

# LOS ANGELES COUNTY VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION

1816 S. FIGUEROA STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015



Ruth A. Wong  
Director

## MINUTES REGULAR MEETING Wednesday, February 8, 2017

### Present:

#### Commissioners

Kristine Stanley, Chair  
Antonio Chapa  
Dave Culmer  
Tom Lasser  
Patricia Jackson-Kelley  
Thomas O'Shaughnessy  
Col. Julian Bond  
Ramon Rodriguez

### Absent:

#### Commissioners

Fred Flores  
Carvel Gay

### County Department

#### **Military and Veterans Affairs**

Ruth A. Wong, Director  
Tatiana Rosas, Executive Secretary

#### Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Approval of Minutes

Chair Kristine Stanley called the meeting to order at 1:32p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Jim Zenner. Commissioner O'Shaughnessy motioned to approve Minutes of January 11, 2017 and was seconded by Commissioner Jackson-Kelley. The Minutes were approved unanimously.

#### Roll Call

As noted above.

#### Chairman's Report

Chair Stanley welcomed everyone for attending and for those that stayed after attending the Collaborative meeting this morning here at Patriotic Hall. Chair went over the Robert Rules of Order and stated that guests should speak with their representatives on any issue or concerns after the Commission meeting.

#### Privatization of the VA & Discuss to Recommend to the Board to Oppose

Commissioner O'Shaughnessy stated that the administration has appointed a member of the veteran family, not a veteran, but committed to the reform of the administration and isn't in favor of the privatization. Therefore, this item is no longer necessary at

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present and requests that it be taken off the Agenda. Colonel Bond stated that he concurs with the request and is seconded by Commissioner Culmer. All agree in favor.

**Construction at the Los Angeles National Cemetery – Thomas M Ruck, Director**

Mr. Thomas Ruck, Director, Los Angeles National Cemetery stated that the construction contract to break ground was signed in late January. He will return to the March meeting and provide an update on the timeline. Also, stated there is no new information regarding the columbarium and when that will move forward.

**Cohen Military Family Clinic at USC – Kathryn Arnett, Director**

Kathryn Arnett, Director of the USC Cohen Mental Health Clinic for Veterans, stated that The Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at USC provides high-quality, confidential and personalized mental health care to veterans and military families at no cost. Services are available to any person who has served in the U.S. Armed Forces, including National Guard and Reserves, regardless of their role or discharge status.

The clinic uses evidence-based practices with a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our veterans and their families. Services are provided by trained and credentialed staff. There are numerous options for receiving care based on the individual needs and preferences of each veteran and family member. Services Include: Counseling Services, Psychiatric Services, Substance Use Services, Family Interventions, Care Coordination, Peer Support Services, and Telehealth.

Jim Zenner, our Associate Director of Outreach and Community Programs, stated they are now reaching out to partners to bring in housing and employment services. They are looking for partners in SPAs 6 and 8.

**Tenancy Assessment – Commissioner Thomas O’Shaughnessy**

Commissioner O’Shaughnessy stated there was a subcommittee meeting and it was determined that the department ask County Counsel to review the new changes to the lease agreement so it has no legal sufficiency and at the March meeting the new lease agreement be put to a vote.

Motion by Commissioner O’Shaughnessy to send Lease Agreement to legal counsel. Motion by seconded by Commissioner Chapa and all were in favor.

**Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Report – Ruth A. Wong**

**Department Activities –**

**Veteran’s designation on Driver’s License (Nov. 11, 2015 – December 31, 2016)** – 6,063 veteran’s verifications issued since November 11, 2015. 1,380 claims filed

**Ceremonies and Commemorations –**

**January 1, 2017** – Public Defender Ron Brown retired

**January 17, 2017** – Arcadia City Council meeting – presented scrolls to Arcadia Policy Dept. Honor Guard

**January 23, 2017** – Retirement Luncheon for DCFS Director, Philip L. Browning

**January 31, 2017** – Board Presentation to recognize Merchant Marines World War II and SS Lane Victory

**February 8, 2017** - Zoot Suit Reception honoring Luis Valdez for his groundbreaking work at the Hall of Administration

**February 9, 2017** – Supervisor Sheila Kuehl's Birthday reception at Hall of Administration

**February 10, 2017** – Black History Month Ceremony at Patriotic Hall

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**Meetings and Conferences-**

**January 5, 2017** – Conference with LASHA and the Los Angeles Veterans Alliance and Secretary Robert McDonald, Mayor Eric Garcetti, and Board of Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas in the auditorium

**January 11, 2017** - Meet & Introduction 4th District Deputy Lynda Johnson and tour of SS Lane Victory in San Pedro and arrange Board presentation to recognize Merchant Marines World War II

**January 14, 2017** – 2<sup>nd</sup> District Empowerment Conference at USC

**January 18, 2017** – Workforce Development meeting Cal State Los Angeles 1<sup>st</sup> District

**January 19, 2017** – Department Head Meeting at Hall of Administration

**February 1, 2017** – Budget Hearing at Hall of Administration

**February 2, 2017** - College of the Canyons Meeting to establish partnership with Veterans Resource Center

**February 8, 2017** – Los Angeles Veterans Collaborative at Patriotic Hall

**February 10, 2017** – Meet with Dr. Jonathan Sherin, Director, Department of Mental Health

**February 16, 2017** – Department Head Meeting at Hall of Administration

**February 17, 2017** – Standing meeting with Rachel Zaiden, Deputy, Third Supervisorial District

**February 18, 2017** – Tuskegee Airmen Foundation hosting Black History Month Reception at Patriotic Hall

**February 22, 2017** – Hosting Los Angeles County Management Council Exec Committee meeting at Patriotic Hall

**February 27 thru March 3, 2017** – California Association of County Veteran Service Officers (CACVSO) Conference in Sacramento.

**Military & Veterans Affairs (MVA) Staff**

ASM I for Building Operations has been identified to hire.

**VAC Strategic Plan Committee Report – Commissioners Hesse, Chapa and O’Shaughnessy**

The VAC Strategic Plan FY 2016-17 was reviewed. All needed corrections were identified. Goals I through III were reviewed and assignments to Goals and Objectives were provided.

Goal #	Objective #	Commissioner Assigned to Goal
I		Thomas E. Lasser
	1	
	2	Patricia Jackson-Kelley
	3	
	4	Patricia Jackson-Kelley
<b>II</b>		
	1	
<b>III</b>		
	1	Chair Hesse & Col. Julian Bond

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- a. MVA & VAC Campaign Committee – Thomas Lasser recommended a retreat for the Commission to discuss Strategic Plan and goals, operating procedures for the Commissioners. Chair asked Commissioner Lasser to coordinate dates/location.
- b. Community Recognition Committee – Patricia Jackson-Kelley will meet with the Chair to develop a survey/form to be able to nominate someone to be recognized/honored.
- c. Bob Hope Tenant Committee – Thomas O’Shaughnessy stated he had nothing else to report.
- d. Event Chair – Patricia Jackson-Kelley stated there is a scheduled program for Black History Month on February 10<sup>th</sup> at Patriotic Hall. The Women’s Program is scheduled for March 24<sup>th</sup>.
- e. Suicide Awareness & Prevention Committee – Kristine Stanley will invite the Clay Hunt Program and Dr. McKnight from DMH to next month’s meeting.
- f. VAC Professional Development Committee – Colonel Julian Bond stated he is doing the framework and will meet with Chair Stanley and present a timeline at next month’s meeting. Also will work on a succession planning and put together a committee for the next Chair vote.

The next VAC meeting location is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District, it is not verified but the proposed meeting will be at Southwest College at the Veterans Center, 1600 W. Imperial Hwy & Western Ave.

**Comments from Audience (three minutes each)**

Francisco Juarez, Project Manager, VAL-OR, Veterans Advocate Lobby Organization, provided an update on “The Home.” He stated that there is environmental impact in building the private school on VA grounds. He is seeking VAC support to move with caution. He distributed “Land Grab Packets.”

Atem B. Atem, WYLD is a veterans and youth mentorship program. In the program youth and veterans work together on service learning projects, Leave No Trace ethos, recreation through hiking and backpacking, educating the community about access to the outdoors, and caring for the environment. “We believe these groups have a lot to offer each other and their communities when given the opportunity to meet their highest potential.”

David Jackson, USC Credit Union, Director of Community Development, stated his primary focus is financial literacy and wanted to introduce himself to the Commission.

Tracy Anderson, advocate for 46years, a combat veteran and lives in building 207. She stated that Andrew Bock is restricted to a wheelchair and was promised to be placed in a medical facility and nothing has been done. She doesn’t understand how this veteran can live in this homeless sub-standard home and is here to ask assistance for him. Director Ruth Wong stated that she would assist.

Chris Baca, Meals on Wheels West, for veterans of all ages, he delivers as long as you are home-bound (troubled or unable to purchase meals). He wanted to introduce himself and asked that everyone support Measure H.

Debra Mendelsohn, Deputy, 5<sup>th</sup> Supervisorial District for Supervisor Kathryn Barger. She wanted to introduce herself and bring greeting from the Supervisor. Also, Supervisor Barger will continue former Supervisor Antonovich’s Tribute to Veterans at Arcadia Park during the Memorial Day weekend and invited everyone to attend.

Kyle Orlemann, is a wife to a service connected veteran. She called 911 to help her husband and stated the ambulance was not allowed to take her husband to the VA. Her husband ended up staying at a civilian hospital for three-days until it was safe to move him and because they were unable to access his record from his USB wristband the hospital administered the wrong medications. It took the ambulance 45minutes to get him to the hospital and the second time he got sick, she didn’t call the ambulance and it took her 15minutes to reach the VA hospital. She doesn’t understand why when calling 911 for an ambulance; they are unable to take a veteran to a VA hospital.

**New Business**

Nothing for New Business.

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**Item's for Next Month's Agenda**

- Los Angeles National Cemetery – Thomas Ruck
- West Los Angeles VA representative
- Expansion of Brentwood School – Thomas O'Shaughnessy
- Fire Department vs. Private Ambulance – Thomas O'Shaughnessy asked to see if there is a topic for discussion
- Representative from County regarding the Parking Structure for Patriotic Hall – Ramon Rodriguez

Deputy Patrick Blachfield Gadut, Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, provided an update on the LA Sheriff's Department Military and Veterans Affairs Unit. The unit is actively recruiting, there is currently over 1,000 veterans employed in the Sheriff's Department. There are over 300 in-mates that are veterans and they are looking at housing methods so that the VA can provide better services to veteran in-mates.

**Follow-Up on Veteran Issues**

Commissioner Culmer requested that the Director to look into past paperwork of the renovation pertaining to the parking lot; there is a necessity to recall the past plans on the building of the parking lot at Patriotic Hall. Motion by Commissioner Culmer to find the original plans that called for a parking structure at Patriotic Hall; What happened and why? The motion was seconded by Commissioner O'Shaughnessy and all were in favor.

**Good of the Order**

Commissioner Dave Culmer stated he had nothing for the good of the order.

Commissioner Ramon Rodriguez stated he had nothing for the good of the order.

Commissioner Julian Bond stated the 746th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, will have a deployment ceremony at the battalion's Van Nuys headquarters on February 11<sup>th</sup>; they will be en route to Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

Commissioner Antonio Chapa stated the Culinary Program at Patriotic Hall will start another session in March. In late April or early May, the VA Minority Deputy Ricardo Reyes is looking at a panel in LA County. There are currently 47,000 veterans that have not filed for citizenship.

Commissioner Tom O'Shaughnessy stated that on January 25<sup>th</sup> at the American Legion Post #43 there was a Town hall meeting on Housing and Affordable Housing that he attended. He attended the LA Collaborative at Patriotic Hall and the Legal Sub-committee and they discussed changes in the law and how we deal with parking (or not being able to pay a ticket). He will be compiling a letter on how to contact our State Legislators and will put together appropriate actions.

Commissioner Tom Lasser stated he had nothing for the good of the order.

Commissioner Patricia Jackson-Kelley stated "A System worth Saving" at the Hollywood Post #43. The Change of Command – Army Recruiting ceremony at Patriotic Hall with Commissioner Lasser.

Chair Kristine Hesse stated on February 14<sup>th</sup> the San Gabriel Valley Job Fair connecting student veterans with employment. On March 24<sup>th</sup> the County Women's Veteran Program - Wellness Day will be held at Patriotic Hall, and on March 3<sup>rd</sup> Congresswoman Grace Napolitano will host her annual Mental Health Summit. Chair Stanley thanked everyone for attending. Commissioner Rodriguez motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Commissioner Chapa. Meeting adjourned at 2:50p.m.

Tatiana Rosas  
Executive Secretary  
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Note: The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, March 8, 2017 at 1:30 p.m. at Southwest College, 1600 W. Imperial Hwy., Los Angeles, CA 90047.