

**VETERANS MEMORIAL ISLAND SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, February 7, 2018 – 10:00 a.m.
City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida**

PRESENT: Chairman, John Matthews, Vice Chairman, Joel Herman, Members: Barbara Fallon, Curtis Paulisin, Don Wickstrand, and Alternate Member #1, Sylvester McIntosh **Also Present:** Public Works Manager, Don Dexter; Recreation Director, Rob Slezak; Assistant City Attorney, Stefanie Beskovoyne and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

Excused Absence: Peggy Lyon

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 3, 2018

Mr. Herman made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 3, 2018 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting. Ms. Fallon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

5. NEW BUSINESS

A) Next Generation Veterans Ruck March – Mr. Jimmy Jackson and Mr. Bruce Cady

Mr. Bruce Cady introduced Mr. Jimmy Jackson.

Mr. Jimmy Jackson, Iraqi War Veteran, said they are putting together a nonprofit ruck march to bring awareness to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). They would like to involve the First Responders, Firefighters, Law Enforcement, the United States Army Recruiting Station, as well as the Veterans Council, and other Veterans groups. The ruck packs will be weighted with non-perishable food items, which will be donated to a local food pantry after the event to help feed the homeless Veterans. PTSD is a big issue in this community. A lot of Veterans have taken their own lives and a lot of misconceptions have been spread throughout the public. The idea is to get the general public to join them on this march, so they can obtain the information on PTSD from not only the active duty military personnel, but also Veterans, Law Enforcement Officers, and the First Responders.

Mr. Matthews asked if it is correct that the pack will contain 15 - 20 pounds of food items. He also asked if carrying the weighted packs will be optional. Mr. Jackson replied that the packs will weigh 15 – 20 pounds, but they are optional.

Mr. Paulisin asked Mr. Jackson if he has been introduced to Mrs. Kryse Manson who runs the Food for Vets program. Mr. Jackson replied not yet. He explained that he has a point of contact with The Source, but he can split the food donations. Mr. Paulisin told Mr. Jackson that he would have Mrs. Manson touch base with him, or Mr. Cady.

Mr. Matthews explained that Mr. Cady and Mr. Jackson are here today seeking permission to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary as part of the Ruck March. This meeting is also televised so it will help spread the word about their event.

Mr. Jackson explained that the march will start at the US Army Recruiting Station and both of the recruiters are on board with this event. The Sebastian Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) plans on attending as well. The route will go from the Army Recruiting Station across the Merrill Barber Bridge and it will end on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. All their gear will be downloaded before they enter the Island and they will not be doing any physical training while on the Island. A Veteran will give an opening prayer and then a First Responder and a Veteran will each give a speech on PTSD. It will be a time of remembrance for those they have lost.

Mr. Matthews said this is an appropriate use for the Island and they would like to help spread the word, so that the community gets involved and helps support the event.

Mr. Paulisin asked what time does it start. Mr. Jackson replied that it will start at 8:00 a.m. Mr. Cady clarified that they do not plan to spend more than 30 minutes on the Island.

Mr. Jackson noted that they are planning to have a chase vehicle follow them just in case someone falls out and there will be a water station near the bridge.

Ms. Fallon suggested that they get in touch with Mrs. Dangerfield, because Mr. Dangerfield was a Fire Captain who lost the battle to PTSD. Mr. Johnson stated that he is trying to contact the Fire Captain to ask if he would be a guest speaker. They would also love to have Mrs. Dangerfield come out and speak.

Mr. Matthews asked how can the community get involved. Mr. Jackson explained that anyone can just show up and participating with the ruck sack is optional. The food donations are going to a good cause. He is creating an email specifically for the registration, so the public can contact him. If they search Next Generation Veterans Vero Beach they will find more information on facebook, or on the Veterans Council website.

Mr. Cady stated that the PTSD support group meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the Vero Beach Veterans office, which is located at 2500 15th Avenue.

Mr. Herman made motion to accept the application to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for part of the Next Generation Veterans Ruck March. Ms. Fallon seconded motion and it passed unanimously.

6. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Doy Demsick, Next Generation Veterans, said he is here to provide the Committee with an update on the Afghanistan/Iraqi memorial project. The Next Generation Veterans are applying for their 501(c)3 status, so they can do all the fundraising themselves. He wanted to emphasize that they are still in complete partnership with the Veterans Council on this project. There are two (2) phases to the project, which consists of the original monument that was previously presented and then a second memorial that will go on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. He announced that he will be moving to Virginia in a couple of weeks, but the motivated members of the Next Generation Veterans are a strong group and they will move the project forward successfully. They have so much support from the community.

Mr. Matthews stated that they will miss him when he leaves, because he has done so much for the Veterans. Mr. Demsick said it has been an absolute honor to be a regular at the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meetings. They all know how important everything is that they do for the community and he was glad he could be a part of it.

Mr. Matthews commented that some of the ideas that were discussed for the memorial on the Island included trying to have monuments that help honor all of those in the current conflicts. There is not just one (1) conflict, so they discussed possibly using smaller, different colored, granite monuments for the different conflicts to create a garden of remembrance.

Mr. Demsick explained that they have not gotten to that point in the planning process. He agrees that the more people and conflicts they bring into it the more honoring the memorial will be. They want to make sure they don't limit themselves in what they are trying to accomplish.

Mr. Matthews said he wishes them continued success with the monument to honor those Veterans.

Ms. Fallon told Mr. Demsick that it has been a pleasure working with him and he has done great things.

Mr. Herman asked if there was a time frame for completing the 501(c)3 process. Mr. Cady explained that they registered their entity with Sunbiz and they applied for their employer identification number (EIN) last week. They will be submitting their Internal Revenue Service 1023 package within the week as well as registering with the Department of Agriculture. The City Attorney's office is waiting for a number of things from them. By the end of February, their goal is to have their entity established so they can execute an agreement with an artist and continue their work with the City of Vero Beach. After that is complete they can start their fundraising and continue to work with the City to finalize the details of the project. He does not believe the project can be finished by Veterans Day 2018, so 2019 is more realistic.

Mr. Matthews stated that this Committee supports the Veterans community and they want to continue to hear about both memorials when they can. He mentioned that the Veterans Council is holding their Prom Night fundraiser event this Saturday.

Mr. Demsick commented that last year they had a very successful 80's Prom Night. This year they did their voting by people donating money towards which decade theme they would like for this year's prom. The 1980's was in the lead again, but someone donated \$100 to swing the vote to make it a 70's theme. The prom will take place this Saturday at the Walking Tree Brewery starting at 7:00

p.m. They will have an awesome DJ and a keg that is decorated with mirrors to make it a disco ball keg. They have some excellent sponsors for this year's event and they expect to raise about \$7,000 for the Veterans Council.

Ms. Fallon asked if the Prom is advertised anywhere. Mr. Demsick replied that they are mostly doing their advertising on facebook, but they also listed it on a couple of the community calendars.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

Mr. Matthews announced that he walked Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary yesterday and as always it looked beautiful. There is still a little erosion behind the monument sign as you come onto the Island, but considering what the Island went through from Hurricane Irma it looks great. He asked if there are any plans for using the cement slab from the Sundial's previous location.

Mr. Don Dexter, Public Work's Manager, replied not right now, but they could use it as a spot for a new memorial.

Mr. Mathews said the cement slab is more in the middle, so they might want to use it for something that is for everyone. He commented that the two (2) new benches near the Navy memorial look very nice. He also noticed that one (1) bench near the Marine Corp monument was repaired with a synthetic material instead of wood. Mr. Dexter explained that the synthetic material holds up very well especially for the bases, so they use it when they make repairs.

Mr. Dexter reported that the City worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on the erosion. They will be filling in the area behind the sign and along the bank of the causeway on the south side.

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

None

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) Next Meeting Date –March 7, 2018

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee is scheduled for March 7, 2018.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

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