

**COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
MINUTES****REGULAR MEETING
October 21, 2015**

The Commission on Veteran Affairs convened in a regular meeting on October 21, 2015 at St Jones Building, Conference Room 200A, located on 1000 E 11th St in Austin, Texas.

Chair Jason Denny called the Board Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Jason Denny – Chair - CM Kitchen
Pete Salazar – Vice Chair - CM Pool
Douglas O’Connell – CM Gallo

Phillip Gutierrez – CM Troxclair
George Bailey Harrington – MPT Tovo
Nicholas Van Zandt – Mayor Adler

Staff in Attendance: Allen Bergeron, Tina Lee

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Chair Jason Denny asked Commission members to review minutes from the regular meeting on September 16, 2015. Commissioner Phillip Gutierrez recommended adding the park committee into the minutes and the time adjourning at 7:10PM. Once the minutes have been changed, Vice Chair Pete Salazar moved to approve the last meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillip Gutierrez. 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
 - Heroes Lodge: Problem with tax credit and VASH vouchers are limited due to requirements of what a homeless Veteran is.
 - Female Veterans:
 - Only Female commissioner resigned from the commission. Hoping for the next vacancies to fill this committee.
 - Employment/Transitioning Veterans/Education: Nick Van Zandt, Pete Salazar, and George Harrington.
 - Commissioners reached out to ACC to speak about the development regarding the one stop shop center for Veterans.
 - Possible partnerships with UT Veteran services discussed and the ability to include other Veteran service offices.

3. NEW BUSINESS

- The HEB program has three foundations they are working with to build and buy a program for wounded Veterans. More details regarding this program HEB is working on is to come at a later date.
- Presentation by CEO and Founder Clay Weger regarding his company “Freedom Office Supplies”. Mr. Weger informed the commission that he just started his company in March last year and they have been running for three months. They are working with Veterans and employs Veterans if they know anyone looking for employment. Mr. Weger built this company for Veterans and that hiring Veterans make the most sense since they are disciplined, eager and loyal to working diligently and effectively

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

N/A (No public hearings during this meeting)

• CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

- General Robert Halverson addressed the commission regarding the airport parking for veterans change. The City goes above and beyond in supporting Veterans but many were upset about this change and wanted the commissioners to address their council members regarding this change. An update later that afternoon has been brought to Gen Halverson’s attention that Veterans will have complimentary parking but limited to up to 5 days and a list of those authorized are on the website.

STAFF BRIEFINGS

- Annual Homeless stand down scheduled for October 23rd. Tents are needed due to rain
- Veterans Appreciation luncheon only for City of Austin employees is scheduled for November 10th. Commissioners invited to attend and represent their council members
- Marine Corp Ball in South Austin Marriott, the Mayor will do a proclamation on November 14th.
- Veterans park update
 - Phillip and Guillermo looked at possible sites for the Veterans Park
 - i. Palmer Auditorium park
 - ii. Liz Carpenter Park
 - iii. Lady Bird Park
 - Would like to choose a place where it is visible and accessible
 - They will schedule a meeting with City Parks and Recreation to discuss any possible movement on this Veterans Park initiative.
- Annually, the City of Austin and Fort Hood partners together to invite senior leaders to participate in “A day in the life of a soldier”.
- Would like the commissioners to discuss VBE (Veteran Business Enterprise) with their council members and that the disparity study is almost complete.

ADJOURN: Jason Denny adjourned the meeting at 7:24 PM. Without objection