

**VETERANS MEMORIAL ISLAND SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, February 1, 2023 – 9:30 a.m.
City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida**

PRESENT: Chairman, John Matthews; Members: Melissa Arndt, Carolyn Lange and Michelle Dale **Also Present:** City Attorney, John Turner (arrived at 10:21 a.m.) and Deputy City Clerk, Sherri Philo

Excused Absence: Curtis Paulisin

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Matthews called today's meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Matthews led the Committee members and the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Mr. Matthews added to today's agenda, service for a deceased veteran and an update on the quote for replacing the cenotaph for Mr. Loudermilk.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) January 4, 2023

Mrs. Daley referred to page one (1) and page two (2) of the January 4, 2023 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee minutes. She stated that "Mr. Hide" should be "Mr. Hyde."

Mr. Matthews made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2023 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting as corrected. Mrs. Lange seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A) Chairman

Mr. Matthews called for nominations for Chairman of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee.

Mrs. Lange nominated Mr. John Michael Matthews for Chairman of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee.

There were no other nominations.

Mr. John Michael Matthews was unanimously appointed Chairman of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee.

B) Vice Chairman

Mrs. Lange nominated Mrs. Michelle Dale for Vice Chairman of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee.

There were no other nominations.

Mrs. Michelle Dale was unanimously appointed Vice Chairman of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Tony Young reported that a Jimmy Buffet tribute concert will be held on February 18th at the Elks Lodge and the proceeds will go towards helping defer the costs for the World War II Tribute.

6. NEW BUSINESS

None

7. OLD BUSINESS

A) Update on the Bridge Replacement

Mr. Matthews asked when they replace the bridge, would they also be replacing the gates.

Mr. Richard Mutterback, Assistant Director of Public Works, said if it is part of the bridge structure it will be replaced. He reported that they found oyster beds at the base of the bridge, so oyster relocation is required prior to the start of construction. He reported that Shoreline Foundation, Inc. was the lowest bidder at \$1.498 million and this would be going before the City Council at their February 6th meeting for approval. Once the City Council awards the contract and the contract is in place they would then start the procurement process. Their current schedule, if they receive all the materials, is to start demolition on May 29th. He noted that May 29th is Memorial Day.

Mr. Matthews reported that they are planning to hold the Memorial Day Service at the pavilion.

Mr. Mutterback stated that if they were to start demolition on May 29th their completion date is estimated in October, 2023. He noted that demolition would not start until they have all the materials needed for the project.

Mr. Matthews said a completion date in October could easily get moved into November, which is the month of Veterans Day.

Mr. Mutterback said they might need alternate plans for the Veterans Day Ceremony as well.

Mrs. Barbara Ruddy said if they have to have all the materials here prior to the beginning of the project, she was certain that it would be completed by Veterans Day.

B) Maintenance of the Island and Ability to Fly the Flag at Half Mast During Construction.

Discussed under item A)

C) Update on the Merchant Marines Monument

Mr. Ross Rowlinson referred to the information on the U.S. Merchant Marine monument that was placed on the dais before each Committee member (attached to the original minutes). He said the information includes an update on the text for the plaque for the Merchant Marine monument that they were proposing, along with some additional information that they need to get approved before it goes before the City Council. He asked that the Committee look over the verbiage for the plaque.

Mr. Matthews said that the location has not been chosen yet, but they have asked that it be located near the water and not tucked behind any mangroves. He said that he walked the Island yesterday and the spot between the Air Force and Marine Corp monuments was open and was a possibility.

Mr. Mutterback said the Committee could make a recommendation, but City staff has to maintain the Island so they would need to have some say in the final approval.

Mr. Matthews said they would need to table the location for now with the hope that they could approve it at their next meeting. This would give the Committee members a chance to walk the Island and bring back their suggestions. He said there seems to be enough space on the west side of the Island between the Air Force and the Marine Corp monuments.

Mr. Mutterback said they did look at that. He said most of the monuments have a little sidewalk that tees off with two (2) benches at the end. He said in the past City staff has built the pedestals and the base for the smaller monuments, as well as provide the benches. But as far as payment for the materials, such as the concrete, that would come from either this Committee or the organization. He thought that what Mr. Rowlinson was asking for today was approval from the Committee so they could bring it before the City Council for their approval. He didn't see why

the Committee couldn't do that even though the location has not been finalized. He asked Mr. Rowlinson if they were on the February 6th City Council agenda.

Mr. Rowlinson said that he was not sure how to proceed with going before the City Council.

Mr. Mutterback said if he understood Mr. Rowlinson correctly, he was going to go before the City Council at their February 6th to present this.

Mr. Matthews suggested that the Committee members walk the Island and then they can discuss possible locations at their next meeting.

Mr. Rowlinson referred to the information provided to the Commission and stated that they were not pushing anyone in any direction, but they would like to have the monument in any of the four (4) areas shown on the map.

Mr. Matthews referred to the map and stated that area three (3) was out because there were too many things already there.

Mr. Rowlinson said they were trying to get approval on the verbiage on the plaque. He said that he would be okay with having the monument without the plaque.

Mrs. Lange felt the information about the Merchant Marines needed to be on the monument.

Mr. Rowlinson asked the Commission for their approval on the verbiage.

Mrs. Lange made a motion to approve the verbiage. Ms. Arndt seconded the motion.

Mrs. Barbara Ruddy referred to the statement, "*9,521 U. S. Mariners perished in WWII from 1939-1945 the highest loss of any other U. S. military branch.*" She felt that needed to be clarified.

Mr. Rowlinson explained that was per capita.

Mrs. Ruddy said that she would just state the number of lives lost.

Mr. Tony Young said the intent was that a memorial would be in recognition for Merchant Marine members that gave their lives in WWII. This expands that. He said if it is too wordy it would detract people from focusing on it. He said that this approval would be just for the wording for the memorial. The discussion on the location still needs to come back before the Committee for their recommendation.

Mr. Matthews said they also run things by the Veterans Council for their input. He felt that they should table this until their next meeting. He did not know if they were ready to approve this at this time.

Mrs. Ruddy said that she would move the number of those who perished up to the second paragraph so it would state, *“We dedicate this monument to those 9,521 U.S. Mariners who have perished during military duties...”*

Mr. Michael Hyde, Chief Engineer, retired U. S. Merchant Marine, stated that during WWII the U. S. Merchant Marines had the highest loss of life per capita. The next highest was the U.S. Marine Corp. He said that he would like to lose the front plaque because it is self-explanatory and it matches the other five (5) monuments that are on the Island. As to the location of the monument, he would prefer location one (1) or two (2) with the preference on location one (1). He said they would clean up the verbiage if they have to have it at all.

Mr. Matthews felt that the plaque was too wordy and it was a good point on if they need the plaque at all. He did not think they were prepared to vote on this today.

Mr. Hyde said that he would prefer not to have the plaque.

Mr. Rowlinson thought that he heard from someone that there was going to be a way to get history, such as having a QR code on each monument where people could use their phones to get the history.

Mr. Matthews said that he did not think that was in the works yet, but it has been mentioned.

Mrs. Dale thought that having a QU code was an excellent suggestion.

Mr. Rob Medina, Mayor of the City of Palm Bay, was encouraged with a QR code because it was the way of the future. He said that everyone is using it and it doesn't take much of an effort. Not only could it be on each monument, but it could also wrap everything together. He felt that the ratio should be stated in the QR code because it is an important piece of information. He said Merchant Mariners from WWII died at a higher rate and they did it in support of all the military branches. He felt this was an important critical component for information and education that they want to pass on to the generations after us. He said QR codes are the way of the future. He was sure that the City Council could work together to establish a staff person to create the QR code. He felt that it would enhance the children that are coming to be able to flip on a QR code to get the history. He was encouraged about what was occurring on the Island because they were looking into the future. That it was not just for us, but for future generations.

Mr. Matthews said there was a motion to approve the verbiage, but a few things have happened since that motion. He asked the Committee members if they were ready to approve this.

Mrs. Lange said they need to table this after all the discussion that they have had and address it at their next meeting.

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, said they have a motion on the floor so the procedure is if they want to amend the motion there needs to be amendment offered. Then they could act on the motion as amended. However, if it is the will of Committee to table this matter, a motion to table could also be made at the same time.

Mrs. Lange made a motion that they table this item. Ms. Dale seconded the motion.

Mr. Turner said that would take priority. He said if they want to consider this to their next meeting, they could table it to a date certain.

Mrs. Lange said they would table this item to their next meeting.

Mr. Turner said so the motion is to table this matter to their next meeting, which is March 1, 2023.

The motion passed unanimously.

D) Update on the Stage and World War II Tribute

Mr. Tony Young gave a brief update on the WWII Tribute. He reported that Mrs. Sharon Sexton has agreed to be the artist that would provide the mosaic tiles for the ribbons that would be on display at the rear of the WWII Tribute. He said the civic engineering plan has been completed and the work order from City staff has been approved. He said that things were moving along very well. He said it was appropriate for them to give the City Council an update on the Tribute at their second meeting in February.

8. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

A) Offer from the Garden Club

Mr. Matthews reported that they received an offer from the Garden Club that they would like to plant plants where they are needed on the Island.

B) Add on item – Request for the Use of the Veteran's Memorial Island Sanctuary

Mr. Matthews reported that the family of Mr. Roger Wayne Butland would like to hold a Memorial Service on the Island on Monday, February 13, 2023.

Mrs. Dale made a motion to approve the event. Ms. Arndt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

9. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mrs. Dale thanked everyone in the community who participated in the walk-a-thon last month. She reported that they were able to donate \$67,000 toward their causes for people who are struggling with PTSD.

Mrs. Dale reported that the Vero Beach High School Band would be holding their 30th Anniversary Red, White, and Blue Concert on April 2nd and April 3rd.

Mrs. Dale reported that she currently serves as President of the American Gold Star Mothers of the State of Florida and they would be holding their Department Convention in Vero Beach on May 6, 2023.

A) Add on item – Cenotaph Replacement for James Ellis Loudermilk.

Mr. Matthews reported that they received an estimate of \$200 to replace the cenotaph for Mr. Loudermilk.

Mr. Matthews made a motion to approve the cenotaph replacement for James Ellis Loudermilk. Mrs. Lange seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mrs. Lange reported that about a month ago someone put a big water bowl on the Island for dogs and she removed the bowl because dogs were not allowed on the Island.

Mr. Rowlinson asked if it was possible for the Committee to consider today whether or not they need to have a plaque on the Merchant Marine monument.

Mr. Matthews said that he was not ready to vote on this today. He felt that they needed to do a little more research on it.

Ms. Arndt thought as long as it looked like the other monuments, she did not think it would be an issue if there was not an informational plaque.

Mr. Turner said if it is the will of the Committee to reconsider that at this point, they need a motion to bring it back for consideration at this time.

Mrs. Lange made a motion to consider bringing this matter back.

Mr. Turner said so the motion is to bring this item back at this time for consideration by the Committee as a whole to have discussion and to open it back up for public comment.

Mrs. Lange said that is correct.

Ms. Arndt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Rowlinson said to clarify, all they were asking the Committee today was if they could agree to remove the plaque completely and not discuss the verbiage. If they could agree to that they would be agreeing that there would not be a plaque.

Mrs. Lange made a motion to pass that.

Mr. Turner asked for clarification on the motion.

Mrs. Lange said the motion is that they follow through with what they just heard and that they are in agreement that there will be a monument exactly like everything else there, this is permission for the Mariners that there will be a monument and they are not going to have a plaque with all the information. It is going to be uniform with everything that is already on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary.

Mrs. Lange said the other things, such as the QR codes would be revisited at another time. The conversation was to grant permission today.

The motion passed unanimously.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) March 1, 2023

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee will be held on Wednesday, March 1, 2023 at 9:30 a.m., in the City Hall, Council Chambers.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

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