

**VETERANS MEMORIAL ISLAND SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, April 6, 2022 – 9:30 a.m.
City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida**

PRESENT: Chairman, John Michael Matthews; Vice Chairman, Curtis Paulisin; Members: Michelle Dale, and Carolyn Lange **Also Present:** Assistant City Attorney, Jenny Flanigan; Assistant Director of Public Works, Richard Mutterback; and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Chartier

Excused Absence: Melissa Arndt

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Matthews called today's meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Committee members and the audience joined together in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) March 2, 2022

Mrs. Dale made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2022 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting. Mr. Paulisin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Barbara Ruddy stated that she attended the Red, White, and Blue concert and it was extraordinary. She said that Mrs. Dale did an outstanding job as the Mistress of Ceremonies and Marine Ship bell was wonderful. Everyone who attended really appreciated it.

Mr. Matthews said that is a really talented group of young people and they perform this concert every year. He said that Mr. Rob Ryan, Marine, rang the Ships bell.

A) Request to use the Island for a Memorial Service for Al Lehman – April 19, 2022

Mr. Matthews said that they received a request to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for a memorial service for Staff Sergeant Al Lehman. This application has already been approved by all the required departments. The service is scheduled for April 19th from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and they are expecting about 40 people to attend. Mr. Lehman was a Staff Sergeant in the United States Air Force. He stated that not too long ago a caravan was organized and they drove by his place to wish him a happy birthday. He sat in a chair on the front lawn and watched the caravan go by. He believes that was his 96th birthday.

Mr. Matthews made a motion to approve the memorial service on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for Staff Sergeant Al Lehman. Mrs. Dale Seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

B) Request for use of the Island – April 28, 2022 - Indian River County Victims’ Rights Coalition

Mr. Matthews said another request to use the Island is from the Indian River County Victim’s Rights Coalition. They plan to hold their ceremony on April 28th from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and they are expecting about 50 people. He said they have been holding this ceremony for decades.

Mr. Paulisin said he wonders why they don’t have anyone going to speak with the people who attend. They used have someone there speaking about what is going on and to bring awareness.

Mr. Matthews made a motion to approve the Indian River County Victim’s Rights Coalition to use the Island for their service. Mr. Paulisin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

C) Request for use of the Island for Memorial Day Ceremony - May 30, 2022 – Veterans Council of Indian River County

Mr. Matthews stated that their third request for use of the Island is from the Veterans Council of Indian River County for the Memorial Day service on May 30, 2022. It will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and they estimate there will be 750 people in attendance. They are still working on the details of the event. He explained that Memorial Day is solemn ceremony honoring those who died while serving the Country.

Mr. Matthews made a motion to approve the request for the Memorial Day service by the Veterans Council of Indian River County on Monday May 30, 2022. Mr. Paulisin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

D) Review Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee Forms, Applications, Rules, and Duties

Mr. Matthews said it was mentioned at their last meeting that some of their applications needed to be updated, so that is why they received copies of them to discuss (on file in the City Clerk’s office). He said the Committee’s purpose is to preserve and protect Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary and recommend to City Council who can use the Island and what is appropriate. There are some things that are not allowed on the Island.

Mr. Paulisin read the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee’s mission statement (on file in the city clerk’s office).

Mr. Matthews continued by reading the list of uses that are not permitted on the Island from the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Authorized Uses and Memorial Rules. He said that often people do not read the sign on the restrictions.

Mr. Paulisin said that they previously discussed that people were not sure where to find the information for Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary on the City’s website. He asked if these rules are under the Recreation or where can they direct people to find them.

Ms. Jenny Flanigan explained that they updated the forms and they can be found by going to the Recreation Department under forms and also under Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary on the City's website. They removed the reference to Bellsouth and replaced it with the contact information for the Public Work Department. People can also obtain copies by contacting the City Clerk's office.

Mr. Matthews said the application for the cenotaph markers is fine, but the map that goes with it needs to have Private Joseph Canalichio added to it. He was honored with a plaque at one of the Gold Star Family Grove trees.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A) Review Presentation on New Stage and World War II Tribute

Mr. Matthews stated that they will review the presentation on the stage and the World War II (WWII) tribute.

Mrs. Ruddy said last year she and her sister presented checks to the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary in honor of their friend John Papageorge and their father Samuel Eschenbach who were both Veterans. She was informed by Mr. Matthews that the Committee was entertaining the idea of starting an initiative for a WWII memorial, so she told him if they got their act together she would help them raise the money. They very next day she reached out to Mr. Scott Johnson and asked him if he would be willing to volunteer his extraordinary architectural services to this effort. She stated that Mr. Johnson agreed and then they formed a Committee and started their effort. They are now going to see the final product that Mr. Johnson has provided. It is extraordinary and Mr. Alex MacWilliam would be so proud as well as anyone who visits the Island.

Mr. Scott Johnson, Architect, said they have seen this presentation before, but this is a condensed version that will be presented to City Council on April 19. He continued by going through his presentation (attached to the original minutes).

Mr. Paulisin asked how often will the LED strips be illuminated. Will they be run on solar power, be illuminated all the time, on a timer, or have they even thought about that.

Mr. Johnson replied that they have not thought a lot about that other than they can go on or off either by a switch or timer. They could come on as the sun goes down and stay on for an hour or two (2), or they could stay on longer. He is not sure it would be solar powered, but that is a good idea.

Mrs. Lange asked if they have a preliminary idea of what this will cost.

Mr. Johnson replied that they working in conjunction with Mr. Robert Paugh, Bill Bryant Construction. They do not have figures to quote yet, but Mrs. Ruddy promised him that whatever that figure is she would be able to raise the money.

Mrs. Lang asked if they have a vision of when they hope to have this project completed.

Mr. Johnson replied that he would love to have it completed by Veterans Day 2023, but they understand that there is an issue with the bridge. They have not connected with the City Officials yet on the bridge replacement and the issue of getting the trailers onto the Island.

Mr. Paulisin asked to confirm that the Committee is not going before City Council until April 19, 2022.

Mr. Johnson replied that is correct. They will not start any fundraising until City Council has approved it.

Mr. Matthews stated that the Architect and the Engineers will work out the details, but most of them would agree that they want to honor the WWII Veterans and they need a stage and those two (2) things can be combined. He said what exactly will happen on the Island is still a moving target as far as estimating when they will be able to access the Island. It will cost quite a bit of money for this project, which will be donated and here will be no cost to the City to build it. He understands that there are a lot of people ready to donate towards it and when it is finished it will be donated to the City.

Mr. Matthews made motion to approve a stage and a tribute to WWII Veterans on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary without all the detail so it can move forward to City Council.

Mr. Paulisin asked if Mr. Johnson will present this to City Council on his own or with Bill Bryant Construction.

Mr. Johnson replied that he represents the Committee, which includes Mr. Paugh from Bill Bryant Construction along with Mr. Tony Young, Mrs. Ruddy, and Mr. Carroll Oates. He explained that this is really a visioning process and it is not a flushed out design. This is what could potentially be done, but they have a lot of work to do.

Mr. Matthews stated that he made a motion and he asked if there is a second.

Mr. Paulisin asked Mr. Matthews if he could restate the motion.

Mr. Matthews made motion to approve the construction of a new stage and a tribute to WWII Veterans on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. Mrs. Dale seconded the motion.

Mr. Paulisin said he understands that this is needed and it developed very quickly, but the longer they wait the longer it will take. With all of the work involved he is not sure the timeline they have in mind at will work, but he would be happy to support this moving forward.

Mr. Richard Mutterback, Assistant Director of Public Works, explained that bridge is in the design and permitting process right now. It is scheduled for the full replacement starting next fiscal year, which be a six (6) to 12 month process.

Mr. Matthews said the bridge replacement would have to be completely done before they could start this project, because of the weight restrictions that are in place.

Mr. Mutterback said he does not think they could complete this project between now and next September. He said it is not just the bridge with the limitation, but it is the entire infrastructure on the Island like the sidewalks, pavers, trees, etc. That is why they will need to take into account the use of concrete buggies and extra expenses and time when they are figuring their costs.

Mr. Matthews said while the bridge is being built there will not be any ceremonies or people going onto the Island for a while.

Mr. Mutterback replied yes, it will be completely closed for a period of time.

Mr. Matthews stated that they are just talking about the basic idea of a stage and tribute right now. If they are allowed to move ahead, they will need approval from the City Engineer and City Council. They are not saying it has to be done by any certain time or if it even has to be this exact design. Their point is that they need a stage and they want to honor the WWII Veterans, which is way overdue.

Mr. Paulisin said he is in favor of keeping it generic by stating that they need a WWII memorial and a stage on the Island and then go from there.

Mrs. Lange said they touched on the idea before about using brick on the bridge as memorials for their loved ones who served. Is this something that could be put together to raise money.

Mr. Mutterback replied that City staff took and made that suggestion, but it is not recommended by the engineer to use bricks or pavers on the bridge for various reasons.

Mrs. Lange said maybe they could do it somewhere else for fundraising purposes.

Mr. Matthews explained that fundraising is not allowed on the Island. He said the Island has the same dignity and decorum as a cemetery and having all of those names might not tie in with that decorum. He said he would like to see what the bridge will look like at some point.

Mr. Mutterback said that the direction of staff was to maintain as much of the same design as the current bridge, such as using the eagle medallions and some of the other features.

The motion passed unanimously.

B) Input on Mangrove Windowing and Trimming

Mr. Matthews said he believes all the Committee members had the opportunity to visit Veterans memorial Island Sanctuary to see where they thought the mangroves could be addressed with windows or hedging. He said part of Mr. Johnson's design for the stage and tribute was to have long views across the Island and out onto the water.

Mr. Mutterback replied that they took those views into account and the Committee's input about being able to see out to the water when sitting on the benches. He handed out a copy of the updated mangrove trimming plan (attached to the original minutes). He explained that at every bench there is a 30-foot window. On the view to the south and the 45 degree view to the south west there are two (2) 150-foot windows, which is about half the length of a football field. He said 83 percent of the mangroves would be left in reserve and untouched, which helps maintain the privacy of the Sanctuary and to cut down on the noise. He asked if the Committee members have any additional requests or comments and if not they are ready to start the permitting.

Mr. Matthews stated that this looks like a good plan, so when would they start this work.

Mr. Mutterback explained that their next step would be to identify the differed species and the heights to make sure they can be windowed or if there are any other stipulations.

Mr. Paulisin said it looks great.

The other Committee members were in favor of moving forward with the plan.

6. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

Mr. Matthews announced that there was a dedication for the cannon that was donated to the City by Mr. Robert Bouchlas. The City built a nice base for it and it is located near the ocean at Jaycee Park.

Mr. Matthews stated that Vietnam Veterans Day was March 29th, which was the anniversary of when they pulled out of Vietnam. He said on Vietnam Veterans Day he went out to the Vietnam memorial on the Island and he noticed there was some caulking that needs to be redone. It is nothing major, just normal maintenance. He asked Mr. Mutterback if that is something the Vietnam Veterans Association should be responsible for repairing.

Mr. Mutterback said that he received an email yesterday and he has passed that onto the City's Facilities Maintenance Department and they will take care of it.

Mr. Matthews announced that there is going to be a Vietnam Veterans reunion at the Daytona Beach Speedway on May 27-28. Toby Keith will be one of the entertainers and tickets are free to Vietnam Veterans and their families. It is going to be a very ambitious event and the largest welcome home celebration ever assembled.

7. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mrs. Dale announced that the American Gold Star Mothers is having their national convention in West Palm Beach in June. On June 23 there will be an opening ceremony of the Vietnam Traveling Wall memorial, which will be present from June 23-26 during the time of their convention. She has flyers that she can pass out and she will share this information with the Veterans Council as well.

Mrs. Dale said that on May 7th, the Gold Star Mothers of Indian River County invited Florida Brass to holding a concert at the Elks Club. Cocktails will be at 6:00 p.m. and the concert is at 7:00 p.m. Florida Brass is a group of men who have a phenomenal sound and they come from all over Florida and several other states. They agreed to do a fundraiser to honor the fallen and the Gold Star Mothers. The cost is \$20 per ticket and the tickets can be purchased on line using the website on the flyer.

Mr. Paulisin announced that the Vietnam Veterans Golf Tournament will be on June 18, 2022a at the Sandridge Golf Course. The Indian River County Vietnam Veterans is the only 501(c)3 organization that houses Veterans In Indian River County. All the funds from the tournament will go to that cause. He said Ms. Sandra McLaughlin built new apartments on Royal Palm Boulevard to help house Veterans and the Vietnam Veterans of Indian River County provided her with a lot of furniture to help furnish the units.

Mr. Matthews stated that when they start fundraising for the WWII tribute and stage, the 501(c)3 organization that will be accepting the donations is the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). They will account for all the money and make sure it is handled properly.

8. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) May 4, 2022

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee is scheduled for May 4, 2022 at 9:30 a.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:31 a.m.

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