

**COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
MEETING MINUTES**

A Regular Meeting of the Veterans Affairs Commission was held at the Frost Bank Tower,
100 W. Houston, 19th floor Training Room, San Antonio, Texas 78205 on Tuesday July 16, 2013 at 3:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cris Vieyra

James Devno

John A. Rodriguez (absent)

Albert Hinojosa (absent)

Alfredo Dominguez

Juan Reyna

Manuel Barajas (absent)

Richard Jones

Mona Meikle

Stephen Spear

John Esquivel

CITY STAFF: Sandra Bagwell

GUESTS: Mike Sculley

Tony Canez

1. Call to Order

Mr. Esquivel, Chair called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Members and City Staff recited the Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of the Minutes from the October 30, 2012 meeting.

Mr. Devno motioned for approval and Mr. Jones seconded the approval and the members unanimously approved the minutes.

Mr. Esquivel asked about the request for a City of San Antonio Flag by the USS San Antonio and if there was a certain size flag that they wanted. Mr. Devno stated that the ship requested a donation of a flag to fly on board their ship. Mr. Esquivel also asked about the funding for the flag Ms Bagwell stated that if there were funds available in the August time frame, they would purchase the flag. Mr. Devno was able to secure a military discount at Dixie Flags.

4. Citizens to be heard

No one signed up to speak.

5. Action Items

- a. Update on the Medal of Honor memorial, presented by Mike Sculley, Bexar County.

Mr. Spear introduced Mike Sculley who gave an update to the members regarding the Medal of Honor memorial that the county was building at the Tobin Center. They received clarification from the Medal of Honor Foundation as to which Medal of Honor to depict as each branch of the service had their own medal and it had changed through the years. It was determined that current medal in the memorial would be appropriate and would be used. He also stated that Mr. Spear did such a good job researching the recipients that very little needed to be changed. Mr. Spear had originally separated the recipients in categories and there was discussion among Bexar County officials regarding the different categories. It was decided to have one category and put the recipients in chronological order. Mr. Sculley also mentioned that the memorial would have lighting.

Mr. Sculley also stated that he would like to involve the VAC with the planning of the groundbreaking ceremony and the unveiling ceremony. His first thought was to schedule the groundbreaking ceremony close to Veterans Day and has been talking to Mr. Vieyra. He will continue to talk to him, Mr. Spear and Mr. Esquivel to get their ideas and will send them the final invite and schedule when everything is confirmed.

As for the unveiling ceremony, it was suggested that Flag Day would be a good time to have the ceremony depending if the project progressed as scheduled.

Mr. Jones asked if there were any surviving family members of the Medal of Honor recipients. Mr. Spear mentioned that he knew of three. Mr. Vieyra also knew of one recipient that might still be alive and living in San Antonio, he said he would make some phone calls and find out.

Ms. Meikle asked for clarification regarding the separate categories that Mr. Spear organized the recipients into. Per Mr. Sculley, there were separated by who was born in San Antonio, who entered the service in San Antonio, and who contributed to the San Antonio community.

- b. City Council Consideration Request concerning Veteran Owned Small Business Program, at the request of Councilman Soules, presented by Mr. Stephen Spear.

Mr. Spear stated that Councilman (CM) Soules requested a meeting with him to explain this program. CM Soules stated that he thought veterans weren't getting the same consideration as other women and minority small business owners. He asked that the members looked at the ordinance and to talk to their councilperson.

- c. Discussion about the proposed ordinance regarding discrimination against the LGBT and veteran community, at the request of Councilman Soules, presented by Mr. Stephen Spear

Mr. Spear stated that Councilman Soules wanted to reach out to the Veterans Affairs Commission to see what they thought with being part of this ordinance.

Mr. Esquivel stated that the communication that Mr. Spear had with Councilman Soules was outstanding. He also mentioned that Mr. Devno experienced the same with Councilwoman Taylor.

6. Member Announcements

Mr. Vieyra stated that he was almost finished with preparations for his Veterans Day celebration and plans to invite the City Council members and will see if any would like to participate. Once it's complete, he will forward an agenda to the VAC. Mr. Esquivel asked if Mr. Vieyra if he worked with the Celebrate America's Military from the Chamber of Commerce as far as coordinating the event. Mr. Vieyra clarified that he worked with the District 20 VFW organization and he commands 20 VFW posts, of which there are about 13,800 members. He would like to meet with the Chamber to coordinate activities. Mr. Esquivel stated that he would put him in touch with the Chamber's Military Affairs Committee.

Mr. Dominguez stated that he didn't have anything to report from Councilman Lopez' office.

Mr. Jones asked that Mr. Esquivel pass his information to the Chamber's Military Affairs Committee also as he organizes a Marine Corp Birthday Lunch the Friday before Veterans Day and there had been some conflicts in the past. He thinks that opening a line of communication would be beneficial.

Mr. Vieyra asked what events that Mr. Jones helps Coordinate. Mr. Jones stated that in addition to the Marine Corp Lunch along with a Fiesta event. He represents the Marine Corp Coordinating Council which represents active duty Marines along with other Marine Corp veterans groups.

Mr. Devno reported that the Good Samaritans Veterans Outreach Program at St. Philip's College has found funds to renovate the building. He anticipates that they will open sometime this fall. He is on their naming committee to determine a name for the building along with Mr. Rodriguez. He said that he would reach out to the Buffalo Soldier organization to see if they have any names. Once this center is opened, he will work as a volunteer to help veterans get back in school.

Mr. Esquivel asked if Mr. Erickson was working on this center. Mr. Devno stated that he didn't think so. He did see Mr. Erickson and Ms. Franklin at the Veterans Land Board event the previous weekend.

Mr. Spear stated that he didn't have anything additional to add.

Ms. Meikle said that she didn't have anything from Councilwoman Chan but she wanted to give an update about the Wounded Warrior event at the Rodeo. This event provides each Wounded Warrior that attends a steak dinner, free parking, the chair he sits on during the rodeo. There have been presentations of homes at the Rodeo for the Wounded Warrior. Mr. Devno also stated that they were also given a hat and belt buckle. She is asking the members to ask their council representative to see if they could purchase a ticket. Ms. Meikle stated that Mr. Devno was able to secure five tickets from Councilwoman Taylor last year. Mr. Esquivel asked if CW Taylor personally purchased the tickets or did it come from the City. Mr. Devno stated that it came from her District 2 budget. Mr. Spear clarified that each councilperson has a discretionary budget that would cover items such as this.

Mr. Reyna stated that he had nothing new to report from District 7.

Mr. Devno commented that Mr. Rodriguez does an annual ceremony for a Medal of Honor recipient that is buried here in San Antonio. He is asking that the VAC members attend the ceremony.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:18 p.m. The next meeting will take place October 15, 2013 at 3 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Bagwell, Office of Military Affairs*

*Please visit the Veterans Affairs Commission website: www.sanantonio.gov/oma
Audio recording is available at the Office of Military Affairs by written request to: sandra.bagwell@sanantonio.gov*

Attachments: None