

**VETERANS MEMORIAL ISLAND SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, March 4, 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 (arrived at 10:03 a.m.), 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) February 5, 2020 – Regular Meeting

Mr. Matthews stated that on page two (2) of the February 5th minutes, a monument for the Merchant Marines was mentioned, but he is not sure if the Merchant Marines are considered Veterans, texcept those form World War II (WWII).

Mr. Herman replied that the Merchant Marines from WWII are considered Veterans. They can take their crew ship certificates and apply for a DD Form 214.

Mr. Matthews asked what about the current Merchant Marines.

Mr. Herman replied he is not sure. He would have to look into that because he has not had any Merchant Marines come into his office.

Mr. Herman made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 5, 2020 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting. Ms. Fallon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

B) February 12, 2020 – Special Call Meeting

Mr. Paulisin said he did not know if the vote on the motion to fund the Gold Star Grove marker was correct on the February 12, 2020 minutes. He said he believes that Ms. Fallon abstained from voting.

Ms. Fallon replied that is correct, she did abstain.

Mrs. Lyon said she does not believe they can abstain from voting, unless the laws have changed over the past few years.

Mr. Matthews said the Commission members have to vote yes or no.

Mrs. Lyon replied that is correct unless they leave the meeting.

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, confirmed that Commission members cannot abstain from voting unless they file a notice that they have a conflict of interest.

Mr. Matthews said the abstained vote happened and they cannot change the past, but for the future, the Commission members need to vote yes or no. The motion still passed, because they had three (3) members that voted yes, one (1) who voted no, and one (1) abstained.

Mr. Matthews said near the bottom of page two (2) it says he stated the City Resolution is clear and that they would not be paying for other monuments to go on the Island. He did not mean it in that way. He explained that the way monuments are paid for is when people donate money, it goes into the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary account and when they have to pay for items on the Island, it comes out of the account. The person making the donation does not pay for anything directly.

Mr. Paulisin said he assumes that most of the donations are earmarked for certain items on the Island. If they are earmarked, he would think that those requests would be honored.

Mr. Herman made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2020 Special Call Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting with the corrections made. Ms. Fallon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

5. NEW BUSINESS

A) Vietnam War Veterans Day – March 29th

Mr. Matthews announced that Vietnam War Veterans Day is March 29th. He said over 58,000 people died in the war, millions served, and thousands were wounded. Many people are unaware of how many individuals were unaccounted for. They were either Prisoners of War (POW), Missing In Action (MIA), or their bodies were not recovered and those families were left waiting and wondering. The number of individuals unaccounted for in the Vietnam War is 1,587. He said if anyone sees a Vietnam Veteran on March 29th, perhaps we should welcome them home. He said there are no services or ceremonies scheduled for that day. There is a Vietnam War monument on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary, so if anyone is visiting the Island they might want to stop by the monument.

B) World War 1 Monument for Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary

Mr. Matthews said he was recently talking with Mr. Tony Young, Mayor, about Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary and they realized there is not a World War I (WWI) monument on the Island. The memorials and monuments on the Island are supposed to be sponsored by a Veterans organization, but there are no living WWI Veterans or any WWI organizations in Indian River County to propose a monument. He is not sure if the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee could propose and initiate it, but he thought they could discuss it. He said there are several families in Vero Beach that have a connection to WWI and there are eight (8) cenotaph markers memorializing people from our community who served

in that war. They have memorials for WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and they have approved a place for a memorial for the Gulf War and War on Terrorism, but there is nothing for WWI. WWI is important to the Marine Corp, so maybe they could get a Marine Corp League to sponsor it. They could also check with the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) or the American Legion. He said there is an empty cement slab on the Island where the sundial used to be, so that might be a good spot for it.

Ms. Fallon stated this is something that they should seriously consider.

Mr. Herman asked what happened to the sundial.

Mr. Matthews said it is over near the flagpole. The old location became too shaded, so they had to move it. The empty slab is over near the POW/MIA and Army memorial. He does not think they could do this without including the Vocelle family, the MacWilliam family, and the families of the eight (8) individuals with cenotaph markers from WWI, if they exist.

Mr. McIntosh asked if they could bring it up at the Veterans Council and work together with them to fund this project.

Mr. Matthews said he believes the City Resolution states that a Veterans organization needs to make the proposal.

Mr. Herman said the proposal would go to the Veterans Council first for approval and then it would come to the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee.

Mr. Matthews said it does not seem appropriate that they are not recognizing WWI with a monument.

Mrs. Lyon stated in the rules for the Island it states that plans for a monument would require approval by the City Council after consideration and approval by the Veterans Council of Indian River County and the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee. It is not very clear on the funding for monuments, so they might want to look into that further.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A) Update on the Gold Star Grove Marker Installation

Mr. Matthews stated that the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee approved the Gold Star Grove marker, so they are moving ahead on getting it made.

Mr. Don Dexter, Assistant Public Works Director, reported that they received the wording for the plaque and Ms. Nanette Haynes, Grounds Maintenance Manager, ordered it. The plaque will take four (4) to six (6) weeks to be made, so they should have it installed well before Memorial Day.

Mr. Paulisin stated that this plaque was paid for by private donations and one (1) was made in memory of Mr. Joseph Martorana.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

Mr. Matthews announced that the Medal of Honor day is on March 25th. He does not know of any local Veterans who have received the Medal of Honor and they do not have a ceremony planned for that day.

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mr. Paulisin stated that the proceeds from the Mary Snyder/Vietnam Veterans Golf Tournament will stay in Indian River County. They work in collaboration with Every Dream Has A Price, Inc. and the money will go towards homes for the homeless Veterans.

Mrs. Lyon asked what is the date of the tournament.

Mr. Paulisin replied that it will be on June 13, 2020 at Sandridge Golf Course and the price is \$70.00. He said that Route 60 Hyundai will provide a car for the first hole in one (1) on the 17th hole of the Dunes course and there is a \$10,000 prize for the first hole in one (1) on the 14th hole of the Lakes course.

Mr. Matthews asked how many homes do the Vietnam Veterans have for the Veterans.

Mr. Paulisin replied that they have three (3) homes. They house 32 Veterans, because some of the homes are triplexes.

Mrs. Patty Howard, Assistant Recreation Director, announced that the new Recreation Director, Mr. Jim O'Connell starts on March 16, 2020. She explained that he is from Peachtree City, Georgia and she will bring him to the next Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting.

Mr. Rob Medina, with Congressman Bill Posey's office, stated that on April 15th, Congressman Posey will be holding a Veterans Summit in Indian River County. The goal is to bring benefit information to the local Veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs will be there as well as representatives from the Veterans Hospital in West Palm Beach. They will be able to look over claims and file any appeals if necessary. The object is to make sure the Veterans are well informed on the Mission Act, which took effect this year. The Mission Act pertains to the Veterans who served during the Vietnam War era.

Mr. Paulisin asked if Congressman Posey will be attending.

Mr. Medina replied yes, he is scheduled to be there. It will be held at the Indian River County Commission Chambers. He said he is excited about the new benefits, which now allows more Veterans who are service connected to go on base and use the exchange and the commissary. At the Veterans Summit, they will have a Panel of Directors session and a question and answer time. There will be tables set up where they can explain the benefits to the community. It will run from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. and the panel discussion will start at 10:00 a.m.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) April 1, 2020

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee is scheduled for April 1, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

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