

**COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS  
MINUTES****SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
August 26, 2015**

The Commission on Veteran Affairs convened in a special called meeting on August 26, 2015 at St Jones Building, Conference Room 200A, located on 1000 East 11<sup>th</sup> St in Austin, Texas.

Former Chair Phillip Gutierrez called the Board Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Jason Denny  
Phillip Gutierrez  
G. Bailey Harrison

David Thomas  
Pete Salazar  
Nicholas Van Zandt

Staff in Attendance: Tina Lee, Allen Bergeron, Jeff Burton

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Former Chair Phillip Gutierrez asked Commission members to review minutes from the regular meeting on July 17, 2015. Commissioner David Thomas moved to approve the last meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Pete Salazar. Motion passed with no objection.

**2. OLD BUSINESS**

- The former commissioners of the Veterans Commission developed three work groups that concentrated on the top three priorities that Veterans face. With a minimum of three commissioners per group they have decided to continue concentrating on the following work groups
  - Homeless Veterans : Phillip Gutierrez, David Thomas, Jason Denny
    - There are 449 current vouchers and 355 veterans housed with 46 currently searching.
    - Heroes Lodge, American Gi Forum initiative is moving forward with 120 days from building. There will be 212 units/ transitional units located at 7800 Burleson Rd.
  - Female Veterans: Cassaundra Melgar C' De Baca, tbd, tbd
  - Employment/ Education: Nick Van Zandt, Pete Salazar, and George Harrington.
    - Commissioner Harrington recommended adding transitioning veterans as a priority with Employment and Education.

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

- Introduction of the new commissioners took place at this special called meeting
  - Jason Denny, USMC Veteran and working at the Texas Veterans Land Board
  - Phillip Gutierrez, Former Chair of the Veterans Commission and Navy Veteran
  - Nick Van Zandt, Former Army MP and Intel officer

- George Harrington, West Point Graduate and Engineering officer currently working with a civilian engineer firm
- David Thomas, USAF Viet Nam Veteran and was with the past Veterans Commission
- Pete Salazar, worked with Veterans through US Vets and Caritas with clinical case management.
- Past Commission's goals and mission were to assist with the creation and success of
  - Developing VBE ( Veteran Business Enterprise)
  - Veterans Park in the Capital City of Texas to be grand and accessible.
    - Commissioners agreed to vote at the next meeting for the creation of a subcommittee of the Veterans park
  - Resource Center of a "One Stop Shop"
    - The council recommendations submitted by the prior commissioners lacked signification amount of detail in terms of stakeholder commitment and funding. The next recommendations should include an employment component into the resource center along with the cost of maintenance. Also a list of confirmed and interested organizations should be included along with the plans of development this one stop shop center for Austin.
- The current commissioners decided to vote on the Chair for the Veterans Commission at the meeting and to vote for the Vice Chair for the next meeting when more members were present.
  - Phillip Gutierrez nominated Jason Denny as the Chair for the Veterans Commission and Pete Salazar seconded the motion. The vote was passed with no objections and Jason Denny accepted his new position as the Chair for the Veterans Commission.
- George Harrington made a motion to change the Commission meeting times to 6PM for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month, Pete Salazar seconded the motion. This vote was passed with no objections and the meeting for the Veteran's Commission will begin at 6PM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month.

#### 4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

N/A (No public hearings during this meeting)

#### 5. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

N/A (No Citizen Communication during this meeting)

#### 6. STAFF BRIEFINGS

- Jeff Burton, Current Executive liaison for the Veterans Commission and current Employee relations and acting Assistant Director for HRD overseeing the Veterans Program.
- The City of Austin has a strong and lasting relationship with Fort Hood, Camp Mabry.
- On August 31<sup>st</sup>, 3 Corps will be casing colors in Fort Hood and the Commissioners are invited to attend and represent the Commission on Veteran Affairs for the City of Austin.
- Any assistance with the BC Email should contact CTM at 512-974-3497.
- The Mayor held a press conference to ending Veteran Homelessness by Veterans Day 2015
- Homeless stand down will take place at the VFW 856 on October 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Allen Bergeron emphasized to the Commissioners how important conflict of interest as a Commissioner and other nonprofits and organizations are and to keep their City affiliation separate from other organizations.
- VBE disparity study should be completed between the months of October – November this year.

#### 6. ADJOURN: Jason Denny adjourned the meeting at 6:35 PM. Without objection