

**VETERANS MEMORIAL ISLAND SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, May 4, 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) April 6, 2022

Mrs. Dale said on page 2 under item B) in the second paragraph, the word "to" is missing. The third paragraph from the bottom on page 3 the word "are" is missing and right under that Mrs. Lange's name is misspelled. On page 4 in the fourth paragraph from the bottom the word "at" should be removed. In the first paragraph under item B) on page 5 the word Memorial should be capitalized. In the second paragraph under member's matters, the word "holding" should be "hold". In the next paragraph the word "a" needs to be removed in the first sentence and the word "in" in the second sentence should not be capitalized. In the last paragraph on page 6 there should be a space between the word "the" and 501C(3).

Mr. Matthews stated that the Military Officers Association of America is actually a 501C(19) nonprofit organization, so that should also be corrected.

Mr. Matthews made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2022 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting with the corrections made. Mr. Paulisin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Tony Young said he would like to share some information on 12 of the Veterans from this area who lost their lives in World War II (WWII) and have cenotaph markers on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. He gave brief accounts on the history of Clifford Barnwell, Charles Blair, Ebert Blanton, George Button, Fred Coleman, Joseph Canalicchio, Hiram H. Collins, Edward Courtney, James Dodson, Jimmie Doles, James Donevant, and Gene Evans.

Mr. Matthews thanked Mr. Young for researching all that information and sharing it with the community.

Mrs. Barbara Ruddy commented that she addressed City Council and asked them to treat the WWII Tribute as a matter of urgency, because the surviving WWII Veterans are in their 90's and are passing away quickly. They are hoping that on Veterans Day 2023 they will be able to have the dedication of this Tribute. She handed out an envelope of information on the fundraising for the stage and WWII Tribute to the Committee members (on file in the City Clerk's office). She said she has hand delivered about 125 of these envelopes to businesses and individuals in the community.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A) Request for use of the Island for a Memorial Service for William Mercier – May 14, 2022

Mr. Matthews announced that they received a request to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for a memorial service for William Mercier on May 14, 2022 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. with about 40 people attending. Mr. Mercier was an honorably discharged Staff Sargent in the Air Force and this application has been approved and required signatures have been obtained.

B) Request for use of the Island for a Celebration of Life Service for Glenn D. Fraser – May 28, 2022

Mr. Paulisin announced that they received a request from Karie Fraser to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for a celebration of life service for Glenn Fraser on May 28, 2022 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Mr. Matthews said Glenn Fraser was an honorably discharged Veteran who served in Vietnam and they are expecting 30 to 50 people to attend.

Mr. Matthews made a motion to allow the celebration of life service for Glenn Fraser on May 28, 2022. Mr. Paulisin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

C) Application for a Cenotaph Plaque for Glenn D. Fraser - Requested by Karie Fraser

Mr. Paulisin stated they also received a request from Karie Fraser for a cenotaph marker for Glenn Fraser.

Mr. Matthews said the City has a Resolution and it outlines the authorized uses and rules that control what takes place on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. He explained that the cenotaph markers are for people who lived in Indian River County when they joined the service and who died while defending our Country. It does not look like this was the case with Glenn Fraser, as he was already out of the service when he passed away. He is sorry that they cannot honor the cenotaph marker request, but they will allow the celebration of life service.

Mr. Matthews made a motion denying the request for a cenotaph marker for Glenn Fraser. Mr. Paulisin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

D) Request for use of the Island – November 6, 2022 – American Gold Star Mothers of Indian River County

Mrs. Dale said the event for the American Gold Star Mothers of Indian River County is a walk-a-thon for military Veterans suicide awareness.

Mr. Matthews commented that they will have approximately 200 to 400 people attending this event and they will be using the Island for about an hour.

Mr. Matthews made a motion to approve the request from the American Gold Star Mothers of Indian River County for a walk-a-thon on November 6, 2022. Mr. Paulisin seconded the motion and it passes unanimously.

E) Request for use of the Island – November 12, 2022 – Alzheimer and Parkinson Association of Indian River County

Mr. Matthews announced that the Alzheimer and Parkinson Association of Indian River County also submitted a request to use the Island for their event, which has been going on for many years. They will have 500 to 600 people at their event.

Mrs. Peggy Cunningham, Executive Director of the Alzheimer and Parkinson Association of Indian River County, said it has been a privilege to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for part of their Walk to Remember fundraiser event over the past years. This fundraiser supports the programs they offer, free of charge, to anyone in Indian River County. She said the event starts in Riverside Park and as the walkers enter the Island they are reminded that this is the time for reflection and the walkers are very respectful. They always have their event around Veterans Day and this year it will be on November 12, 2022. They have many Veterans that use their services, so they recognize them by bringing them up on stage at the beginning of their program.

Mr. Matthews made a motion to approve the use of the Island on November 12, 2022 for part of the Alzheimer and Parkinson Association's event. Mrs. Dale seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A) Update on the Stage and World War II Tribute as presented to City Council

Mrs. Ruddy said she understands that the idea of selling bricks as a fundraiser with Veteran's names on them will not be allowed to be used on the Island. However, another idea was mentioned about using the bricks to create an area for a bike rack in Riverside Park just outside of the Island.

Mr. Richard Mutterback, Assistant Director of Public Works, reported that this idea was mentioned to them recently, so the Public Works Department already put a bike rack in the budget for next year. It will be on one (1) side or the other of the entrance to the Island. He reminded the Commission members that the current industry is experiencing supply chain issues and raw material shortages. Even though they say it will take six (6) months to replace the bridge, it could take six (6) months just to procure all the supplies and materials.

Mr. Young commented that the team working on the WWII Tribute had a tent set up at the Vero Beach Air Show, so they spent the weekend talking with people about the WWII Tribute and stage project. There are many people that can relate to their family members serving in WWII, so donating to this project is a way to honor their service. If anyone wants to contribute to this cause they can make a donation to the Indian River Chapter of Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). The Island will not only use the Tribute for the recognition of the WWII generation, but it will be a reflection of our military Veterans and military families across the board. He said the City Manager stated that “this will be the next generation to fulfill the vision of Mr. Alex MacWilliam.”

Mrs. Lange said she was wondering if there could be some project that people could contribute to that would honor the names of people who served in WWII, but did not die in the War.

Mr. Matthews explained that the Island is dedicated to all those who died in the service to our Country and the WWII Tribute will be for all WWII Veterans.

Mrs. Lange commented that she found out a few years ago that the Library in Vero Beach was recognized as having one (1) of the largest military library sections throughout the Country.

Mr. Young explained that about five (5) years ago a Navy Lieutenant became the manager for the Wall Street Journal office in England and his last name was Rustin. He had an extensive military book collection and when he passed away the Rustin family donated a large volume of the books to the Indian River County Library. He said the second floor is the archive for the Main Library for Indian River County.

B) Update on Mangrove Windowing and Trimming

Mr. Mutterback reported that the mangrove trimming is moving forward with permitting. Next week they will visit the Island to identify all of the species and to see if there are any changes that need to be made to the plan they previously presented.

C) Memorial Day Service – May 30, 2022

Mr. Matthews stated that the Memorial Day service will be on Monday May 30, 2022. He said the draft copy of the program is almost complete (on file in the City Clerk’s office). He briefly went over the program and announced some of the events and individuals who will be participating.

Mr. Young reported that last Saturday there was a memorial service for Mr. Jim Thompson. He said last year he received a message from Mr. Thompson saying he was no longer able to stand, so he gave his boots to his son to donate for the Boots on the Ground Display on Memorial Day. He was a great Veteran and he loved Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary.

Mr. Matthews said the service for Mr. Thompson was held at the First Baptist Church and the list of speakers was extensive. He will be greatly missed.

7. CHAIRMAN’S MATTERS

Mr. Matthews commented that he was a Marine and fought in the Vietnam War. In his Battalion there were 567 Marines and Corpsman killed and later today he is going to a reunion to spend some

time with those who are left. He said he recently read that only 30% of those who served in the Vietnam War are still alive, so they are slowly shrinking. The all Veteran reunion is in Melbourne at Wickham Park from May 5th to May 8th. He also announced that the 247th Marine Corps Birthday Ball will be on November 10, 2022 and it will sell out as it always does. Mr. Matthews reported that the Connected Warriors are giving free yoga classes at the Vero Beach Rowing Club for any Veteran and their families. Connected Warriors is a nationwide program and yoga helps Veterans with range of motion, stress, high blood pressure, etc. He also announced that the largest welcome home celebration for Vietnam Veterans will take place at the Daytona Beach Speedway on May 27th and 28th. He said they are advertising it as a tribute so meaningful it will change history. It is free to Vietnam Veterans and their families. Mr. Matthews said that he recently attended the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) awards ceremony at Sebastian River High School and there were 46 Veteran's organizations there to present the awards.

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mrs. Dale announced that the Florida Brass concert, sponsored by the Gold Star Mothers of Indian River County, is on May 7, 2022. A cash bar will be available at 6:00 p.m. and the concert starts at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are still available and people can register at Floridabrass.veroelks.com or she can be contacted at Ircgoldstarmoms.org for tickets. She also reported that from June 22 to June 26, 2022, the American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. will be holding their national conventions in West Palm Beach, Florida. The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall will be there as well on June 23rd and the public is invited. Mrs. Dale announced that they (American Gold Star Mothers of Indian River County) will have their annual walk-a-thon on November 6, 2022 at Riverside Park. This is to bring awareness that nationally, there are 22 military Veteran suicides a day. This is their fourth walk-a-thon to raise funds for Veteran programs offered by Dogs for Life, Inc. and the Mental Health Association in Indian River County. She said registration for the walk starts at 9:00 a.m. at Riverside Park and the walk starts at 10:00 a.m. If anyone needs more information they can go to Ircgoldstarmoms.org.

Mr. Paulisin announced that the Mary Snyder Veterans of Indian River County Golf Tournament will take place on June 18th at the Sandridge Golf Club. The maximum number of golfers is 288 and they hope to reach that goal. Every penny raised goes to help the homeless Veterans or future homeless Veterans in the City of Vero Beach and Indian River County. After the tournament, there will be lunch provided at the Indian River County Fairgrounds. Tickets and information can be found at vvir.org or by calling him (Mr. Curtis Paulisin) at (772) 538-2484.

Mr. Young said anyone can assist even if they are not golfers. He is soliciting for door prizes and people can contact him if they would like to donate a gift certificate for a restaurant, a round of golf, etc.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) June 1, 2022

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee is scheduled for June 1, 2022 at 9:30 a.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

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