VETERANS MEMORIAL COMMISSION

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

May 11, 2017

5:30 p.m.

Veteran’s Memorial Building, SAWM Gallery, 1st Floor

Present: Constance Arens, Vice Chairwoman
Cindy Guckenberger
John Powers
Mike Jager, Executive Director
Nikée Woods, Program Coordinator

Gary Grant
Jerry Ziese
Scott Olson, Councilman
Teri Van Dorston, Assistant Director

Excused: Kristin Delfs, Chairwoman
Sherri Schuchmann

Guests: Howard Purdy
Mike Chismar

The regular meeting of the Veterans Memorial Commission was called to order by Vice Chairwoman Arens at 5:30 p.m.

Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes:
Commissioner Grant made a motion to approve the minutes of the March meeting; seconded by Commissioner Powers. The motion carried with no objections.

Financials:
Commissioner Grant requests that an established museum budget be determined and clearly reflected on the expense sheet so it is apparent what is spent on displays and museum purchases throughout each fiscal year. Line items are confusing at present as they are worked in to the general bill spreadsheet. E.D. Jager believes this would be possible and will work on it through the City’s Finance Department spreadsheets. Commissioner Ziese recalls past-Commissioner interest in forming a non-profit arm and comments it would be a good idea; such as funds from “friends of the Museum” funneled to the VMC to fund displays/museum piece in order that monies could be raised and accounted for specific endeavors. Ziese would be willing to head this undertaking. Commissioner Grant reminds and clarifies that an entity needs to be available beforehand to receive such funds. Peter Welch was mentioned; and the old brick fund [Eastern Iowa All Veterans Memorial Charitable Foundation] that Mr. Welch facilitates. Commissioner Ziese will reach out to Mr. Welch about the status and interest of that Foundation receiving donations on behalf of the VMC museum collection. Commissioner Grant made a motion to approve the January and February bills; seconded by Commissioner Powers. The motion carried with no objections.

Museum Report-Assistant Director:
E.D. Jager suggests that the gallery walk-thru be completed following the meeting for those who would like to attend with a short report for the meeting. A.D. Van Dorston obliged and reports that she and the VMC intern had worked diligently to open the refreshed gallery by April 6, the WWI 100th anniversary. She continued: there are a few more artifacts and labels to be placed once cases are complete. Collection items steadily come in, averaging at 200-250 pieces a year. The VMC intern is also cataloging items from 2012, while working approximately 25 hours a week. Councilman Olson asked where items are stored and A.D. Van Dorston shared the area directly above the SAWM gallery; formerly known as the old Legion room. That room is outfitted with climate control and museum specific storage shelving.
Communications from the Metro Veterans Council:
Commissioner Powers reports that with the help of Cheryl King and VMC staff, the annual Memorial Day programming at the AVM Park is shaping up nicely. Commissioner Powers thought it best to update information to the VMC that he had been informed of and therefore reports that his guest from the March VMC meeting has followed up with WMT [actually KHAK radio] and in-turn reported there is a general plan for the Freedom Rock and are good to go. Commissioner Grant reiterates that he is uncomfortable with the lack of leadership surrounding the Freedom Rock project for Linn County at the AVM Park. Grant points out that no one has talked to the Commission about logistics, or who is raising money, and who is in charge. Commissioner Powers understands that until 2020, details for the rock won’t be required and hopes that the time in-between will suffice to conclude all details. E.D. Jager interjects that he has accepted responsibility to coordinate the Linn County Freedom Rock project approximately a year ago and continues by sharing these details:
   1) The artist should make a site-visit prior to Cedar Rapids placement to take input on design and limitations.
   2) KHAK radio representative and their partnered not-for-profit met with the Linn County Veterans Association last month.
   3) Everyone will be better informed in a year or so when the project gains momentum.
Program Coordinator Woods shares that she has fielded calls on similar interest most recently from the local Marion American Legion to place the Freedom Rock at a different Linn County location. Commissioner Ziese asked for past work of the Freedom Rock artist, Bubba Sorenson. E.D. Jager directed him to use the artist’s website. Councilman Olson considers the scale and shape of the Freedom Rock important in the planning process when placed at any site. Commissioner Powers states he needs “help” as the matter keeps returning to his attention via the MVC. Councilman Olson states a master plan would be best, especially while considering future plans of the AVM Park.

Public Comment:
Commissioner Powers introduced Howard Purdy to share concern about the damage to the existing granite AVM Park sign. E.D. Jager states he had reached out to a tuck pointing firm and had not heard back yet in regards to providing an estimate for the damage from a snow plow in the past. Commissioner Powers also requested one of the MVC members to update and repair the fading names of the Desert Storm Monument placed at the AVM Park. Mike Chismar notes that June 16 at Hawkeye Downs will be Military Appreciation Night and all are invited.

Commissioner Powers shared his appreciation for A.D. Van Dorston to be interviewed on behalf of the MVC in regards to the Memorial Day Program at WMT, local media group.

Commissioner Grant made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:53 p.m.; seconded by Commissioner Powers. The motion carried with no objections.

Respectfully submitted,

Nikke Woods, Program Coordinator

CHAIRWOMAN

VICE CHAIRWOMAN