

**COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
MINUTES****REGULAR MEETING
February 17, 2016**

The Commission on Veteran Affairs convened in a regular meeting on February 17, 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 6:31 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Jason Denny – Chair
Pete Salazar – Vice Chair
Douglas O’Connell
Phillip Gutierrez

George Bailey Harrington
David Thomas
Sandra Serna
Guillermo Villarreal

Staff in Attendance: Tina Lee

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Chair Jason Denny asked Commission members to review minutes from the regular meeting on January 20, 2016. Commissioner Phillip Gutierrez recommended adding Mary from the Daughters of the Revolution to the Citizen communication. Vice Chair Pete Salazar moved to approve the last meeting minutes after these changes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner David Thomas. 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
 - Phillip recommended reaching out to someone in the Mayor’s initiative to speak at the meeting regarding the guidelines of the Heroes fund.
 - Female Veterans:
 - Sandra Serna reached out to the Texas Veterans Commission and County. Would like to look at the possibility of co-hosting a community dialog and conduct studies and surveys for Women Veterans on interested topics and issues.
 - Employment/Transitioning Veterans/Education: Nick Van Zandt, Pete Salazar, and George Harrington.
 - Reached out to their council members and waiting for feedback. The next stop will be to reach out to employment agencies throughout the City for opportunities for Veterans. .

- Guillermo and Phillip with Parks and Recreation Manager Ricardo Soliz regarding Veterans Park. They voiced their concerns about the current projects and the ADA accommodations. They recommended a different location and look into opportunities for local artists to participate in designing the park. The next step will be to solidify the steps and to partner with the appropriate people to proceed in designing and developing Veterans Park in the City of Austin.

3. NEW BUSINESS

- Assistant Director for the City of Austin SMBR Debra Dibble informed the Commissioners regarding the process and update regarding the Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE). The disparity study has been completed with a total of 727 pages and Director of SMBR Veronica Lara has signed a memo regarding the next step for the VBE and where to find the draft of the study. Debra encouraged the commissioners to go to website and speak before the Council members regarding the Veteran's input and recommendations. On March 1st there will be an advisory committee at 5:30PM with NERA doing the presentation regarding the VBE disparity study. On March 3rd, the Council will accept or reject the study and Debra recommends the commissioners to speak during the citizen's communication about the VBE. In March – June, they will be collecting data before implementation.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

N/A (No public hearings during this meeting)

• CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

- Molly Potter, USAF Disabled Veteran was wounded in Afghanistan in 2010. She is going for Miss Veteran America and is completing an awareness campaign for beyond the uniform, homeless female veterans and their children and housing for deployed single mothers. She is looking for opportunities to be involved with the Veteran community and to support others.
- Rudy Uribe, President and CEO of Recruit Vets have been involved with and in favor of the development of the VBE for the past ten years. He has a Veteran owned business and he is looking forward to the opportunity for the City to accept Veteran Businesses.

STAFF BRIEFINGS

- March is Women Veteran's month and Mayor Adler will be presenting a proclamation for women Veterans month on March 3rd. The Veterans program will be hosting an only City appreciation luncheon event for Women Veterans on March 22nd.
- The Commission has agreed to call a Special called meeting on March 1st at 6:30PM regarding the VBE.

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