

**COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
MINUTES****REGULAR MEETING
March 18, 2014**

The Commission on Veteran Affairs convened in a regular meeting on March 18, 2014 at City Hall, 301 West 2nd Street in Austin, Texas.

Chair Cassaundra Melgar- C'D Baca called the Board Meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Cassaundra Melgar- C'De Baca, Chair
Phillip Gutierrez, Vice Chair
John Conley

Chris Garcia
Gary Linder
Bill McLellan

Staff in Attendance: Allen Bergeron, Tina Lee

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Chair Cassaundra Melgar-C'D Baca asked Commission members to review minutes from the meeting on February 18, 2014. Vice Chair Philip Gutierrez moved to approve the February 18, 2014 minutes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Chris Garcia. Motion passed with no objection

2. OLD BUSINESS

- Updates by the Committee working groups lead on the top three priorities for our Veterans.
 - Homeless Veterans- Chris continues to attend the monthly ECHO meetings and would like to schedule a committee meeting at a later time.
 - Female Veterans- Next committee meeting is to be determined
 - Employment and Education – Next committee meeting is to be determined
- The tour at the VA with the Mayor and Council members is to be held on either April 28th or May 2. The group will consist of the Mayor, two council members and 3 commissioners.
- Commissioner Chris researched around Texas for other successful “One Stop Shops” for Veterans and would like to have a survey completed to determine which services are needed for Veterans in and around Austin. The commission also discussed the possibility of creating a network of students to assist and participate and for the Commissioners to be involved/partner with other community organizations to assist Veterans.
- The annual report for the commission was completed and would like to take action this year in assisting and making a difference in Veteran’s lives. They would like to volunteer, speak and participate with other organizations and have a volunteer force present to assist Veterans.

3. NEW BUSINESS

- Alan Graham, president and founding member of Mobile Loaves and Fishes informed the board on his ideas to ending Homelessness and have 25% of their community consist of Veterans. The community will break ground on June 1st and 200 homeless people will be housed.
- Tom Orlando, CEO of Homes 4 Vets presented to the board about his ideas to ending Veteran Homelessness. His organization will offer affordable housing and hopes to establish a 20 acre community for Veterans. This organization will offer rehab and vocational training and stabilize the lifestyle of Veterans. This community will need 25 million to be completed and 6 million to start.
- Amy Price, Community Information Director of 2-1-1 for United Way presented to the board on how to direct and serve Veterans who contact United Way. United Way collects data and reports community trends and assists with basic needs. They serve as a resource guide to the community and would like to know the resources and information to direct Veterans to organizations where they could be helped and informed of their needs and benefits.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

N/A (No public hearings during this meeting)

5. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

- Bill Wilson, from Senator Van De Putte's office presented a proclamation on women Veterans to Chair Cassaundra Melgar- C'D Baca
- Kimia Dargahi, from Delta Gamma informed the board about volunteer opportunities with "Service for Sight" and would like to join forces in assisting and helping Veterans who are blind or visually impaired.
- Zenobia Joseph, Army Veteran communicated with the board on hiring Veterans and employment. She requests that information on hiring Veterans from the City be listed online and asked for a percentage of Veterans employed by the City of Austin.

6. STAFF BRIEFINGS

N/A (No Staff Briefings)

7. ADJOURN: Chair Cassaundra Melgar-C'D Baca adjourned the meeting at 3:35 P.M. Without objection