

**VETERANS MEMORIAL ISLAND SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, July 1, 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, Don Wickstrand, Alternate Member #1, Sylvester McIntosh, and Alternate Member #2, Peggy Lyon **Also Present:** City Attorney, John Turner; Public Works Director, Matthew Mitts; Assistant Public Works Director, Don Dexter; Recreation Director, Jim O’Connell; Assistant Recreation Director, Patty Howard 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) June 3, 2020

Ms. Fallon made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2020 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting. Mr. Herman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

5. NEW BUSINESS

A) Request to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary by the Alzheimer & Parkinson Association - Mrs. Peggy Cunningham and Mrs. Judith Lemoncelli

Mr. Matthews announced that they received a request to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary from the Alzheimer & Parkinson Association. The biggest issue is that they do not know what November is going be like with the Coronavirus.

Mrs. Peggy Cunningham, Executive Director of the Alzheimer & Parkinson Association, explained that their organization provides programs for people who are caring for those with dementia. They also have programs for patients who have movement issues, like those with Parkinson’s disease. Most of their programs are congregate programs, so now everything is either on the phone, on videos, or via zoom. She stated that their Walk to Remember event is their major fundraiser and they have been holding it for 17 years. It is also an awareness raiser and they have information booths set up in Riverside Park during their event. Their event is always the same

weekend as Veterans Day so they bring the Veterans up onto the stage to be recognized. They have been able to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary as part of their walk for several years. This is a fundraiser so either way they will be raising funds and they want to make a request to use the Island. The community has always been wonderful about helping them with this event.

Mr. Matthews asked how many participants do they anticipate.

Mrs. Cunningham replied that there are usually 600 to 700 people involved with this event. She said the walk may take longer than normal if they are still social distancing so they will need to see how things are as they get closer. The population they serve are the most vulnerable so they will work this event in a way to keep everyone safe.

Mr. Matthews stated that this event is for a very good cause and one (1) they like to support. They also encourage the community to donate or help in any way they can. He explained that they are only an Advisory Committee so even if they advised the City Council to approve the request, the City is not granting any permits for events like these at this time. He said this event does not take place until November so he suggests that they come back to a future meeting as their event gets closer before they vote on this request.

Mrs. Cunningham replied that they are preparing themselves that it might be canceled, but they would be happy to come back again.

B) Donation to Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary from Mr. & Mrs. Philip Canal

Mr. Matthews announced that they received a donation from the Canal family. Their family member, Army Private Joseph Canalichio, was honored with a memorial at a tree in the Gold Star Grove so they made a \$250.00 donation to Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary.

C) Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Bridge Repairs Approved by the City Council

Mr. Matthews reported that repairs to the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary bridge are in the works. He said that the City Council approved to spend \$130,000.00 for this work.

Mr. Matthew Mitts, Public Works Director, reported that they had a project scheduled for this year to rehabilitate the bridge, but in the process they found more extensive work than they anticipated. They came up with a proposed plan to do temporary repairs to the bridge and then replace it within the next five (5) years. The negative impact is that the bridge lost some of its load capacity. He explained that some of steel frame is corroding and rusting away, but it can still handle light trucks and they can transport the stage onto the Island for events. Once they have the plans developed for the construction of a new bridge, they will bring the plans to the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee for their review and input.

Mr. Matthews asked if the repair work will affect the gates or the spots where the flags are displayed.

Mr. Mitts replied that the bridge will generally look the same and have the same features after the repair work.

Mr. Matthews said when the plans are being developed for a new bridge that is when the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee can provide some input on modifications. He said he understands it will cost \$1.3 million to build a new bridge.

Mr. Mitts replied that is correct.

Mr. Matthews asked if the County will help fund the cost of replacing the bridge.

Mr. Mitts said they will peruse any funding opportunities that are available, because the bridge will need to be replaced.

D) Recap of Memorial Vigil for Mr. Frank Strahorn

Mr. Matthews explained that this item is on the agenda because they were originally going to have a memorial service for Mr. Frank Strahorn on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary, but there was no way they could do it safely with social distancing. Yesterday there was a service for him at the church he attended and some of the Marines he served with came from across the Country to be there. It was sad, but sweet to hear their stories. He died a hero and he saved many lives. They want to remember him fondly and honor his service and the sacrifice he made that day.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A) Proposed Plaque for the Korean War Veterans Monument – Mr. Joe Gomez, Korean War Veterans Association

Mr. Matthews stated that they received a revised design for a plaque to be considered for the front of the Korean War Veterans Monument. At last month's meeting, they received a design of a basic plaque and they tentatively approved the recommendation of adding a plaque to the Korean War Monument. The design of the new plaque has details and tells the story of the Korean War.

Mr. Joe Gomez, Korean War Veterans Association Chapter 318 of Indian River County, said that he brought another proposal for a plaque that is drawn to size. He explained that there is no plaque recognizing the Korean War Veterans in Indian River County, so this will be the only one (1). He held up the design of the plaque for everyone to see. He said the actual size 22" x 18". He would like have it installed on the front of the monument at a slight angle if that is possible, so it is easier to read.

Mr. Matthews said a couple of days ago was the 70th Anniversary of the beginning of the Korean War. This plaque will inform people of that date along with the statistics. He asked if they should incorporate a design of a Korean War medal on the plaque.

Mr. Gomez stated that they have the Presidential Peace Medal and the Korean Peace Medal, which could be used in the design.

Mr. Matthews said he thinks that two (2) of those medals would be appropriate.

Mr. Herman agreed that it would look good to have one (1) medal on each side of the words or where they will fit. Mr. Paulisin said he also agrees as long as they are small adaptations.

Mr. Matthew said he would entertain a motion for approval. He asked to clarify that the Korean War Veterans Association would pay for the plaque, but the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Committee would also accept donations to help with it.

Mr. Herman made a motion to approve the new plaque design and recommend that the City Council allow the plaque to be added to the Korean War Monument. The plaque will be paid for by the Korean War Veterans Association and any donations for this project that are made to the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. Mr. McIntosh seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Matthews said they can get Mr. Gomez a referral on where the City has plaques made so he can get an idea of the time frame and the cost.

Mr. Gomez stated that once he has the emblems and everything together he will find out where he needs to send it.

Mr. Don Dexter, Assistant Public Works Director, said the company the City uses should make a plaque for them. He said his only concern is the size of the plaque, as it is much larger than anything the City has ever had cast.

B) Update on the Sea Wall Repair Project

This item was discussed after item 5-C).

Mr. Mitts said another project that is underway is the bank stabilization of the sea walls west of the bridge. They installed riprap bags to build walls and filled it in with dirt to level the land. They will be laying sod and finishing up this project soon.

Mr. Matthews stated that this project will help prevent erosion caused by hurricanes or bad storms.

C) Further Discussion on a World War I Monument

Mr. Matthews said at past meetings they have discussed creating a World War I (WWI) Monument using the empty cement slab where the sundial used to be.

Ms. Fallon said they should consider doing something similar to the World War II (WWII) Monument since it would be easy to duplicate, but with the WWI information on it.

Mr. Matthews stated that if they made it out of marble or granite the wording could be engraved on it. He said the fact that 54,246 lost their lives in WWI is important information to have on the Island.

Ms. Fallon suggested that they engrave the figures on the front of a basic monument like what they are doing for the Korean War Monument.

Mr. Matthews stated that they do not need a big statue or monument. He will see if the Veterans Council knows of someone who can lay it out and draw up the design.

Mr. Matthews stated that they previously approved a marker, a monument, or a garden of remembrance for the War on Terrorism campaigns to go on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. He has not brought it up for a while because he does not want to interfere with their current efforts and raising funds for the *Words From War* Monument that will be constructed in Riverside Park.

Mr. Herman stated that the WWI Monument needs to be done. They need to find an organization that will take charge of it.

Mr. Matthews said that Mr. Sylvester McIntosh mentioned it to the American Legion since they were formed during WWI. He said once they have a few organizations and individuals who want to donate to it then they can move forward. He will try to get something drawn up so they have something to show to people and talk about. A monument will show the beginning of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary and honor those from WWI.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

Mr. Matthews announced that there will not be any July 4th fireworks utilizing the Island. He stated that the Marine Corp Birthday Ball in November has also been canceled for this year.

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mr. Paulisin announced that the West Palm Beach Veterans Hospital is open for appointments and the Veterans Council's vans are making trips there five (5) days a week. They sanitize the vehicles and everyone has to wear a mask.

Mr. Paulisin stated that an event called *Cooking with a Hero* has also been canceled for this year.

Mr. Paulisin said that the Mary Snyder Veterans Golf Tournament is still scheduled for August 1st. It is sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans and it is one (1) of their biggest fundraisers. The proceeds go to help with the upkeep and to run the homes for the Veterans. They will be practicing social distancing and they are working on the procedures for using golf carts. The luncheon will still be at the Indian River County Fairgrounds and they are working on the social distancing procedures for that. There are currently 150 individuals signed up to golf.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) August 5, 2020

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee is scheduled for August 5, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

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