

COMMISSION ON VETERAN AFFAIRS MEETING MINUTES



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REGULAR MEETING
February 15, 2017

The Commission on Veteran Affairs convened in a regular meeting on February 15, 2017 at the ACC Veterans Resource Center located on 6001 Airport Blvd, Austin Texas 78752.

Chair Jason Denny called the Board Meeting to order at 7:03p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Jason Denny - Chair	Molly Potter
Pete Salazar – Vice Chair	David Thomas
Phillip Gutierrez	Guillermo Villarreal
Ramiro Hinojosa	

Staff in Attendance: Karen Haywood, Allen Bergeron, Tina Lee

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Chair Jason Denny asked the Commission members to review the minutes from the special called meeting on January 9, 2017. Commissioner David Thomas made a motion to approve the January meeting minutes and Vice Chair Pete Salazar seconded the motion to approve the minutes. Motion passed with no objection.

2. OLD BUSINESS

- Commissioners were asked to have a meeting scheduled with their council member to express their concerns and ideas for the Veterans in the City of Austin
 - Chair Denny and Vice Chair Salazar in a joint meeting with their council members discussed the issues of the Veteran Business Enterprise and One stop Shop initiative. They were informed to estimate a figure on the one stop shop and draft it as a budget item. Chair Denny pitched the one million budget to move forward and they would like to continue communication on veteran services and to have money earmarked for Veterans Plaza
 - Commissioner Potter has not been able to set up a meeting with her Council member due to his schedule but his office supports and had questions regarding staffing at the Veterans one stop shop center and the amount it would be. They also suggested to see examples of other cities and will try to meet with his office again.
 - Commissioner Hinojosa has a meeting scheduled with the Mayor's office and a member of his staff asked to talk in person regarding a monetary budget for the one stop shop initiative.

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- Commissioner Thomas has not been able to set up an appointment with his council member and would like to schedule a meeting with notes in place.
- Commissioner Gutierrez met with his Council Member and she supports the idea of Veteran's Plaza and to see the proposal and information regarding the park on Vic Mathias Shores.
- Commissioner Villarreal has met with his council member and received tentative support. They would like a report of where the location of Veterans plaza would be and recommends the Veteran Commission to work with AISD on a possible vacant building for the Veterans One Stop Shop initiative to be established and had questions on staffing.

3. NEW BUSINESS

- Dusty McCormick from the City of Austin Economic Development department discussed the aspects and creation of a veteran's small business loan program. The economic development department launched the lending program and wanted to create a lending fund for veterans. The funding would be through HUD (Housing and Urban Development) and they will work with the city department and get approval from the City Council.
 - Their mission is to 1) Promote entrepreneur in veterans, 2) Prosperity, 3) Promote employment, 4) Promote Austin as the best city. The Mayor and senior management supports this idea of proposing a micro-loan of \$0-\$35,000 at a low interest rate (2.8%) and have the veterans bring in their business proposals. Dusty asks for the commissioners on the Veteran Affairs to attend the council meeting when it is on the agenda to support the program and initiative.
- In regards to the Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE), CM Kitchen will be looking into the delay of the creation of the VBE and asks the commissioners to follow up with their council members.
- Ricardo Soliz and Rey Hernandez with the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department updated the commissioners on the status of Veterans Plaza. In 2008, they contained three monuments from the other park and arranged to have them placed in front of the American Legion Post on Veterans Drive. In 2015 they hired a consultant to develop designs and drawings but halted operations when they were asked to stop due to site being unsuitable. They are projecting Veterans Plaza to be on Vic Mathias Shores and re-engage the consultant to include the monuments and additional space once approved. Moving forward, they will need a design, possible monuments, and possible money tagged to for Vic Mathias shores. They recommend discussing with the Arts commission on the possibility of having arts/designers on board. Once the budget has been established, they will talk about the next step.
- Commissioner Potter informed the commission on the event "Served like a girl" and that the film is being premiered at SXSW. It contains stories of these women and their journey to becoming Ms. Veteran America and their Military service. The event is on March 13th at 1:30PM at the Alamo Drafthouse Ritz. Commissioner Potter requests the city to see if Mayor Adler would be available to present the proclamation prior to the showing and that the founder of Final Salute will be present. Commissioner Potter also informed the commissioner about the possibility of the Texas Veterans Commission not hosting a roll call. She would like to host a professional workshop and asks for the City to help advertise. It would be a luncheon and networking event for women veterans and

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will be open to anyone interested. Commissioner Thomas made a motion to have the veteran's commission and City of Austin to support this event and Commissioner Villarreal seconded it. The goal would be to host this event in June and look into space, and logistics to move forward.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

N/A (No public hearings during this meeting)

5. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

N/A (No citizen communication)

STAFF BRIEFINGS

- The Soldier internship program is still a work in progress. The Fleet department has hired two soldiers through the program and have other departments pending. There are 7-10 line tech positions available through Austin Water.
- Commissioner David Thomas is working with his Council member to see if we could name the street he lives on to Richard Overton Avenue by his birthday on May 11th.
- May 18th- Memorial day Proclamation ceremony at City Hall honoring Navy Seal Deets's family

ADJOURN: Jason Denny adjourned the meeting at 8:47 PM. Without objection