

**VETERANS MEMORIAL ISLAND SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, June 5, 2019 – 10:00 a.m.
City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida**

PRESENT: Vice Chairman, Joel Herman; Members: Curtis Paulisin, Don Wickstrand, Alternate Member #1, Sylvester McIntosh, and Alternate Member #2, Peggy Lyon **Also Present:** Assistant Recreation Director, Patty Howard; Public Work's Manager, Don Dexter, and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

Excused Absences: John Michael Matthews and Barbara Fallon

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Herman 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) May 1, 2019

Mrs. Lyon made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 1, 2019 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting. Mr. Wickstrand seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Tony Young, Vice Mayor, explained that over the last year they made great progress in establishing the Gold Star Family Grove on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary, which was dedicated on Memorial Day. During the year with all the City staff changes and his busy schedule, the wording was not submitted to institutionalize the Gold Star Family Grove into the City Resolution. A copy of the proposed wording was provided to the Commission members (on file in the City Clerk's office). He stated Mrs. Lyon made some recommended changes to the Resolution and to the Rules and Regulations new paragraph H, which defines the Gold Star Family Grove and how they are recognized. He stated that he will make the same motion to the Veterans Council, so it can move forward to the City Council for their approval. This all had to be supported by a Veterans Organization and with a recommendation of the American Gold Star Mothers Association, Inc. (AGSMA). It is also within the keeping of the existing guidelines of Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. At the Memorial Day Ceremony, it was so touching to acknowledge the families of the Gold Family Star Grove. Family members came from all across the United States to participate in the ceremony. He said Mrs. Michelle Dale, Gold Star Mother, said it very well when she stated that one (1) thing she wanted more than anything else was for her son's sacrifice not to be forgotten. He stated that the updated map is also included in the handouts.

Mrs. Lyon made a motion to accept the Resolution and the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Rules and Regulations with the changes made. Mr. McIntosh seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A) Request to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for a Ruck March – Veterans Council Next Generation Veterans

Mr. Herman stated that they received an application requesting to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for a Ruck March.

Mr. Jason Patzer, Commander for the Next Generation Veterans of Indian River County, stated that they will be holding their fourth annual ruck march on June 28, 2019. He said that they will be mustering in Riverside Park, because there will be a large crowd. He explained that a ruck is a forced march or walk where the participants wear a backpack that contains 10 to 15 pounds of canned food. The food will be collected and donated to a food pantry at the end of the march. The ruck march is to raise awareness for the Next Generation Veterans in the County and for the monument that will be constructed near Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. Their request is to muster and hold a small ceremony with a guest speaker and a prayer under the flag on Veterans Memorial Island at the end of the march. This is a fun event with a lot of young members who are just joining the military as well as people who already served and have returned. They will have 35 Marine recruits joining them from Port St. Lucie and West Palm Beach for this ruck march.

Mr. Herman asked what time does it start. Mr. Patzer replied that registration is at 8:00 a.m. and the march starts at 9:00 a.m. The march normally takes about one (1) hour, so they should be back at Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary about 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Herman asked how many people are they expecting. Mr. Patzer replied that they are expecting 100 or more people to be there. He said a couple of gyms are putting together teams, as well as the Fire Department. They have had a great response. Last year they had 50 to 60 participants, so it is continuing to grow.

Mr. Paulisin made a motion to approve the use of Veteran Memorial Island Sanctuary for part of the ruck march. Mr. Wickstrand seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

B) D-Day – June 6, 2019

Mr. Herman announced that tomorrow, June 6th, is D-Day. Mr. Young stated that tomorrow is the anniversary of the Normandy landing. Mr. Hiram Collins was honored on Memorial Day with a temporary plaque at one (1) of the Buttonwood trees, which is part of the Gold Star Family Grove. He explained that Mr. Collins landing craft was hit by artillery fire and he was declared missing in action. His name is on one (1) of the walls at the cemetery in Normandy. His family came from Maryland to Sebastian, Florida and they established Captain Hiram's Restaurant. His nephew named the restaurant in honor of him and his son continues that legacy. He stated that there were about 55 men honored with cenotaphs on the Island when it was first established. Out of the 55, 40 of them were from World War II

and only a third died before the invasion. He gave some brief background and history on some of the veterans from that period who are recognized on the Island.

Mr. Herman said there will be plenty of television and radio shows and newspaper articles about D-Day. He asked that if anyone sees a WWII Veteran to please stop and tell them thank you for their service and leave it at that. If it were not for those men doing their job, we would not be here today.

Mr. Wickstrand stated that he was seven (7) days shy of his 11th birthday on June 6, 1944. He was born and raised in Portland, Oregon and he delivered newspapers as a young boy. He would go to the facility where all the paperboys would go to gather their papers and he remembers headlines reading D-Day. He was raised during the war and they would have blackouts, because they thought the Japanese were going to attack. His father was a block warden and he would walk the neighborhood to make sure that everyone had their blinds pulled down and the lights were out at a certain time. They had rationing of shoes, clothing, gasoline, etc. At the time, he did not think much of it because everyone was involved and affected by the war. His dad was too old for the war, but he worked in the shipyards that built the Liberty Ships.

Mr. Herman said those are the stories that people need to hear and remember. These veterans are a walking piece of history and when those veterans pass away, the stories go with them.

Mr. Young announced that tomorrow at the Navy Seal Museum they will be providing coffee and a light breakfast at 10:00 a.m. and at 11:00 a.m., Mr. Rick Keiser will speak about the Navy Seals involvement in the Normandy invasion. If anyone plans on attending, the Museum asks that you contact them to reserve a space.

C) Flag Day – June 14, 2019

Mr. Herman announced that June 14th is Flag Day and everyone who has any type of flag will hopefully fly it, wear it, and display it proudly.

Mr. Young stated that June 14th is also the Army's birthday.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A) Recap of Memorial Day Ceremony– May 27, 2019

Mr. Herman stated that they had a good ceremony for Memorial Day. Mr. Wickstrand said it was the largest crowd he has ever seen. Mr. Herman said that it was nice to see the young folks, the teenagers and the children there. There were more of the younger generation there than he has seen in the past and it is good that they know why they hold this ceremony and what it means. He asked if there were 1,500 to 1,800 people there. Mr. Young said he believes there were about 2,000 people who attended.

Mr. Don Dexter, Public Work's Manager, stated that he did not do an actual head count, but he understands that 1,500 programs were printed and they ran out about 9:45a.m. and people were still coming onto the Island. He believes there were about 1,800 that attended, so this was the largest crowd he has seen.

Mr. Herman stated that the Veterans Council did a wonderful job and when the High School Band comes out and plays music like that you have to love it.

7. CHAIRMAN’S MATTERS

None

8. MEMBER’S MATTERS

Mr. Paulisin announced that June 15th is the Vietnam Veterans Golf Tournament at Sandridge Golf Club. He sadly reported that they lost Mrs. Mary Snyder to a higher being. She was doing a lot of the paperwork for him, so now he and his wife are taking that over. They have between 170 to 180 golfers signed up and check in time is at 7:00 a.m. He said that Mrs. Donna Bahensky, Director for the VA Medical Center, will be attending. There will be some other dignitaries and they will unfurl a flag in memory of Mrs. Snyder. If anyone has questions they can contact him at (772) 538-2484.

Mr. Herman asked how many staff members are coming up from the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center. Mr. Paulisin replied that there will be 15 or 16 people attending from West Palm Beach.

Mr. Patzer offered the assistance of the Next Generation Veterans if they need help with the golf tournament.

Mr. Herman asked if anyone knows what June 10th is. Mrs. Lyon stated that it is Ms. Alma Lee Loy’s birthday. Mr. Herman said that Ms. Loy turns 90 this year, so if anyone sees her out and about please stop and wish her a Happy Birthday.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) Next Meeting Date – July 3, 2019

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee is scheduled for July 3, 2019.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Today’s meeting adjourned at 10:36 a.m.

/rh