

**COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
MINUTES****REGULAR MEETING
January 20, 2016**

The Commission on Veteran Affairs convened in a regular meeting on January 20, 2016 at the ACC Veterans Resource Center located on 6001 Airport Blvd, Austin Texas 78752.

Chair Jason Denny called the Board Meeting to order at 6:33 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
Sandra Serna – CM Garza

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 December 16, 2015. Vice Chair Pete Salazar moved to approve the last meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner George Harrington. 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
 - No updates
 - Female Veterans:
 - Sandra Serna will like to take the lead of this work group and will report back with recommendations to involve the community.
 - Employment/Transitioning Veterans/Education: Nick Van Zandt, Pete Salazar, and George Harrington.
 - No updates
- A few Commissioners had a meeting with the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department regarding the next step and plans with ideals for the Veterans Park in Austin Texas.

3. NEW BUSINESS

- Jolene Grajczyk from the Travis County Veteran’s court presented and informed the commissioners about the history of Veterans Court and the success of Veterans graduating. There have been 127 graduates to date. (Brochure available in supporting documents)

- Nicki Paul from ECHO provided a spreadsheet regarding the status of Homeless Veterans in Austin. She provided a strategy for long term sustenance and would like to form a partnership with the Veterans Commission to assist and help end Veteran homelessness and the Mayor's initiative. (Attachment provided in supporting documents)
- The Commission will seek more information and rules regarding social media with the City Clerk's Board and Commissions officer to have a presence on social media.
- The Veterans Day parade flag discussion will be moved to the next meeting
- In regards to the Neighborhood Enhancement Team (NET) with Code Compliance, it would be best for CM Casar's appointee to take the lead in assisting and forming a partnership since it will be in their district.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

N/A (No public hearings during this meeting)

• CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

- Mary from the Daughters of the American Revolution spoke in regards to being more involved in the community and that they will like to assist Veterans.

STAFF BRIEFINGS

- There is a growing relationship with Fort Hood and they invite the City of Austin senior staff to participate in the "Life in a Day of a Soldier". The Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act is still being discussed and will be implemented this year.
- In regards to the Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE), there was a study done to show that there is an adverse impact on Veterans.

ADJOURN: Jason Denny adjourned the meeting at 8:14 PM. Without objection