VETERANS MEMORIAL COMMISSION (VMC)
MEETING MINUTES
April 11, 2019 5:30 p.m.
Veterans Conference Room-4th Floor
Veteran’s Memorial Building
50 2nd Avenue Bridge
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401

Commissioners Present: Darrell Andersen - Chairperson  Commissioners Absent: Kristin Delfs
Sherri Schuchmann – Vice Chairperson
Constance Arens
Greg DeWolf
John Powers

Staff Present: Paul Pestel, Facilities Director (FD)
Claire LeMay, Program Coordinator (PC)
Scott Olson, City Council Liaison

Staff Absent: Teri Van Dorstom, Assistant Director (AD)

Guests: Mike Chismar
Joe Aossey – Veterans for Peace Linn County Chapter 169
Bob Spanger – Veterans for Peace Linn County Chapter 169
Jan Patterson – Veterans for Peace Linn County Chapter 169
Steve Patterson – Veterans for Peace Linn County Chapter 169

The regular meeting of the Veterans Memorial Commission was called to order by Commissioner Andersen, Chair, at 5:30 p.m. Commissioner Andersen asked PC LeMay conduct a roll call following the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

Commissioner Arens made a motion to approve the minutes of the February meeting; seconded by Commissioner DeWolf. The motion carried with no objections.

Financials (Budget report/Bills):

Commissioner Arens made a motion to approve the financials; seconded by Commissioner Schuchmann. The motion carried with no objections.

Facilities Director Report:

FD Pestel began his report by presenting the by-laws for the Veterans Memorial Commission, and conducts a first reading for consideration to adopt. He advised the Commission to review the by-laws and suggest changes. If no changes are suggested, the Commission shall be asked to vote to adopt the by-laws at the next regularly scheduled meeting. If changes are submitted and agreed upon, another reading reflecting the updates will be conducted at the next meeting.
After the reading, Commissioner Arens inquires if changes or additions can be made, and FD Pestel replied yes, and if there are please send them to him and he will relay them to the group accordingly. Councilman Olson inquires if FD Pestel consulted with the City Attorney for the format of the by-laws. FD Pestel explains the Commission worked with the City Attorney in the 1990’s to create by-laws. FD Pestel used what was found from the 1990’s and created what was read in this meeting. These were crafted with the advisement of attorneys and applicable to the Commission current functions. Even with the effort put in at the creation in the 1990’s, they were not formally adopted by the Commission. Councilman Olson further inquiries if there is a need for approval from the City Council to adopt by-laws. FD Pestel replies he has reviewed the city policy manual, and confirms the VMC are within their rights to adopt by-laws.

FD Pestel goes on to explain that he is also in process of creating our own city policy manual for the Veterans Memorial Commission city department. FD Pestel has also begun work on a rental policy manual that will cover detailed procedures regarding long-term and short-term rentals to help guide the staff.

FD Pestel asked for questions. Councilman Olson inquires about the outcome of the snow removal over the past winter. FD Pestel reports that this winter was very difficult on the current equipment, and he has inquired with the Fleet department for larger equipment for snow removal. FD Pestel adds that, the All-Veterans Memorial Park (AVM) walkways will be added to the VMC crew snow removal rotation beginning this winter.

Assistant Director Museum Report:

AD was absent for this meeting, and submitted a written report for the Commission.

Communications from the Metro Veterans Council:

Chairperson Andersen requests a report. Commissioner Powers reports on the progress of the details for the Memorial Day Ceremony. Chairperson Andersen asks to have as many Commissioners present at the ceremony as possible. A special reminder was mentioned about the seats held “reserved” for the VMC, in the front.

Program Coordinator Events Report:

PC LeMay reported that the current fundraiser “I Know Jack” was well attended. Upcoming events include a cast party for the Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre, the Junior Achievement Taste of Achievement fundraiser, and the Cedar Rapids Roller girls first bout will be May 18.

PC LeMay continues by reporting on a veterans program/closed group scheduled to be held at the Building, beginning May 9th. The group is called “ACT” which stands for Acceptance, Commitment and Take Action Therapy for PTSD for Veterans. This will be a 10 week program, spearheaded by Greg [Francisco] of the 6th Judicial District. Commissioner Powers asks for more information about Greg and how the group landed on “PTSD” for the name of the program. PC LeMay responds, that Greg is working with Ed Haycraft on this; Haycraft is the Veterans Justice Outreach Officer at the Veterans Affairs (VA) outreach center here in Cedar Rapids. LeMay further explains that Haycraft advocates for Veterans who are experiencing judicial issues, trouble with the law, etc. This program/group can be part of the court ordered probationary or parole requirements for Veterans attending.
Chairperson Andersen verbally follows up on a project/program he has proposed titled, “Patriot Boot camp.” Andersen is working with David Tobinski at NeBoCo in town on bringing this program to the Building in 2021. He explains it is a three-day, intensive entrepreneurial camp that is veteran based.

Commissioner Arens inquires about wedding rentals. PC LeMay reports 2019 is fully booked for weddings, and 2020 is filling quickly.

**Public Comment:**

Mike Chismar shares information during the public comment section regarding the expansion of the VA to the west side of Cedar Rapids. Chismar reports that a veteran’s adaptive sports initiative may be an exciting part of the expansion.

Four members of Veterans for Peace presented to the Commission a request to place a permanent Peace Pole in the All Veterans Memorial Park (AVM). The group describes the pole and why they would like to place it at AVM. The general concern was if the peace pole would aesthetically and logistically fit into the park. Chairperson Andersen recommended the group check out AVM to see what is currently at the park and if the Veterans for Peace group could match the materials. Commissioner Powers requested that the group present the same to the Metro Veterans Council.

Chairperson Andersen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:19 pm.; seconded by Commissioner Powers. The motion carried with no objections.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire LeMay, Program Coordinator

Date 6/3/19

CHAIRPERSON

Date 6/3/19

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Date 6/3/19