VETERANS MEMORIAL COMMISSION (VMC)
MEETING MINUTES
August 8th, 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
Constance Arens
Greg DeWolff
Mike McElmeel

Commissioners Absent: John Powers
Sherri Schuchmann
Kristin Delfs

Staff Present: Teri Van Dorston, Assistant Director (AD)
Claire LeMay, Program Coordinator (PC)

Staff Absent: Paul Pestel, Facility Director (FD)

Guests: Mike Chismar
Tammy Maneely

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 role call following the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

Commissioner McElmeel made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 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 McElmeel. The motion carried with no objections.

Presentation:

Tammy Maneely presents on behalf of Sapadapaso. This organization is responsible for two main events, the Sapadapaso Hooley and the St. Patrick’s Day Parade. Ms. Maneely is a 4-time past president and the 2020 Hooley chairperson. A “Hooley” is a traditional Irish fundraiser.

She shares that Sapadapaso stands for Saint Patrick’s Day Parade Society. The first parade in Cedar Rapids occurred on March 17th, 1976, after a radio announcer from WMT made a comment about Saint Patrick’s Day, which created a buzz for a parade. Ted Mahoney was Saint Patrick in the first parade; it had 7 entries,
and was well attended by the community and the event has continued to grow ever since. Traditionally every year a signature button is created by a local artist.

Sapadapaso is a 501c3 nonprofit organization and committee, that meets monthly on the 17th. The City or Cedar Rapids used to cover many of the expenses, but as the parade grew all expenses became the responsibility of the nonprofit. Typically it can cost in the range of $15,000 to $20,000 to conduct the parade. In 2014, a national poll in USA today ranked the Cedar Rapids Saint Patrick’s Day Parade as one of the top in the nation. Many of the founding members of Sapadapaso were veterans and the parade consists of several community groups including boy scouts, girl scouts, church organizations, businesses and families. Maneely’s family has participated in the parade for 36 years.

The committee is committed to continuing the tradition of the parade, and this has meant an addition of fundraising to meet the costs of an event this size. One of the biggest fundraisers for Sapadapaso is the Irish Hooley.

In 2018, the organization had about 600 people attend the Hooley. The entrance fee is an affordable $5.00, this is intended to keep the event family friendly. They host a live Irish band, concessions that consist of corned beef and cabbage, and collaboration with local Lion Bridge Brewery to name a beer which they sell at the Hooley. This event is the largest fundraiser for the parade.

Maneely states that the Coliseum event rental space is perfect, but the event rental the single largest expense the parade has, and is requesting a reduced rate from the Commission.

Chairperson Andersen comments that SaPaDaPaSo has been committed to running a great parade for a number of years, and it is a big deal in town. He states that part of the Veterans Memorial Commissions charter is to not only serve veterans, but also community organizations and nonprofits. He continues to share that the Commission has recently established proposed nonprofit rates. Chairperson Andersen then inquires about the amount of time SaPaDaPaSo would need for set up and the Hooley itself. Manleey responds that the Hooley is the first Sunday in March. SaPaDaPaSo was granted a rate that covers expenses of employees and utilities to have the building open for the day.

Facilities Director Report:

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

Assistant Director Museum Report:

AD Van Dorston gives an update on the All Veterans Memorial Park policy. She provides a recap from when the Ad Hoc committee was developed to present discussions. She explains that after a heated meeting in July the VMC ad hoc committee regrouped, took what happened at the MVC meeting and requested a meeting with their leadership. AD Van Dorston felt this meeting went well and every one came away with a better understanding of goals of the policy. Commissioner Arens inquires to when this meeting occurred, and Chairperson Andersen responded it occurred two to three weeks ago, with AD Van Dorston adding it occurred on July 25th.

AD Van Dorston continues to explain that the policy is in place to guide actions at the Park moving forward. The VMC simply cannot operate the park as it has in the past. The VMC owns and maintains the Park and is therefore held in the public trust by the VMC. Any modifications to the park shall be vetted through the VMC. The MVC has agreed to become better partners going forward meaning they have agreed to facilitate the majority of the brick program, which has become a time consuming burden for AD Van Dorston. The VMC facility crew will continue to receive the brick shipment, seal the bricks and lay them
at the Park. The MVC has agreed to activate their 501c3 with the State of Iowa, thus helping VMC be more comfortable partnering with the MVC overall. The MVC has also agreed to continue facilitating the Memorial Day program.

The policy has modified language from exclusively partnering with the MVC working with any volunteers or veterans groups that will agree to the terms of the new policy. The anticipated outcome is to adopt the policy that the Ad Hoc committee considers the final version. AD Van Dorston then asks for questions or recommendations from the present Commission members. Commissioner Arens inquires about the previous maintenance done by the facility crew and what the process will be going forward. Chairperson Andersen adds that there are more defined tasks for each party; when, where, and how each step is taken. Commissioner Arens asks about how broken bricks will be managed. AD Van Dorston replies the MVC will continue to reorder and pay for the replacement of any damaged bricks.

AD Van Dorston outlines that the Chairperson, Facility Director, and the Mayor can sign this policy into effect if Commission members are agreeable to the policy. With no recommendations or further questions, the signatures will be acquired at a future date.

Program Coordinator Events Report:

PC LeMay informs the Commission regarding an upcoming meeting with the Iowa City VA Public Relations department to plan a VA Health and Resource fair on November 8th in conjunction with Veterans Day. Chairperson Andersen inquires about the Stand Down, which is scheduled for September 6th, 2019.

Public Comment:

No public comments at this time.

Commissioner McElmeel made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:02 pm.; seconded by Commissioner DeWolf. The motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire LeMay, Program Coordinator

[Signatures]

CHAIRPERSON

Date 10/5/19

VICE CHAIRPERSON Sherri Schuelmann Date 9/12/19

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