations on veteran services.

No action was required.

Vice Chair

Vice Chairman Alfredo Dominguez stated that Councilmember Brockhouse was very supportive of the Commission's efforts and had offered financial assistance for future events. He asked for clarification as to whether the District 5 vacancy could be filled by a non-District resident. He stated that he assisted a veteran with property maintenance and setting an appointment to get an identification card. He invited Commissioners to VFW Post 76 for Memorial Day and Flag Day. He noted that Governor Greg Abbott would attend on Flag Day and encouraged Commissioners to invite their Councilmembers. He asked Commissioners to provide suggestions for additional service providers to be listed on the OMVA Website.

Chair

Chairman Delgado thanked Commissioners for their service and encouraged them to continue their work. He expressed the importance of coordination prior to event attendance to ensure members did not violate the Texas Open Meeting Act. He stated that he met with Catholic Charities and they had many available resources for veterans upon referral.

Col. Rolirad suggested postponing the July 7th Commission meeting until August due to City Council's July hiatus. Vice Chairman Dominguez asked Commissioners to hold the meeting on their calendars until a decision was made.

No action was required.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Chairman Delgado adjourned the meeting at 4:12 pm.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Cecily Hope Pretty, Office of the City Clerk*