

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, October 10, 2012

Present:

Commissioners

Bob Archuleta, Chair
Carvel Gay, Vice Chair
Dave Culmer
Ramon Rodriguez
Stephanie Stone

County Department

Military and Veterans Affairs

Tatiana Rosas, Executive Secretary
Ruth Wong, Special Assistant

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Approval of Minutes

Chair Bob Archuleta called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m., and welcomed everyone for attending. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ruben Treviso, past President, GI Forum. Due to a lack of a quorum, only five Commissioners present; the approval of minutes was postponed.

Roll Call

As noted above.

Chairman's Report

Chair Archuleta announced that Robert Saxon, Chief, Veterans Services and a dear friend to so many of us, and represented the needs of the veterans every day of his life; passed away on Monday. The Department is touched by his loss and those closest to him. This meeting is dedicated in his honor. Bob rest in peace! There was a moment of silence.

Comments from Audience (three minutes each)

American Legion Los Angeles Post 381

Peter Bernard, Police Post 381, and a member of the American Legion. They are the largest post in the Los Angeles County and the second largest in the State of California. He has asked the Commission for help in being allowed to tour Patriotic Hall. The Commission has asked for a tour of Bob Hope Patriotic Hall as soon as that can be arranged and still no date; US VETS has been given several tours of the building.

They plan on expanding their programs and will be adding a new post with the fire department, "First Responders Post," estimated 4,000 participants to be a part of this post in Los Angeles County.

Veterans Advisory Commission Meeting

Minutes of October 10, 2012

Page 2

He informed that he did complete and turn in the questionnaire from the County asking about operational and space needs which he requested they need an office with two desks and a file cabinet.

Chair Archuleta instructed staff to call and request a tour within the next two weeks and they would invite Mr. Bernard on the building walk-thru.

Commissioner Stone stated that General Wong can represent and provide guidance on Bob Hope Patriotic Hall.

Ruth Wong stated that there are no tours or walk-through allowed at this time. The building is still being commissioned and the County is working on the space plan. There are no special requests being approved to tour the building.

Congresswoman Gail Napolitano

Hector F. Elizalde, Veterans/Military Liaison for Congresswoman Gail Napolitano announced that the 2nd Annual San Gabriel Valley "Heroes in the Shadows" Homeless Veteran Stand Down is on November 2-4, 2012 at Whittier Narrows Park. The Vet Hunters are looking for volunteers to help during the stand down; also lacking is food service for Sunday morning and lunch.

Commissioner Stone stated that last year's stand down was very well attended.

Transportation Foundation of Los Angeles

Tamiko Hirano, Executive Director, Transportation of Los Angeles, Western Region Representative, Department of Defense (DoD) and Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) stated she attended the Mayor's meeting on the First Annual Veterans Appreciation Festival scheduled for November 10th on the USS Iowa. She distributed a flyer to all present and stated that there will also be 200 patriotic Harley Riders going over the bridge in San Pedro. There will be demonstrations on karate and jujitsu and there are 2,000 free tickets available for veterans and their dependants.

Commissioner Rodriguez requested a contact person on the USS Iowa for staff to contact. He recommends that the Commission have a meeting on board the ship. Ms. Hirano will provide staff with the contact information.

Ruben Treviso, Commander, GI Forum, commended Commissioners Stone and Rodriguez for their all their support and the work they do for veterans.

Los Angeles Regional Office – Dennis Kuewa

Mr. Kuewa was unable to attend the meeting.

Veterans Home Support Committee – Stephanie Stone

Commissioner Stone reported the support committee is now a foundation and is called the Los Angeles National Cemetery Support Foundation. It was decided that there will be no meeting until January 24, 2013 and this would be an in-person meeting at the Home.

Vet Hunters – Jose Leal

Mr. Joe Leal, United States Army Reserve, 155th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion and President and Founder, The Vet Hunters Project stated veterans range 90% Iraq/Afghanistan and 10% Vietnam Veterans and many of these homeless veterans are currently serving in the Reserve or National Guard. The veterans that they serve get enrolled with the VA, GI Bill and any resource needed to set them up for success. "Each situation is different and we tailor to meet the needs that best fits the veteran's situation. For example, when we find veterans living in homeless camps, many times they have zero income, clothing and medical issues." The Vet Hunters break down all the support levels and get the veteran enrolled to receive general relief, food stamps, medical, social security and VA benefits if eligible.

Veterans Advisory Commission Meeting

Minutes of October 10, 2012

Page 3

It costs VHP a minimum of \$500.00 per veteran to accomplish the impossible. They purchase and provide for veterans bus passes, food, clothing and anything to set them up for success. Mr. Leal stated, "We also prevent homelessness by helping pay rent, pass due car payments (depending on situation) and also help with paying court tickets and vehicle registrations when tied to homelessness. All this sounds good but we can only do this through donations."

Commissioner Stone stated she thanked him and The Vet Hunters for all they do with very little money to help the veterans. Commissioner Rodriguez also commended Mr. Leal and The Vet Hunters and stated that he knows that every Board of Supervisor has discretionary funds that can help support the program; he should present to them and ask for their assistance. Commissioner Rodriguez stated that The Vet Hunters have the Commission's support.

Mr. Leal stated that he is only as good as the team. He is honored to have been invited to present before the Veterans Advisory Commission. He would like the newspapers to have a "veterans' page" in their newspapers at the moment nine newspapers have committed to having a patriots corner in a section of their newspapers to empower people and get veteran information disseminated out to veterans.

Mr. Hector F. Elizalde stated that his first experience with The Vet Hunters Project was when in Pomona. The local YMCA was being shut down within the week and there were going to be forty-eight veterans on the streets. The Vet Hunters proceeded to pick up their phones and called the VFW and by the end of the day on Saturday each provider took a case and helped each veteran. "Supervisor Molina and her Deputy Angie Castro were flabbergasted by the fast response and all the veterans were assisted and not left on the streets. I ask that each Commissioner go to their respective Supervisor and support the Vet Hunters and put Joe and them in front of the Board and have him do a presentation."

Chair Archuleta thanked him for his presentation and commended The Vet Hunters for the great work their doing for the veterans. He also stated the General Peter Gravett has started a program with Habitat for Humanity and he will be meeting with him

Election of Commission Officers

Due to a lack of a quorum, only four Commissioners present, the election of Commission Officers is postponed until next month.

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Report – Colonel Joseph Smith

Ruth Wong provided the following information for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Department Report in lieu of Colonel Joseph N. Smith, Director's absence.

- Armed Forces and Appreciation Day on November 3, 2012 at the Rose Bowl. All Commissioners are invited and notify staff if you will be attending so tickets can be reserved for you.
- The Department is putting together a memorial service for Bob Saxon; an e-mail will be going out with the information, the Commissioners are invited to attend.

New Business

Commissioner Rodriguez recommended that a letter from the Commission should go to each County Board of Supervisor requesting that they fill their vacant seats on the Commission. Currently, there are vacancies on the First District, Second District, Third District, and on the Fifth District an inquiry should be made if Commissioner Rosmarin will be returning, if not can that seat be also filled.

Chair Archuleta recommended that each Commissioner make a personal call to their respective Supervisor and request that they fill their vacancies and suggest that each Commissioner make a recommendation on a possible candidate.

Commissioner Stone suggested recommending another female veteran for the Commission.

Veterans Advisory Commission Meeting

Minutes of October 10, 2012

Page 4

Item's for Next Month's Agenda

- Election of Commission Officers
- Los Angeles Regional Office – Dennis Kuewa
- West Los Angeles Fisher House Foundation – Timothy Byk
- VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare Center – Ralph Tillman
- VA Long Beach Healthcare System – Alice Martinez
- Commissioner Stephanie Stone will invite two Veterans for November's meeting to offer the Invocation and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Stone recommended teleconference meetings for those commissioners who cannot personally attend.

The following requirements have to be met:

- The agenda must be posted at each location
- The address of each location must be listed in the notice and on the agenda.
- At least a quorum of members must participate from locations within L.A. County
- Each location must be fully accessible to the public
- Each location must be ADA-compliant
- The public's right to testify at each location must be ensured
- All votes must be taken by roll-call.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated he is totally against this; if you cannot make one meeting a month there is a problem and you shouldn't sit on the Commission.

Chair Archuleta stated that he has seen the downside and he agrees that Commissioners need to adjust their schedules and commit to attending once a month.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated there had never been a quorum problem before. Commissioners need to let staff know prior to the meeting if he/she will be attending or will be absent.

Chair Archuleta requested:

- a. Letter to the four Supervisors requesting they fill their vacant Commissioner slots.
- b. Letter to the Commissioners not here today expressing the importance of their participation at meetings and if not able to attend to let staff know of their absence.
- c. Staff will call each Commissioner three-days prior to the Commission meeting and check attendance.

Good of the Order

Commissioner Culmer; stated that West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce and West Hollywood Memorial was dedicated approximately six to eight years ago were he was a speaker. This year he will attend the Veterans Day event there on November 11, 2012 at 11:00am.

Commissioner Stone; stated for the good of the order:

- On October 4th, 2012, The California Department of Veterans Affairs hosted a leadership conference for veterans and veteran stakeholders in Sacramento. The conference, titled "A Call to Service, A Call to Action" to empower attendees to make a difference when working with women veteran issues in their communities. Hoping the conference comes to Los Angeles next year.
- On October 4th, 2012, The California Department of Veterans Affairs hosted a leadership conference for veterans and veteran stakeholders in Sacramento. The conference, titled "A Call to Service, A Call to Action" to empower attendees to make a difference when working with women veteran issues in their communities. Hope the conference comes to Los Angeles next year.

Veterans Advisory Commission Meeting

Minutes of October 10, 2012

Page 5

- Attended the Los Angeles Veterans Collaborative this morning and discussed issues affecting veterans in the local community such as behavioral health, career advancement, families & children, housing, homelessness and legal issues.
- Acknowledge Military Children Education Coalition a group whose mission is to ensure inclusive, quality educational experiences for all military children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition.

Commissioner Stone informed that she'll be out of the country and won't be able to attend next month's Commission meeting.

Commissioner Rodriguez; thanked Mr. Leal's for the presentation of The Soldier's Medal that was awarded to Sgt. James B. Bennett. Commissioner Rodriguez also stated that he will be a speaker at The Nixon Library on Veterans Day.

Commissioner Gay; stated he had nothing for the good of the order.

Chair Archuleta; stated he will be speaking on Veterans Day in Pico Rivera, Irwindale, Montebello, and at Cypress he'll be the Master of Ceremony. He thanked everyone for their participation.

Chair Archuleta adjourned meeting at 2:47 p.m.

Tatiana Rosas
Executive Secretary
October 10, 2012

Note: The next Commission meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, November 14, 2012 at 1:30 p.m. in Suite 100 at the Department of Public Social Services site at 2615 S. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA.