

COMMISSION ON VETERAN AFFAIRS MEETING MINUTES



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**REGULAR MEETING
May 18, 2016**

The Commission on Veteran Affairs convened in a regular meeting on May 18, 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 6:32 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

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

George Baily Harrington
Pete Phillips
Molly Potter
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 April 20, 2016. Chair Jason Denny made a motion to approve the April meeting minutes and Commissioner Phillip Gutierres recommended to add his name to the end of year report and seconded the motion to approve the minutes. 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 Gutierres, David Thomas, Jason Denny
 - Austin has reached functional zero but the numbers of homeless veterans continue to grow.
 - Female Veterans:
 - Texas State and the Texas Veterans Commission sent out needs assessment on Veterans and Molly will be briefing the commission at the next meeting with the TVC Women Veteran Program Manager Anna Baker.
 - Employment/Transitioning Veterans/Education: Nick Van Zandt, Pete Salazar, and George Harrington.

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- No updates on Transition and education
- In regards to the last update on Veteran's park, they have tentatively decided on a visible and open spot for the City's Veterans park and the next step would be to commission some artwork or have a design competition. Nothing is official as of today and will wait to move forward with the plans of Veterans Park. Will be having another meeting with Parks and Recreation and eventually generate interest to have a design contest.

3. NEW BUSINESS

- Debra Dibble with the City of Austin SMBR office updated the commission and recapped the Veteran Business Enterprise status. The disparity study was completed and they are working with a legal team out of D.C. on the final reports. The program will need more staff and the department has put in a request to get their budget approved. It is recommended to encourage and lobby to the council to approve the budget during the recommendation in September. Director Veronica Lara will come to the Veteran Commission meeting prior to the budget approval. This initiative dates back to 2006 and should be running by the end of this year.
- Kyle Mitchell informed the commission regarding the Senate Bill 55 and how Texas Veterans Military alliance will be the pilot admin for this grant statewide. This grant is part of the Health and Human Services Department and is a one million dollar program. This is a mental health grant to fix the gaps in veteran services for mental health.
- Nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair were convened at this meeting and nominations for Chair were current Chair Jason Denny and Vice Chair Pete Salazar. Both Jason Denny and Pete Salazar were voted to remain in charge of the Veterans Commission and the vote was approved unanimously.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

N/A (No public hearings during this meeting)

• CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

N/A (No Citizen Communication)

STAFF BRIEFINGS

- Memorial Day ceremony at City Hall is scheduled for the following week and the Commission is invited to attend
- In regards to the Fort Hood Soldier internship program, the MOA is moving up to the City Manager and to be approved in a couple of days. Fleet department will be the pilot program to have mechanics work for the City of Austin with the hopes for the program to expand in the coming years.
- May 27-28th is the last spring flight for Honor Flight Austin and Commissioner George P. Bush and his staff will be attending this flight.

ADJOURN: Jason Denny adjourned the meeting at 7:54 PM. Without objection