

**VETERANS MEMORIAL ISLAND SANCTUARY  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES  
Wednesday, September 5, 2018 – 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, and Alternate Member #2, Peggy Lyon **Also Present:** Recreation Director, Rob Slezak; Public Works Manager, Don Dexter, Assistant City Attorney, Kira Honse, 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) August 1, 2018 – Regular Meeting**

**Ms. Fallon made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 1, 2018 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting. Mr. Herman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**B) August 16, 2018 – Special Call Meeting**

**Mr. Herman made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2018 Special Call Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting. Mr. Paulisin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

**A) Request for use of Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony on September 21, 2018 - Veterans Council of Indian River County**

Mr. Matthews announced that they received a request from the Veterans Council to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for a POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony on September 21, 2018.

Mr. Tony Young, City Councilmember, said that at the request of the Veterans Council he accepted the request to help with the POW/MIA Day ceremony. It will take place on Friday, September 21,

2018 at 9:00 a.m. at Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary at the POW/MIA monument. He briefly went over the program. He asked Mr. Matthews if he would accept the request to lead the Pledge of Allegiance for the ceremony. Mr. Matthews said that he would be proud to do that. Mr. Young stated that he will be the speaker for this ceremony and the City Council will present a Proclamation for POW/MIA day at their next City Council meeting. He said there are five (5) POW/MIA men recognized on the Island. These individuals are Robert Hurst, Joseph Hill, Edward Courtney, Ernest Sheffield, and Felix Poppell. They will place a wreath at the monument, recognize the prisoners of war, and close with the song "Amazing Grace".

Mr. Matthews stated that the POW/MIA monument at Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary is a regional monument. He said there are still thousands of military personnel that are missing or unaccounted for.

Mr. Young said he did not realize how horrendous the torture was at the POW camps and many people do not have the opportunity to hear the accounts of what the POW's suffered.

Mr. Bruce Cady, Veterans Council, stated that they are expecting about 30 people to attend the POW/MIA ceremony.

**Mr. Herman made a motion to approve the application for the POW/MIA Ceremony. Ms. Fallon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**B) Request for use of Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for a Ruck March on September 22, 2018 – Veterans Council Next Generation Veterans**

Mr. Matthews said they received a second application from the Veterans Council Next Generation Veterans to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for part of their Ruck March on September 22, 2018.

Mr. Jimmy Jackson, Vero Beach Veterans Next generation Veterans, passed out flyers about the Ruck March (on file in the City Clerk's office). He is here today to ask permission to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for the beginning and the end of the march. Their past marches have been successful and they download all their gear before they enter the Island. The march will raise funds for the Words From War monument, the Upward American Veterans program, and to collect food for the Food Pantry of Indian River County. It will be a six (6) mile beach side route with multiple water stations. They have many organizations participating including the Gold Star moms, the Indian River Sheriff Department, the Jeep Club, several military recruiting satiations, etc., and Senator Debbie Mayfield will be speaking at the end of the march.

Mr. Matthews stated that there are many people in this community that want to support the monument and the veterans. He asked if they will be starting at the Army recruiting station.

Mr. Jackson replied that it will start and end on the Island. They are doing a beach side route this year which will take them through some neighborhoods and along A1A back to the Island. They will start on the Island with an invocation, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the National Anthem. He explained that the rucksack is a modified backpack with a frame that can hold a lot of weight. The rucksacks will contain a minimum of 15 pounds of nonperishable foods and the maximum will be 30 pounds. The participants are not required to carry the weight, but they are asking that they donate nonperishable foods if they are going to participate.

**Mr. Herman made a motion to approve the request to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for the Ruck March. Mr. McIntosh seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**C) Request for use of Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for the Alzheimer & Parkinson Association's Walk to Remember on New Date of November 3, 2018**

Mr. Matthews explained that the Alzheimer & Parkinson Association attended a previous meeting with a request to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for part of their event on November 10, 2018, but that is Veterans Day. The Committee approved the use of the Island, but they were required to select a different date. The date was changed to November 3, 2018 and that is the same day as the Veterans Parade downtown.

Mr. Cady said he does not think there will be a conflict and there will be different crowds for each event. He explained that on November 3, 2018 the Veterans Council is partnering with the Cultural Council to host a parade in downtown Vero Beach. They will commence at the Community Center parking lot and proceed down 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue, turn right on 19<sup>th</sup> Street and end at the Freshman Learning Center. They will have participation by all the Veterans Organizations in the community and they are welcoming other civic organizations that want to join them. The Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Vero Beach High School band have confirmed they will be participating. The parade will celebrate the veterans in the community as well as the Historic Downtown District and the Cultural Arts Village. It will start at 9:00 a.m. and this is a small town and a small organization, so they should not hold up traffic for long.

Mr. Matthews stated that the Cultural Council has done a lot of nice things in the community including helping to raise money for the Word From War monument.

Mr. Cady announced that people who would like more information on the monument can visit their web site, [www.wordsfromwar.org](http://www.wordsfromwar.org). Their organization has committed to giving half of the proceeds to the Veterans Council in an unrestricted format. So far they have raised \$60,000 towards their capital fund raising goal \$300,000. He stated that on the east side of the roundabout at the entrance to Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary they put up a sign indicating the future location of the Words From War monument.

**Mr. Paulisin made a motion to approve the request to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary by the Alzheimer & Parkinson Association on November 3, 2018. Mr. Herman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**D) Request for use of Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for Veterans Day Ceremony on November 10, 2018 – Veterans Council of Indian River County**

Mr. Matthews stated that they also have the application to use the Island for the Veterans Day Ceremony on November 10, 2018 from the Veterans Council.

Mr. Young reported that the keynote speaker for the Veterans Day ceremony will be Lieutenant General Eric Schoomaker, who is a director at the Walter Reed Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. He will fly down here and be available for the ceremony. In conjunction will the Veterans Day ceremony they will be giving recognition of the Veterans for the Centennial

celebration, and the recognition of the Gold Star family grove. He anticipates there will be a large crowd on the Island that day, so he advised people to come early, bring a chair, and wear comfortable clothes.

Mr. Matthews said there will be a lot of activities that day. November 10<sup>th</sup> is also the birthday of the Marine Corp, but they are holding the Marine Corp Ball the weekend before.

**Ms. Fallon made a motion to approve the request to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for the Veterans Day Ceremony on November 10, 2018. Mr. McIntosh seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**E) Review City Resolution #2015-23**

Mr. Matthews stated that each of the Committee members received a copy of the City Resolution #2015-23 that provides the rules and regulations for Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. There was quite a bit of discussion over the proposed changes. Basically it will state that upon recommendation by the community of the Gold Star families a temporary marker shall be placed at a Buttonwood Tree, which makes up the 10 tree Gold Star family grove. Temporary markers are permitted to honor those who have sacrificed loved ones in support of this Country. A temporary marker will not be replaced in the event it is damaged, destroyed, lost, stolen, or otherwise removed. The reason for that wording is because in the Resolution it only addresses permanent markers for those who are recognized with cenotaphs.

Mrs. Lyon said the language in the Resolution states that no other individual memorials shall be allowed on the Island, so she would like to know if a marker and a memorial are considered the same thing.

Mr. Young stated that the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee discussed whether this temporary marker placement would expand beyond the grove of trees. The intent is to limit the temporary markers to the 10 trees in the grove to recognize those identified individuals.

Mrs. Lyon suggested that they specify that no other individual memorials shall be allowed except as otherwise stated herein, or in whatever section they create.

Mr. Young apologized that he did not have the opportunity to go over the wording with Ms. Stefanie Beskovoyne, Assistant City Attorney, prior to this meeting. He will get with her and put together the wording so it can be presented to the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee for review at their next meeting. He explained that once the temporary markers are no longer appropriate for the Island it should specify that the Gold Star Mothers would have the opportunity to replace them. Based on what Mr. Matthews said it sound like they would not be able to replace them. The concept was that if the plaque has weathered and not appropriate for the Island the Gold Star Mothers could have the plaque, or give it to the family and that location would be offered to another Gold Star family for recognition of a loved one.

**6. OLD BUSINESS**

**A) Update on the Gold Star Families Monument and Plaques**

This item was discussed following item 5-A).

Mr. Young announced that upon the recommendation from this Committee, the City Council approved the Gold Star grove. The plaque that will go on the pedestal is on order and once all the names have been confirmed for the temporary plaques they will be ordered. He said he believes that one (1) of the nine (9) names recommended for the temporary plaques is eligible for a cenotaph marker.

## **7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS**

Mr. Matthews stated that August 14<sup>th</sup> is the 73rd Anniversary of the end of World War II. Last year they celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Vietnam War on August 22<sup>nd</sup> and they should not forget the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11<sup>th</sup>.

## **8. MEMBER'S MATTERS**

Mr. Don Dexter, Public Works Manager, said that the Committee asked to have the POW/MIA flag flown with the smaller American flag during the POW/MIA Day ceremony. He thought that it might be appropriate to fly both flags through the weekend since the Ruck March will be taking place on the Island.

Mr. Matthews said that since the actual POW/MIA day is on September 15<sup>th</sup> he believes they should raise the flag on that day and leave it up for the entire week. The other Committee members were in favor of that suggestion. Mr. Dexter said he would do whatever they decide and he just wanted to make sure it was up for an appropriate amount of time.

Mr. Young reported that Mr. McIntosh had the opportunity to provide an invitation to the Secretary of Defense to come celebrate the Centennial Anniversary with the City of Vero Beach. If his office calls, he will notify the Committee if he will be here for either Veterans Day or Memorial Day next year. He stated that on Monday he will be meeting with American Legion Post 39 who has expressed a desire to support the Gold Star family grove plaques, so he will let the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee know if there will be any cost not covered by the American Legion.

## **9. NEXT MEETING DATE**

### **A) Next Meeting Date – October 3, 2018**

Mr. Herman asked to be excused from the October 3, 2018 meeting.

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee is scheduled for October 3, 2018.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

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