

**VETERANS MEMORIAL ISLAND SANCTUARY  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES  
Wednesday, February 5, 2020 – 10:00 a.m.  
City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida**

**PRESENT:** Chairman, John Michael Matthews, Vice Chairman, Joel Herman; Members: Barbara Fallon, Curtis Paulisin, Alternate Member #1, Sylvester McIntosh, and Alternate Member #2, Peggy Lyon **Also Present:** City Attorney, John Turner, Assistant Recreation Director, Patty Howard, Assistant Public Works Director, Don Dexter, and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

**Excused Absence:** Don Wickstrand

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Matthews called today's meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Committee members and the audience joined together in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A) January 8, 2020**

**Mr. Herman made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2020 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting. Ms. Fallon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Matthews announced that they received a letter from Mrs. Michelle Dale, President of the Gold Star Mothers Indian River County Chapter, regarding a Gold Star Grove nomination (attached to the original minutes). She planned to attend today's meeting, but she became ill.

Mr. Tony Young, Mayor, stated that Mrs. Dale asked him to stand in for her and speak with the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee on a request she has. He explained that last Veterans Day the Gold Star Grove was dedicated on Veteran Memorial Island Sanctuary for the Gold Star Veterans. Last Memorial Day eight (8) of the Gold Star Grove trees were dedicated to Veterans that have given their lives in service to our Country and two (2) trees remain undesignated. He stated that Mr. Philip Canal approached Mrs. Dale and stated that his uncle lost his life in an accident during World War II. She received all the military records on Mr. Joseph M. Canalichio and she is requesting that the Committee endorse the Gold Star Mothers recommendation that one (1) of the trees be dedicated to Mr. Canalichio.

Mr. Paulisin asked where was Mr. Canalichio from. Mr. Young replied that he was from Pennsylvania.

Mr. Paulisin asked what was the precedent they set for the Gold Star Grove. Mr. Young explained that the intent of the Gold Start Grove is to give families who moved to Indian River County the opportunity to recognize loved ones who lost their lives while in the service by placing a plaque at one (1) of the trees. The constraining factor is that the markers are temporary and when the wood pedestal deteriorates, the Gold Star Mothers can extend that tree to another Indian River County family.

Mr. Matthews stated that the Canalichios' are a very patriotic family and he does not object to this request.

Mr. Young said that the Gold Star Mothers understand what Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary is about and they will protect it. Between the discretion of the Gold Star Mothers and the Veteran Memorial Island Committee, they can be confident that the intent of Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary will continue. There will never be an occasion where the Island would not be in accord with what Mr. Alex MacWilliam and the Commission would want.

Mrs. Lyon said that based on the wording of the current Resolution, it looks like they are covered. She read the Section pertaining to the Gold Star Grove from the City Resolution (on file in the City Clerk's office). She said it focuses on the family that lives in Vero Beach and not where the Veteran resided.

Mr. Paulisin said that is what it sounds like to him. He just wanted to make sure before they moved forward.

Mr. Matthews said that if Mrs. Dale and the Gold Star Mothers are recommending this, then he thinks they should approve it.

Mr. Young stated that all eight (8) of the other Veterans recognized on the Gold Star Grove trees did not live here when they entered the service, but their families are here.

Mr. Matthews stated that they are only talking about ten small markers. He said that maybe it is time to have a monument for the Gold Star Families like they have in other communities.

Mr. Young agreed that there are opportunities for monuments to recognize others on the Island, such as the Gold Star Families, the Merchant Marines, etc.

Ms. Fallon asked if overtime, will the Veterans being recognized at the trees be changed. Mr. Young replied yes, they can be. He said the permanent cenotaph markers are for those who were Indian River County residents when they entered the service.

Mr. Young said he is asking the Commission to approve the application submitted by Mrs. Dale.

**Mr. Paulisin made a motion to approve the application for a plaque to be placed at a Gold Star Grove tree for Mr. Canalichio. Ms. Fallon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Ms. Fallon stated that this is a way to honor a Veteran whose family now lives in Indian River County.

Mr. Young explained that Mrs. Dale will provide the wording for the plaque, so the Public Works Department can get it ordered. They would like to have it in place for the Memorial Day Ceremony.

Mr. Matthews asked how long do the wooden posts last. Mr. Don Dexter, Assistant Public Works Director, replied that they last from five (5) to 10 years.

Mrs. Lyon asked Ms. Rita Hawkins, Senior Administrative Assistant, to provide the Commission members with the current Resolution with the attachment of allowed uses for Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary.

## 5. NEW BUSINESS

### A) Recap of the Memorial Service for John Dominick Matranga, Jr. – January 18, 2020

Mr. Matthews stated that because of the sudden passing of Mr. John Dominick Matranga Jr., the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee did not have a chance to review the application to use the Island. They received all the required signatures so the family could have a memorial service on the Island for Mr. Matranga, who was a Korean War Veteran. About 30 people attended and the Honor Guard from the Sebastian American Legion Post 189 was there. They had a raffle volley and taps and presented a flag to the family. The family was very appreciative and they had an appropriate service.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A) Update on the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Bridge Repair Project – Mr. Don Dexter, Assistant Public Works Director**

Mr. Dexter said the bridge is a work in progress. They asked the consultant to provide them with the specs so they can bid out the project by the middle of April. They will go through the bidding process, so it will be after Memorial Day when that work is done.

### **B) Update on the Seawall Repair Project – Mr. Don Dexter, Assistant Public Works Director**

Mr. Dexter reported that they originally talked about completing the seawall repair project on both sides of the causeway before Memorial Day. However, they want to make sure it looks nice and the grass is completely grown back, so they will be pushing this project off until summer.

Mr. Matthews said the cements bags, or rip rap, will stabilize the shore.

Mr. Dexter stated that when they have high tides from storms and hurricanes this repair should prevent a lot of the erosion they have experienced in the past.

## **7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS**

Mr. Matthews stated that he attended Mr. Rob Slezak's retirement party. He thinks they would all agree that he did a great job and they will miss him.

Mr. Matthews invited a member of the audience to come forward and introduce himself.

Mr. Rob Medina, Community and Military Affairs Representative for Congressman Bill Posey's office, said that he handles most of the Veteran and military affairs for Congressman Posey. He attended today's meeting to thank the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee for the work they do for the Veterans in the community and on the Island. He said he is a Brevard County resident, but he goes to Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary with his family to pay tribute to the men who paid the way for all of us.

Mr. Matthews mentioned that most people refer to Veterans Memorial Island as a Park, but it is really a Sanctuary. It has the same dignity and decorum as a cemetery. He thanked Mr. Medina for attending the meeting.

Mrs. Lyon mentioned that when she and Mr. Young were working on the latest rendition of the rules for Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary, they received requests from around the Country asking to see the rules, so they could emulate them. It is nice to know that their legacy was passed on nationwide.

Mr. Matthews announced that he is working on the flyer for the next Marine Birthday Ball, which will be at Pointe West on November 7, 2020.

## **8. MEMBER'S MATTERS**

Mr. Paulisin announced that the annual Veterans of Indian River County/Mary Snyder Golf Tournament will be on June 13, 2020. The cost is \$70 and it includes a lunch and an awards ceremony afterwards at the Indian River County Fairgrounds. He said all the proceeds will go to help build a triplex and to maintain the other homes the homeless Veterans live in. Route 60 Hyundai will be their main sponsor again this year and they will provide a vehicle for someone to win if they get a hole in one on the 17<sup>th</sup> hole on the Dunes course. On the Lakes course, there is a \$10,000 prize for a hole in one on the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> hole.

## **9. NEXT MEETING DATE**

### **A) March 4, 2020**

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee is scheduled for March 4, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

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