

**VETERANS MEMORIAL ISLAND SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, May 1, 2019 – 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, Don Wickstrand, Alternate Member #1, Sylvester McIntosh, and Alternate Member #2, Peggy Lyon **Also Present:** Recreation Director, Rob Slezak; Public Work's Manager, Don Dexter, and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

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) April 3, 2019

Mr. Matthews said on pages two (2) and three (3) of the minutes, the Red Cross was mentioned in reference to handing out donuts, but that should read the *Salvation Army*.

Mr. Herman made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 3, 2019 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) Updates to the Cenotaph Square and Sanctuary Maps – Mr. Tony Young, Vice Mayor

Mr. Tony Young, Vice-Mayor, said that he wanted the opportunity to share some information on the updates to the maps for Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary and the cenotaph Square (on file in the City Clerk's office). He first referred to the large cenotaph square map that was provided to the Commission members. He explained that they have expanded the area on the Island that pays tribute to our fallen soldiers to include the grove of trees, so he requested that the map be updated to incorporate the Gold Star Grove. It is important that they not only recognize the individuals from Indian River County, but also those families who moved here and lost a loved one by providing the temporary markers at the trees. He explained that the updated map shows

the grove along with the names that are on each of the markers. He continued by giving a brief background on each of the individuals that are recognized with the temporary markers. He said the two (2) new cenotaph markers for Jonathan Clement and Edward Reynolds are also listed on the new cenotaph square map. He said the smaller map, which is the Veterans Memorial Island directory was also updated to include the Gold Star Grove.

Mr. Matthews said he knows there is limited room on the large map on the Island, but he noticed they do not list the individual monuments for the branches of the service on the legend. Mr. Young stated that the names of the branches of service are designated next to the letters around the perimeter of the Island, but not on the legend.

Mrs. Lyon asked if the cenotaph and Gold Star Grove map will be posted on the Island. Mr. Young said that has not been determined. Mrs. Lyon said it would be nice to have it posted out there, so people could see where the different family members are located. Mr. Young said that perhaps they could have it on the Island's large map as an insert when it is updated.

Mr. Young explained that he has done a lot of work and research on the individuals recognized at the Gold Star Grove to create a registry and he will share this information with the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee when it is complete. The Gold Star Moms have been a big help in gathering this information. The account of every individual includes a narrative from the families, research from their casualty reports, obituaries, any information from the Arlington Cemetery, and battle accounts from their military unit if anything is available. He explained this is the synthesis that they began with the Veterans cenotaph markers and they are continuing for the Veterans for the Gold Star Grove. If anyone wants the details of any of Veterans with cenotaph markers, the City Clerk's office has that on file. He announced that Sunday, May 26, 2019 is the Founder's Day Centennial Celebration and Tree Dedication at Riverside Park and MacWilliam Park. Monday, May 27, 2019 is the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary dedication for Memorial Day, so Riverside Park will be packed that weekend.

Mr. Matthews thanked Mr. Young for all the research he has done as a historian along with being Vice Mayor. Mr. Young said this is something he loves and he is glad he can do it for the Veterans and the City.

Mr. Don Dexter, Public Work's Director, stated that they are working on revising the big map for Veterans Memorial Island. He clarified that the Service Memorials are individually listed on the map. He passed around a copy of the map for the Commission members to review (on file in the City Clerk's office). He said they added the Gold Star Grove and the Words From War Monument to the legend and the map. He explained that the sign is out there for the Words From War Monument and the Veterans Council Next Generation Veterans are still fundraising for it, but they have a long ways to go. He said if the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee approves the map, they will move forward with having the map made. Mr. Matthews stated that the new monument is listed as World War Monument on the map. Mr. Dexter said that is an error and it will be corrected to read Words From War Monument. Mr. Matthews stated that the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee did approve the Next Generation Veterans to have a monument on the Island to honor the Iraqi and Afghanistan Veterans. Mr. Paulisin said that monument is still in the works and they have not forgotten about it.

Mr. Herman asked when they update the map could they include the insert of the cenotaph square map. Mr. Dexter replied that he believes it would be too crowded to have them both together. He recommended putting the cenotaph map in its own frame out near the cenotaph square. Mrs. Lyon said that is a good idea. Mr. Dexter said it might be redundant since the people will already be there, they can just as easily walk around and read the names on the cenotaphs.

Mr. Dexter reported that they will be constructing a new frame for the map, because the old frame has served its purpose. He announced that the new cenotaph markers should be here soon, so they will have them in place before Memorial Day. He also stated that the Gold Star Grove markers are all assembled and ready to be installed on the Island next week.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A) Recap of the Indian River County Victims' Rights Coalition Memorial – April 11, 2019

Mr. Matthews asked if anyone attended the Indian River County Victim's Rights Coalition Memorial Service.

Mr. Young said he is very proud that they have allowed this ceremony to continue on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. He said it is just like looking into the eyes of people who lost someone in combat, but to have lost a loved one here in the United States as a victim of a crime might be even worse. He said with the Sheriff's Office, Law Enforcement, the judiciary, and the legal system being there showing their support really adds to the stature of the Sanctuary. The people who come to this service are touched by having their loved ones recognized. Every year there is a woman who funds the flowers that are placed on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for this ceremony and then the families take the flowers home. The event was well attended and Sheriff Daryl Loar had the opportunity to speak.

B) Update on the Memorial Day Ceremony – May 27, 2019

Mr. Matthews said that a good portion of this Memorial Day service will be the dedication of the two (2) new cenotaphs and the Gold Star Grove. He announced that the Memorial Day service will be on Monday, May 27, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. They will print about 1,500 programs, so getting that many people on the Island he recommends that people arrive early and bring a chair. He briefly went over the Memorial Day Ceremony events listed on the program (on file in the City Clerk's office).

Mr. Paulisin asked if they listed the Salvation Army on the program to give them recognition.

Mr. Matthews replied yes. He explained that the Salvation Army will set up their coffee and donut station off the Island towards the boat dock area. The Boots on the Ground display will be set up on the Island the evening before and there will be Veterans performing a fire watch throughout the night, so they will probably enjoy some coffee and donuts in the morning.

Mr. Young stated that Lieutenant General Robert Caslen will be the guest speaker for Memorial Day and he was a prior superintendent of West Point, so that will add stature as well.

Mr. Matthews said he heard the word is out that the City of Vero Beach and Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary are wonderful places and there is almost a waiting list of Generals who want to be guest speakers.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

Mr. Matthews mentioned that yesterday, April 30, 2019 was the date when the last helicopter flew out of Vietnam and then the fall of Saigon happened. He said he attended the Navy Junior ROTC program in Sebastian and there were 49 awards handed out. It was held at the Sebastian River High School and the Commander and the Marine Master Sargent brought the students up on stage and presented them with their awards. It was a very impressive group of young people and it was nice to see the older Veterans there in uniform.

Mr. Matthews stated that in October, he will be going to Normandy and Omaha Beach to visit that part of history. This year is the 75th Anniversary of the invasion of Normandy and he has never been there before, so maybe he can learn a little about how they care for their cemetery.

Mr. Matthews announced that the Marine Corp Ball will be held at Pointe West on November 9, 2019, which is the day before the actual Marine Corp birthday. It will sell out, since there are only 140 seats available. November 10th is also Veterans Day, but another event on that day is the Navy Seal swim out, where Veterans ashes are taken out to sea by Frogmen in their traditional gear. The Navy Seal muster will be on November 9, 2019.

Mr. Matthews stated that he and Mrs. Linda Hillman are the Chairs of the Parade Committee for the 100th Anniversary of Vero Beach. Anyone who wants to be in the parade can go to the Verobeach100.org website to get an application. There will only be 100 floats allowed in the parade and there are requirements in order to participate. The parade will be on October 26, 2019, which is the part of the finale of the Centennial Celebration. The parade starts at 10:00 a.m. at the Vero Beach High School and will travel along 14th Avenue. Following the parade there will be a big party downtown with music, food, entertainment, etc., which will serve as the final event of the Centennial Celebration of Vero Beach.

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mr. Wickstrand said he recently watched a documentary on the PBS television station about the Korean War and it was well done. The Korean effort is sometimes forgotten about, but we should never forget it.

Mrs. Lyon said that she and her family also watched that program and they could not take their eyes off it. She said that her father served in the Navy during the Korean War and three (3) months ago, the Library of Congress Representative came to his assisted living home to interview him about his Korean War experience. She was there to help her dad with the interview and it was fascinating to hear things she did not know about the war and his role in the

war. She said it is good to remember that war, because there are people who are still alive that were a part of it.

Mr. Matthews said that there were more than 58,000 killed in the Vietnam War over 10 years and about the same number were killed in the Korean War, but it happened in just a few years with some very intense battles.

Mr. Matthews asked if there is a Navy League meeting this month. Mr. Wickstrand replied yes. This month the Navy League will be honoring the Junior ROTC units and a Sailor of the quarter. It will be held at Pointe West. The Navy League went from sponsoring two (2) Junior ROTC units to sponsoring five (5).

Mr. Paulisin announced that the Veterans Golf Tournament will be held on June 15, 2019 and currently they have about 160 golfers signed up. The tournament is getting so big that Indian River County offered them the use of the Fairgrounds for their luncheon. He announced that the Vietnam Veterans broke ground on the new home for Veterans, which the proceeds from the golf tournament are going towards. The Vietnam Veterans should make \$25,000 to \$30,000 from the golf tournament after everything is said and done. Anyone who needs information, or wants to sign up can call Mary Snyder at 567-2217.

Mr. Matthews asked how many beds do the Vietnam Veterans homes have to accommodate the homeless Veterans. Mr. McIntosh replied that right now they are full, but he believes there are over 20 beds available. Next year they will be doing a stand down, where they go into to the homeless camps to try to bring out the homeless Veterans to provide medical help, clothing, utensils, etc.

Mr. Paulisin announced that Route 60 Hyundai is giving them a car for a hole in one on the 17th hole for the Dunes Course. Since this tournament has grown so large, there will also be a \$10,000 prize for a hole in one on the 8th hole of the Lakes Course.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) Next Meeting Date – June 5, 2019

Mr. Matthews asked to be excused from the June meeting, so Mr. Herman will be filling in for him.

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee is scheduled for June 5, 2019.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:42 a.m.

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