

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

The Commission on Veteran Affairs convened in a regular meeting on April 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 6:30 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

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

Pete Phillips  
David Thomas  
Sandra Serna  
Nicholas Van Zandt

Staff in Attendance: Karen Haywood, Allen Bergeron, Tina Lee

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Chair Jason Denny asked the Commission members to review the minutes from the regular meeting on February 17, 2016 and the Special called meeting on March 1, 2016. Commissioner Sandra recommended striking out the sentence regarding her changes and the year to be changed from 2015 to 2016. Vice Chair Pete Salazar moved to approve the February meeting minutes and Commissioner Phillip Gutierrez seconded the motion to approve the minutes. Bailey Harrington made a motion to approve the Special called meeting meetings and it 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
    - Andrew Miller from the VA- HUD/VASH program has informed the community that all vouchers are out to Veterans and will need to fill them by finding the appropriate housing
  - Female Veterans:
    - Sandra Serna contacted Travis County and Texas Veterans Commission regarding data of what they have been doing for Women Veterans. She would like a survey to be commissioned throughout the State of Texas.
  - Employment/Transitioning Veterans/Education: Nick Van Zandt, Pete Salazar, and George Harrington.

- No updates on Transition and education
- Ricardo Soliz with the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department discussed the progress of the Veterans Park. The Commissioners agreed to approve the location for Veterans Park to be near Vic Mathias Shores where there will be parking and visibility. They will continue to meet until the park progress has started in the City of Austin.
- In the Special Called Meeting, they have discussed the language to present to the City Council and Phillip, Nick and Jason were present at the minority committee. They are aware of the recommendation and our participation in the disparity study.
  - In 2012, the idea for VBE was approved and a council resolution was adopted to complete a disparity study and approve the VBE if there was a disparity found.
- The Commission end of year report will be worked on by Chair Jason Denny for submission.

### 3. NEW BUSINESS

- Staff of the Samaritan Center and Hope for Heroes Program were present to discuss the status of the Veterans resource center (One Stop Shop). Samaritan Center would like to take the lead with a grant to receive funds to create this initiative and is seeking the assistance from the Veterans Commission. They would like to work and collaborate to be one of the many providers housed at a one stop shop for Veterans seeking assistance and resources. The Senate Bill 55 is a dollar to dollar match for gaps for services and the Veterans Commission will invite a presenter for the next meeting to discuss in detail regarding this grant and senate bill.
- Jim Darwin, Veteran and was appointed as the chair for the 2016 Veterans Parade Committee. Jim has explained the controversy regarding the Confederate flag being flown during the Parade and has informed the commission that he will remain neutral regarding its participation in the Parade.

### 4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

N/A (No public hearings during this meeting)

### • CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

N/A (No Citizen Communication)

### STAFF BRIEFINGS

- On May 19, the City of Austin will be having a Memorial Day proclamation ceremony honoring a local Veteran who was killed in Action at 10AM.
- On March 23, the City hosted its 2<sup>nd</sup> Women Veteran Appreciation Luncheon and will be coordinating a women Veterans Honor Flight for October 2016.

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