

COMMISSION ON VETERAN AFFAIRS MEETING MINUTES



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REGULAR MEETING
June 15, 2016

The Commission on Veteran Affairs convened in a regular meeting on June 15, 2016 at the ACC Veterans Resource Center located on 6001 Airport Blvd, Austin Texas 78752.

Vice Chair Pete Salazar called the Board Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Pete Salazar- Vice Chair
Philip Gutierrez
George Harrington

Pete Phillips
Molly Potter
Nick Van Zandt
Guillermo Villarreal

Staff in Attendance: Allen Bergeron, Tina Lee

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Vice Chair Pete Salazar asked the Commission members to review the minutes from the regular meeting on May 18, 2016. Commissioner George Harrington made a motion to approve the May meeting minutes and Commissioner Molly Potter 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 Gutierrez, David Thomas, Jason Denny
 - Austin has reached its goal of functional zero and at the moment there are about 40 vouchers available with 60 veterans looking
 - Female Veterans:
 - No updates
 - Employment/Transitioning Veterans/Education: Nick Van Zandt, Pete Salazar, and George Harrington.
 - No updates
- Veterans Park is still a work in progress with the next step of seeking art designers, and approaching the Parks and Recreation Department board. Another discussion would be to strategize on how to raise money to make this park known in the State of Texas.

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3. NEW BUSINESS

- Anna Baker, Women Veterans Program Manager alongside with Commissioner Molly Potter went over the details regarding the Women Veterans assessment. Studies has shown that Texas houses the largest population of Women Veterans and that they have the highest level of needs. There are still services lacking specialty care such as gynecology, pregnancies and medical equipment. There are issues such as MST and domestic violence lacking sensitivity and that females are 3 times more likely to be homeless. The TVC holds many events to support women veterans such as roll call, virtual coffee, and they partner with organizations to better serve our women veterans.
- Veterans Economic Communities Initiative was discussed by John Collins, a consultant who goes into communities and promotes partnerships and dialogue among communities. They work with the government leaders and raise awareness of benefits of investing in veterans. They connect veterans and their families with meaningful employment and career development opportunities. They talk to employers who can register and give basic information to help veterans and post jobs and commitments.
- Justin Bohannon, founder of “Make a Vet Sweat” advocated his organization to assisting veterans with their PTSD through fitness. Justin served 10 years with the Army infantry and created this nonprofit 5 months ago. They raise money to give gym memberships for 90 days. Their goal is to have their program nationally recognized and they intend to hold charity events and fundraisers to keep their mission ongoing.
- Chris Araujo with MVPN informed the Commission regarding the 20 million grant from health and human services for gaps in services for veterans. They plan to distribute 10 million at the end of June and 10 million at the end of fall. They would like to seek support from the City to provide a structure and have this collaborative project with other nonprofits participating.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

N/A (No public hearings during this meeting)

• CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

Adrenne Mendoza spoke to the commission about her role with Meals on Wheels Veteran Services. They are funded through the Texas Veterans Commission, Fund for Veteran Assistance Grant and they provide assistance with rental, utilities and food delivery to qualified Veterans to improve their quality of life.

STAFF BRIEFINGS

- There will be a 4th of July event honoring our WWII Veterans. MPT Tovo will be presenting the proclamation on behalf of Mayor Steve Adler.
- The women Veterans honor flight is scheduled for October 7-8 and we need more veterans to apply
- The unveiling of the City’s internship program with Fort Hood will be next Thursday at 9AM in City Hall. The City Manager and Fort Hood Garrison Commander will sign the MOU and Fleet services will start the program off

ADJOURN: Pete Salzar adjourned the meeting at 7:47 PM. Without objection