

**VETERANS MEMORIAL ISLAND SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, July 3, 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, and Alternate Member, Peggy Lyon **Also Present:** City Attorney, John Turner, Public Work’s Manager, Don Dexter, and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

Unexcused Absence: Sylvester McIntosh

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 5, 2019

Mr. Herman made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2019 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting. Ms. Fallon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

5. NEW BUSINESS

A) Request to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary – Mrs. Margaret Cunningham, Alzheimer & Parkinson Association of Indian River County

Mrs. Margaret Cunningham, Executive Director of the Alzheimer & Parkinson Association, said they are having their 16th annual Walk to Remember, which is always held on the 2nd weekend in November. This event is correlated with the Veterans in Indian River County, because many of the Veterans are struggling with the challenges that the Alzheimer and Parkinson Association helps families with. Several years ago they requested to change the route of their walk to include Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. At the start of the event they bring all the Veterans up onto the stage to recognize them. This event is the Alzheimer & Parkinson Association’s major fundraiser. They have been very grateful that over the past years to have been allowed to include Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary in their walk. They tell the participants beforehand that as they go onto the Island it is the quiet, reflective, and respectful part of the walk. She said the event will take place on November 9, 2019 and they would like to continue this tradition with the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee’s approval.

Mr. Matthews asked how many years have they been using Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for part of their event. Mrs. Cunningham replied that it has been for the last five (5) or six (6) years. She explained that the participants stay on the walkway, there is no littering, and they check the Island afterwards.

Mrs. Lyon clarified that the fundraising part of their event takes place in Riverside Park and not on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary.

Mr. Paulisin asked if she has spoken to anyone with the City about getting the stage set up. Mrs. Cunningham replied yes. The stage is usually set up the afternoon before the event. Their registration starts at 7:30 a.m., the walk begins at 9:00 a.m., and they are usually done and out of the Park by 11:00 a.m.

Mr. Herman asked if they are actually expecting 650 people to participate in the walk. Mrs. Cunningham replied yes. Mr. Herman asked if that number has gone up over the years. Mrs. Cunningham replied that it has, because they have been getting more teams participating. In the past, they have relied more on the sponsors for their fundraising, but now they have more teams of families, churches, organizations, etc. and they fundraise throughout the year. The top three (3) fundraising teams are recognized at the event. She invited everyone to come out to the event because there is a lot of information available from the sponsors and it is a nice way to start a Saturday morning.

Mr. Herman made a motion to accept the application from the Alzheimer & Parkinson Association to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for part of their walk. Ms. Fallon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

B) Information on Mainland Ruck March – Mr. Jimmy Lee

Mr. Jimmy Lee, Next Generation Veterans, thanked the Committee for allowing him to speak on behalf of his event. They are doing a ruck march in Downtown Vero Beach and the U.S. Army Recruiting Station asked to have the event at their location. He said he represents a very young organization called Do You Give a Ruck and their focus is to help the community and fundraise for other organizations. They are 10 days away from their event and he has already donated \$3,100 to the Veterans Council and he has raised \$3,553.00 in donations towards their raffle. The ruck march will start at the U.S. Army Recruiting Station and they will have a Vero Beach Police escort as well as the Treasure Coast Jeep Club. The ruck march will go through downtown and end back at the Recruiting Station where they will hold the raffle. The U.S. Army Recruiting Commands from Jupiter, Florida to Sebastian, Florida will be attending the event as well as the Marine Recruiting Command. They will have private military contractors coming from other locations in Florida and local law enforcement agencies attending the event. The last count they received was that there will be over 320 people participating. In the future they would like to hold their event over near Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. They would not have any part of their event on the Island, unless it was to pay remembrance to the fallen.

Mr. Paulisin asked if they rotate their fundraising with different Veteran organizations. Mr. Lee explained that his organization is Veteran owned and operated, but they have civilians mixed in as well. He has been contacted by the Tunnel to Towers and the Gold Star Mothers organizations, so he is open to helping everyone. He explained that they have another event on November 9, 2019, but it will be in Sebastian, Florida. He believes that it is important as a community to reach out to all the Veterans in the County.

Mr. Matthews said the groups name, “Do You Give a Ruck” is a play on words, but it makes people think if they care about and want to help Veterans. He said that people do not have to be a Veteran to participate in this event, which is on July 13, 2019.

Mr. Lee stated they will have mobile water stations and emergency medical technicians out there with them.

Mr. Matthews asked what time does the ruck march start. Mr. Lee replied that registration starts at 7:00 a.m. and then he will give a short speech to recognize the 25 sponsors and the many businesses that made donations for the raffle. A local pop star will be singing the National Anthem and the ruck march will start at 8:30 a.m., so they should be back around 11:00 a.m.

Mr. Matthews told everyone to wipe the dust off their boots, pull out their backpacks, and join the ruck march on July 13, 2019. He thanked Mr. Lee for all his good work and for helping the Veterans in the community.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A) Recap of Veterans Council Next Generation Veterans Ruck March – June 29, 2019

Mr. Matthews reported that the other ruck march that utilized Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary took place on June 29, 2019, but he was not able to attend. He heard that 40 to 50 people attended this event. He said the younger Veterans that are leading these events are doing a good job in the community. They all hold the Island in high regard and treat it with respect and dignity.

B) Report on Flag Raising Ceremony at Victor Hart Sr. Community Enhancement Complex – June 29, 2019

Mr. Matthews reported that on June 29, 2019 he attended the flag raising ceremony at the Victor Hart Sr. Community Enhancement Complex. He said that Mr. Victor Hart has done a lot in the community and he had the opportunity to meet him and his wife. The football field at the complex was fixed so that it is getting proper drainage. They also constructed a new flagpole that is lit, so they can keep the flag up all the time. He gave a brief recap of the people who attended and passed around a few of the programs for the Committee members to see (on file in the City Clerk’s office).

Mr. Herman stated that he also attended this event and there was a good turnout. He asked if there were about 150 people there. Mr. Matthews replied that they printed 150 programs and they were all gone.

C) Report on the July 4th Festivities

Mr. Matthews stated that the July 4th festivities will take place tomorrow at Riverside Park and Veterans Memorial Island will be closed, because that is where the fireworks are set off.

Mr. Don Dexter, Public Work’s Manager, reported that this year the City is celebrating its 100th birthday, so they have some extra events and some special music at the July 4th event. They will have food trucks, beer and wine sales, activities, and the fireworks show will be bigger than they typically have. It all takes place at Riverside Park starting at 3:00 p.m. The fireworks will start at 9:00 p.m. and they normally last for 15 to 20 minutes, but this is supposed to be a longer show and it should be spectacular.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

Mr. Matthews said that he would like to take this opportunity to introduce the new City Attorney, Mr. John Turner.

Mr. John Turner stated that he was recently hired as the City Attorney for the City of Vero Beach and it is a pleasure to be here. Mr. Matthews welcomed him and asked him where he is from. Mr. Turner replied that he came from Fort Myers, Florida.

Mr. Matthews stated that September 20, 2019 is POW/MIA Day and they should remember those who were prisoners of war or missing in action. He would like to put this on the agenda for their next meeting to discuss it some more. He said it is hard to imagine how tough it was for those families waiting and wondering what happened to their loved ones. He said that POW/MIA Day is recognized on the 3rd Friday of September each year.

Mr. Matthews announced that November 9, 2019 is the Marine Corps Birthday Ball at Pointe West. It will sell out since there is only room for 140 people. They will have two (2) three-star Lieutenant Generals there this year. Anyone is welcome to attend and the tickets are \$50.00 each.

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mr. Paulisin reported that the Veterans Golf Tournament went above and beyond their expectations. They had 200 golfers, which broke a record at Sandridge. The Vietnam Veterans were very pleased. They raised over \$25,000 and the proceeds are going to the Veterans house with Every Dream has a Price. They renamed the golf tournament to the "Mary Snyder/Veterans of Indian River County Annual Golf Tournament", because of Mrs. Snyder passing away and all the great things she did in the community. Mr. Matthews said this is just another example of the Veterans in the community helping Veterans.

Mr. Herman said that renaming the golf tournament to Mary Snyder is classy. Mr. Paulisin said it was the right thing to do. He said that Mrs. Snyder liked to stay in the background and did not like to be acknowledged for what she did. He said she was very proactive with the Veterans.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) Next Meeting Date – August 7, 2019

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee is scheduled for August 7, 2019.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:26 a.m.

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