VETERANS MEMORIAL COMMISSION (VMC)
MEETING MINUTES
October 10, 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—Chair
Sherri Schuchmann – Vice Chair
Greg DeWolf
John Powers

Constance Arens
Mike McElmeel

Commissioners absent: Kristin Delfs

Staff Present: Paul Pestel, Facility Director (FD)
Teri Van Dorston, Assistant Director (AD)

City Council: Scott Olson (District 4)

Guests: Mike Chismar

The regular meeting of the Veterans Memorial Commission (VMC) was called to order by Chairman Andersen, at 5:30 p.m. Meeting followed the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: Chair Andersen calls for a motion to approve the previous months minutes. Commissioner DeWolf made a motion to approve the minutes of the September meeting; seconded by Vice Chair Schuchmann. The motion carried with no objections.

Financials (Budget report/Bills): Chair Andersen then calls for a motion to approve the current budget report and spending report. Commissioner McElmeel made a motion to approve; seconded by Vice Chair Schuchmann. The motion carried with no objections.

Facilities Director Report:
FD Pestel begins his report with a review of where he and the VMC are with the growing policy manual that is being formed to manage the Veterans Memorial Building (VMB). To recap, The VMB policy-procedures manual shall exist under the VMC bylaws that were put in place on June 13, 2019. Per the bylaws, the VMC is required to have such a manual.

At this meeting, Pestel requests the Commission review his two-page proposal for the VMB long-term rental policy. Per the second page, Pestel reiterates the necessity to diversify long-term tenants and timeframes of such leases. Timeframes: Pestel suggests that long-term rentals are outlined to be not under 9 months, and not over 36 months. Currently, the VMB shall not charge more than $1 per square foot for leased space. He continues by reiterating the Iowa Code (chapter 37) that governs the VMC, states the following groups are able to rent or utilize long-term space at the VMB: Civil service, Veteran groups, and local government. It is his recommendation that it be stated in the policy that not one of these three sectors have over 45% of leased space in the VMB, thus leveling fairness and creating a balance of groups inside the VMB. Refer to handout for detailed breakdown of current space that can be rented.

Councilman Olson requests clarification that this section of the policy is long-term rentals, not the short term Coliseum, Armory, or Ballroom rentals. Pestel confirms, yes. That will be a separate section of the policy.

Chair Andersen questions the up or down side if the VMC agrees to lease to one group over 45% as compared to another. For instance, if there were 100% Veteran’s groups leasing space, what would be the down side to that? Pestel answers: the revenue stream would turn, and continues by explaining who pays rent and gives an idea of the difference between Veteran groups, non-profit rates and local government offices in the Building. A discussion continues about buildings in the downtown area that also
lease space, what the (current) actual cost of utilities are reflected in those lease agreements, and what the owners charge for rent. Also discussed was the difference between other real estate in town and the VMB property which is governed by Iowa Code.

John powers makes a motion to approve the long-term rental policy as presented; seconded by Vice Chair Schuchmann. The motion carried with no objections.

Pestel updates the Commission on the (open) Program Coordinator position and transition to hire, and concludes with a summary of upcoming events.

**Assistant Director Museum Report:**
AD Van Dorston reports on the project that involves stabilizing heat-fractions that are occurring on the Grant Wood stained glass "Memorial Window" piece. Glass Heritage LLC (Davenport) is scheduled to begin October 16th, and this phase of the work could last in to November. Van Dorston also shares that two Boy Scout troops will receive a tour this weekend to earn a Memorial merit badge. Commissioner Arens inquires how many visitors we get to the Korean exhibition on average. Van Dorston replies that the Building typically sees about 10 visitors a day.

**Public Comment:**
Mike Chismar comments and shares information about veterans and non-veterans joining together to form a "Military Adaptive Sports Initiative" or MASI. He continues, that it is anticipated MASI will join/partner with the Iowa City VA hospital, and the Disabled American Veterans or D.A.V., the Iowa Sports initiative out of Ames, and the para-Olympic committee to form an exciting venture here in Cedar Rapids, eastern Iowa and the state of Iowa.

Vice Chair Schuchmann reminds the Commission about Ushers Scary Safe Halloween that she and Commissioner Arens will participate as representative of the VMC.

Commissioner Powers gives a brief update about the Metro Veterans Council (MVC) meeting. He continues, that the Veterans Day service program is set. Powers also reminds/invites the Commission to attend the Veterans Day service, 11/11/2019 at 10 am in the Coliseum. Van Dorston asks Commissioner Powers if the MVC had elections of their leadership yet, to which Powers responds, no.

Vice-chair Schuchmann asks how the Freedom Rock fundraiser concert went. Van Dorston, who is also a volunteer on the Linn County Freedom Rock committee, answers that it went poorly; that unfortunately it lost rather than raised money. Commissioner Powers and Chairman Andersen comments on the growing positivity in the area around the buzz of it being in Central City, at the Linn County Fairgrounds. Van Dorston requests to present on the LCFR at the next Commission meeting to which all agree.

Chair Andersen calls for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Powers makes the motion seconded by Commissioner DeWolf. The motion carries unanimously, and the meeting is adjourned at 5:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

by Teri Van Dorston, Assistant Director

[Signatures and dates]