

# LOS ANGELES COUNTY VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION

2615 S. GRAND AVE., SUITE 100  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90007



United We Stand



Joseph N. Smith  
Director

## MINUTES REGULAR MEETING Wednesday, February 9, 2011

### Present:

#### Commissioners

Stephanie Stone, Chair  
Bob Archuleta  
Dave Culmer  
Rudy Garcia  
Carvel Gay  
Ramon Rodriguez  
Steve Rosmarin

#### **County Department**

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

Colonel Joseph Smith, Director  
Tatiana Rosas, Executive Secretary

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

Chair Stephanie Stone called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Chair Stone asked Chaplain DOV Cohen, Jewish War Veterans, to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Rodriguez motioned to approve the minutes and it was seconded by Commissioner Gay and they were approved unanimously.

#### Roll Call

As noted above.

#### Chairman's Report

The Chair decided to forego the Chairman's report until later in the meeting.

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

No comments from the Audience.

#### Veterans Home Support Committee – Steve Rosmarin

Commissioner Steve Rosmarin stated that he met with Louis Koff, Terrence Lyons, Annenberg Foundation, and Chair Stone on the motion to form a sub-committee for the Veterans Home Support Committee and review the by laws and make recommendations. Commissioner Rosmarin reiterated the fact that both Lancaster and Ventura

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have non-profit organizations, 501 (c) 3 committees which help the hospitals provide unfunded assistance to their resident patients. He's hoping for the same for the West Los Angeles Home.

Terrence Lyons, Annenberg Foundation, and consultant at the "Strawberry Gazette," stated that Laura Bon, daughter to Mr. Annenberg had a Christmas program where they distributed gifts at the hospital. They are very interested in being one of the supporters to the Home.

Commissioner Rosmarin stated, "The Home is one of LA's best kept secret."

Chair Stone stated, they have an obligation to be a part of the communication process and there is a calendar with dates in which the Commission is to visit each Home.

### **VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System – Ralph Tillman**

Mr. Erik Gutierrez represented Mr. Ralph Tillman and provided the following report:

- Distributed a draft of the Master Plan to the Commissioner and stated that comments can be provided and are welcomed.
- The VA has had a -3% growth unlike previous years (as shown in slide).
- The VA GLAHS is taking measures to regain those veterans that haven't used their benefits especially those that are 100% connected.
- VA is moving ahead with the social media; they currently have 500 followers on Facebook and have a Twitter account.

Commissioner Culmer stated that they are reducing veteran service offices. Currently his office at the VA has been cut in half and asked, "What is the role of the service office at the hospital if it's in a broom closet. Also, the Veterans Park Conservancy got granted 16-acres of land; how is this lease going to benefit veterans if they are not allowed on the grounds."

Mr. Gutierrez answered that he wasn't aware of veterans not being allowed on the grounds.

### **VA West Los Angeles Draft Master Plan – Stephanie Stone**

Chair Stone stated that the Public Comment deadline is February 19<sup>th</sup> and there are additional copies available if someone needs any. Chair Stone asked Mr. Gutierrez if there were any public outreach, and the Master Plan states that there was talk with key members and community members, is there a record of who they were? Mr. Gutierrez responded that he would inquire and find out the names of those that were in the meetings.

Commissioner Rosmarin stated that there hasn't been a discussion in the past 7 years on the Master Plan. He was never asked to serve on any committee.

Colonel Smith stated the content of the Master Plan is the evolution of what is taken place in the last 12 years. The VA has the CARES process which is an assessment of all VA resources to determine their future use, some to be used and others to be given away. The essence of the Master Plan is the rendition of the various changes along the way; the use of the land like in the case of New Directions; and other items proposed by Councilman Shriver, the Park has been in discussion for quite some time. Colonel Smith stated that he's been an outspoken advocate in regards to the Master Plan. In 1996-98 Congress dictated that the VA produce a Master Plan.

Commissioner Culmer stated that on page 22 of the Master Plan it shows that all in red are agreements a total of 18 when in fact there are 21.

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Mr. Erik Gutierrez responded that they do generate revenue with the sharing agreements and there is also a clause in which the government can terminate the agreement. The VA determines if the lease will benefit the vets. They are also not able to no longer go into a lease.

Chair Stone inquired as to the women's programs if there was a stand alone property identified for women services. Mr. Gutierrez answered that he was not certain on a stand alone space probably not considered in CARE process but he would follow up for the Chair.

Chair Stone thanked him for his report and asked if he could send the Commission copies of the Red White and Blue report.

### **Grants available in each of the five Supervisorial Districts**

Item to be rolled over to next month's meeting.

### **Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Report – Colonel Joseph Smith**

Colonel Smith reported:

- People mobilized for Active Duty are up and down every week (approximately 90,000 and on Active Duty 90,903)
- Recruiting by Armed Services components in February met and/or exceeded their goals.
- California budget proposed by the Governor was rejected by the State Subcommittee; the Assembly Subcommittee will meet on Thursday.
- Operation Welcome Home established the 9 regional collaborative areas now in effect. James Schickel is the Regional Collaborative Coordinator, retired Sergeant Major (Marine) for Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura Counties. AmeriCorp staffs assigned are funded for 3 years and are operating in the community contacting referring veterans to the closest veteran office.
- Department's collaborative project with the Transportation Foundation of Los Angeles (TFLA) provided 500 veterans with jobs last year. Results compare favorably with what EDD is doing.
- Cal Vet Board Agenda is each packet for the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting at the LA Veterans Home.
- BHPH demolition phase and evacuation phase of debris are complete. New construction phase has begun. The use of the building is to provide services for veterans.
- The CVSO conference is scheduled for February 28 through March 4, 2011 in Sacramento, CA.
- Thanked all that attended his surprise birthday party, the Department, the Chair, even sons from Atlanta, GA and Washington attended, Was very surprised!

Chair Stone thanked staff for the Department Report.

### **Volunteers of America – Duffy Leahy**

Mr. J. Duffy Leahy, Manager, Helping Veterans Receive Paychecks, Volunteers of America. Last month he was honored to be able to address the Commission and was asked to return this month with a success story. Every time a veteran goes to a program that's a success story for him.

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Mr. Duffy did tell a story that of guy who relocated from the East Coast to live with his daughter. He was a contract auditor once and became homeless; we helped him with his resume and got him housing. The guy though said that he use to make six figures and has a degree from Chapman University so we kept working with him not sure if we could get him the kind of job he was use to. After about 1½year he got a response from a Fortune 500 company in San Diego, and he made \$143,000 the first year; periodically he sends emails. The morale of the story is to stick with them and meet them on their terms.

Commissioner Archuleta congratulated him on the success story.

Mr. Duffy stated that Volunteers of America is expanding there is a new incarcerated and transitional program.

Chair Stone thanked Mr. Leahy for his presentation and thanked him for all his good work.

### **Chairman's Report**

Chair Stone stated that she had reflections and goals when she came into this position especially with female sexual trauma. She hopes to continue to work and make a difference. She wants everyone to see how the Commission can have better communication and is still looking at creating a website for the Commission. Commission Culmer, Mr. Maddox and Chair Stone continue the process and inquiring about costs and see if it's feasible for the Department.

She stated that she went and visited Long Beach VA and the Director is looking forward to hosting a VAC meeting at the facility. She reminded everyone that she is almost at the end of her term.

### **New Business**

Nothing for new business.

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

Grants in the five Districts from each Commissioner

Veterans Home Support Committee – Steve Rosmarin

West Los Angeles Healthcare System – Ralph Tillman

VA Long Beach Healthcare System – Alice Martinez or Rex Jennings

Report from Jose Ramos (Commissioner Archuleta to call Jose Ramos)

Evaluation Ratings – Dr. Hamm

City of Glendale – Peter Zovak

New Director of National Cemetery – Lynette Parker

Secretary to check with the Chair on approval of the new Agenda.

Commissioner Culmer will invite two Veterans for March's meeting to offer the Invocation and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Good of the Order**

Commissioner Archuleta; stated, "Thank you to all and to the VA hospital," veterans are pleased that people do care. On a personal note, his son Captain Brandon Archuleta wants to be a professor at West Point and he has to

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send him to either Harvard or Duke to get his Masters Degree. Matthew graduates in June from West Point and will be going to Ranger School and attending jump school.

Commissioner Culmer; stated that VA rules are so convoluted as to what a veteran is entitled to for pension, not service connected, type of discharge.

Commissioner Rosmarin; stated that he will be in Washington during the next VAC meeting. The JWV Post 113 is inviting everyone to a Satyr on April 10 at 1:30pm.

Commissioner Garcia; is making some investigations and will provide a report as soon as he can.

Colonel Smith; stated that Frank Duddleston, Assistant Adjutant for the LA County Council had died. He was a good friend and a supporter of veterans.

Commissioner Gay; stated that Commissioner MacCarley is in Georgia on active duty dealing with the various situations that have arisen.

Commissioner Rodriguez; stated that like the Chair he also toured VA Long Beach and major construction. He will be going to Washington, D.C. for an Am Vet Council meeting. "Happy Belated Birthday Colonel Smith!"

Chair Stone; stated the there was no meeting for the LA Collaborative Committee last month. At the subcommittee for Women Coalition it was stated that the biggest problem is with lack of communication and not being able to identify those women in need. Attended the USC Wounded Warriors meeting and discussed services and with LT. Col. Stephane Grenier. PTSD is not a disease or disorder but an injury.

Ray Delgado, Am Vets Post 2, announced that volunteers are needed in cleaning the Wall of Honor; please call (310) 462-3654 if you're interested in helping.

Chair Stone wished Colonel Smith, "Happy Belated Birthday." She thanked everyone for attending and for their service to veterans.

Motion to adjourn meeting by Commissioner Rodriguez and seconded by Commissioner Archuleta. Chair Stone adjourned meeting at 3:26 p.m.

Tatiana Rosas  
Executive Secretary  
February 9, 2011

Note: The next Commission meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, March 9, 2011 at 1:30 p.m. in Suite 100 at the Department of Public Social Services site at 2615 S. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA.