

Veterans Advisory Board Minutes
March 22, 2016
Las Cruces City Hall

Open Meeting: The Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m., and followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

American Legion Post 10	Lawrence Orvis, Chairman
DAV Chapter 10	Dan Banks
Marine Corps League	Carol Gaines
Member at Large #1	Dr. David Boje
Member at Large #2	VACANT
MOAA	Christine Sautter
United Military Women of the SouthWest	Karen Woods
Special Forces Association	Kyle Trout
VFW Post 3242	Cosme Padilla
VFW Post 6917	VACANT
VFW Post 10124	Patrick Ramirez
Vietnam Veterans	Fred Schneider
Military Order of the Purple Heart	Rod Gajewski, Vice Chairman

(A quorum of appointed members was present)

Approval of Agenda for today's meeting was motioned by Cosme Padilla and 2nd by Kyle Trout. All members that are present voted unanimously.

Introduction of Guests:

New Mexico Department of Veteran Services	James Turner
Mesilla Valley Hospice	Kathy Olson
Convoy of Hope	Willie Dunn
WWII Veteran	Dwight Weir
Convoy of Hope	John Pickett
El Paso VA Healthcare	Jacquelyn Williams
CLC Parks & Recreation	Mark Johnston

City of Las Cruces Staff:

Travis A. Brown	Board Coordinator
Brittany Viramontes	Recording Secretary

Acceptance of Minutes, Rod Gajewski motioned to approve the minutes from February 23, 2016 with Karen Woods 2nd the motion, all members that are present voted unanimously.

Old Business

- **Possible Changes to the VAB Ordinance (tabled from 02/23/16),** Mr. Dan Banks motioned to remove this discussion from the table, Mrs. Karen Woods 2nd the motion. All members voted unanimously. Chief Brown distributed a handout showing an example of the draft amendment to the VAB ordinance. The draft reflected removing VFW Post 6917 and adding United Military Women of the SouthWest. It also removed language for “an established veteran organization as approved by the board members”. The ordinance would also have an additional Member at Large that shall be affiliated with a student veteran group. Rod Gajewski made a motion to move forward for the considered changes. Kyle Trout 2nd the motion. All members voted unanimously. Chief Brown stated to the board that he would put in the request for consideration with City Council. He asked that the board be patient as it could be a little bit of a lengthy process before it is approved.

New Business

- **Parking Signs at Veterans Park,** Fire Fighter Arnold Diaz sent a photo to Chief Brown of a Veterans Parking Sign from an Applebee’s. The Chief sent the photo to Mark Johnston and the City traffic department is looking into a similar design with City of Las Cruces logos for use at Veterans Park. These signs will not replace handicap parking signs. Approximately six signs will be purchased at a cost of between \$75-\$100 each. Since it is a minor physical change to the park, Chief Brown wanted to present it to the board for discussion. Cosme Padilla motioned to approve the signs being placed at Veterans Park. Kyle Trout 2nd the motion. All members voted unanimously.

Public Participation

- **Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans** is taking place Saturday, March 26th. Flags will be raised at 8am. Mr. Turner stated that they will be dedicating the Vietnam Monument. The Huey Helicopter is in place. The ceremony will begin at 10am. A cookout will follow for the Welcome Home portion. Parking will be available along Roadrunner Parkway and there will be a shuttle from Mission Lutheran Church. Spaces available to set up tables are first come first serve. Flags will also be raised the following morning, Easter Sunday (March 27th) at 8 am.
- **Monument Ownership,** City of Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Director Mark Johnston went over ownership of memorials and monuments with the board. When tax payer’s dollars or legislative funds are used to pay for a monument, the City retains ownership. New photographs will be taken of the monuments and sent to Risk Management for insurance purposes. All monuments have a \$5,000 deductible should something happen to them and a claim must be made. Other monuments are paid for through donations to veteran’s groups and no city money was used. The City will continue to partner with these organizations should something happen to these monuments. In a long term vision, a concrete pathway is envisioned to be laid from the Korean Monument behind the Vietnam Veterans Monument and all the way down the ridge side to the west. This could potentially be enough room for about six or seven more monuments in the park. Mr.

Johnston stated that even with his upcoming retirement it is the City's intention to remain supportive of the Veterans groups and the visions of the park moving forward. Chief Brown personally thanked Mr. Johnston for all of his cooperation with the board and all of the work he had done at Veterans Park for veterans in our community.

- **Jacque Williams** reported that the clinic on Don Roser is on hold due to problems with the contractor. They are not sure of the future of the contract at this time.
- **Kathy Olson**, as an Honor Flight board member, they are recruiting World War II and Korean War Veterans for the Mission 9 flight September 30th, October 1st and 2nd.
- **JR Turner** participated in the Bataan Memorial Death March. During the opening ceremony they do a roll call of Bataan survivors. This year there were 11 survivors from different cities. Unfortunately, there are none remaining from Las Cruces. There were 6,600+ entries this year. The money goes toward the Army MWR fund.
- **John Pickett** represents Convoy of Hope. On April 30th at NMSU across from the ball stadium they will be providing services to those in need. They are expecting around 8,000 people. They will be provided health and dental exams and will be giving away about 35,000 pounds of food. They will have a large tent and are looking for people who represent veteran's organizations to show up and provide information on what services are available to veterans. The event will begin around 7-7:30 and go until the groceries are gone. The last event was held at the Las Cruces Convention Center 2 ½ years ago.

Board Member Reports

- **Dr. David Boje** provided a handout regarding the Fort Bliss Transition Summit happening March 23rd and 24th. This is a free hiring fair for military members, veterans and their spouses. Dr. Boje was in Albuquerque at a Social Work Conference and he came across information regarding Transitional Housing and Supportive Services for Veteran Families. His question to the board is if there are any such programs locally. The pamphlet he received showed they serviced 12 different counties, Dona Ana not being included. Mr. Turner stated that Community of Hope receives grants to provide these type of services.
- **Carol Gaines** congratulated Chief Brown on his upcoming retirement.
- **Dan Banks** was at the Bataan March with the DAV 10.
- **Kyle Trout** was out with the flu but his chapter was at the Bataan Memorial Death March. Their sister chapter was there helping along with the Marine Corps League.
- **Karen Woods** was at the Bataan March as well. They got to meet people from all over. Tomorrow, March 23rd, they will be celebrating Remembrance Day at Veterans Park beginning at 11am. Tickets for the Spaghetti Dinner will be sold at the Walmarts on Valley and Walton with help from the girl scouts this weekend and next weekend.
- **Christine Sautter**, May 14th is Alamogordo's Military Appreciation Day Event at the Griggs Sports Complex from 9am-6pm. They are looking for food and arts and craft vendors for this event.
- **Fred Schneider** is still on the Combined Service Officer Committee. He has run into a few road blocks but is confident that he will overcome them. He is available to speak with any organizations seeking more information about the Committee.
- **Patrick Ramirez**, The National Vietnam Memorial 50th Commemoration Event will be March 29th 11am-2pm at the American Legion Post 10 on Madrid.

- **Lawrence Orvis** presented Chief Brown with a poster of the Vietnam Memorial signed by many veterans for his upcoming retirement. Mr. Orvis reminded the board and guest that bingo is on Wednesdays and Saturdays, first game starts at 6:30pm. Last game is \$1,000 blackout. \$10 to play. Food and drinks are available. Call 526-9139 for more information. The 8th Annual Wreath Memorial will be held at St. Joseph's Cemetery at 1pm on May 29th.

Next Meeting: April 26, 2016

Adjournment: Cosme Padilla motioned to have the meeting adjourned, Karen Woods 2nd the motion. All members present voted unanimously.


Name _____

4/26/16
Date _____

DRAFT