

**VETERANS MEMORIAL ISLAND SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, May 5, 2021 – 9:30 a.m.
City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida**

PRESENT: Chairman, John Michael Matthews; Vice Chairman, Joel Herman; Members: Barbara Fallon, Curtis Paulisin, Don Wickstrand, Alternate Member #1, Sylvester McIntosh and Alternate Member #2, Peggy Lyon **Also Present:** Assistant City Attorney, Jenny Flanigan; Assistant Public Work's Director, Richard Mutterback; Recreation Director, Jim O'Connell; and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman 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 7, 2021

Mr. Matthew said he has one (1) correction to make on page three (3) under the World War I monument discussion. In the second sentence the words *Iron Cross* should read *Army Cross, or Army Distinguished Service Cross*.

Ms. Fallon made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2021 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting with the one (1) correction made. Mr. Herman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Tammy Bursick, City Clerk, stated that she has two (2) items to discuss this morning. First, she received an email from a citizen who asked to have her letter read into the record. Mrs. Bursick read the letter from Mrs. Rosemary White (on file in the City Clerk's office). She said at yesterday's City Council meeting, City Council voted in favor of a Resolution for restructuring the City's Boards and Commissions. She explained that they have had some problems with getting members to serve on some of their Boards and Commissions. They also have a problem with the way the City Ordinance currently reads. It states that a majority of the members must be City residents. She took it to City Council and the City Attorney and they decided to reduce the Advisory Committees from seven (7) members to five (5) members with no alternates. However, some Committees might still want alternates, so the Chairman can come to City Council to make that request. Some other changes are that City Council will give preference to City residents. They also changed the wording of the Resolution to read *to the extent possible the majority of members will be City residents*. She explained that she will be sending letters to each of the Advisory Committee members asking them to reapply to be on the Committee and then City Council will hold interview sessions and appoint five (5) members. This Committee has some special requirement, such as having a member of the Veterans Service Office and the Veterans Council on the Committee.

Mr. Matthews asked when they get the paperwork do they fill out an application if they want to continue to serve. Mrs. Bursick replied yes, just reapply and it will be taken to City Council.

Ms. Jenny Flanigan, Assistant City Attorney, explained that the Resolution states that all members can continue to serve until successors are appointed.

Mrs. Lyon asked since she is an alternate and a County resident should she not reapply. Ms. Flanigan said she thinks this Committee is special and if the Chairman feels alternates are necessary that would be a good reason to reapply. The Chairman would make a request to City Council on behalf of the Committee if they decide they want alternates.

Mr. Herman asked if the two (2) positions (Veterans Service office and Veterans Council) are filled and they do not have any other City applicants what happens. Mrs. Bursick explained that the way they changed the Resolution they are hoping to get more City residents to apply, but they can make it work. She explained that they count the Veterans Council and Veterans Service office appointees as City residents.

Mr. Matthews asked if anyone from the public can apply. Mrs. Bursick replied yes, there are nine (9) advisory Committees that this will affect. Some people might apply for multiple Committees, so City Council will have choices.

Mr. Leonard Markir, City resident, said he would like to share some information with the Committee. He explained that there are a couple of proposals to convert tennis courts to Pickleball courts at Riverside Park. One (1) is for six (6) Pickleball courts and the other is for 12 Pickleball courts. The 12 court proposal would be the closest to Veterans Memorial Island. This is being discussed by the Recreation Commission, but nothing has been decided. If it is approved they said the courts will be busy all day long and if they build 12 courts they would need additional parking. The adjacent neighborhood is pretty much against having Pickleball at Riverside Park. He said the original proposal was to take two (2) tennis courts and make six (6) Pickleball courts and the newest proposal is to take the three (3) tennis courts closest to the Island and convert them into 12 Pickleball courts. He wanted to give the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee the opportunity to know about it. This subject will be discussed again at the June Recreation Commission meeting. He thinks it is a more aggressive use of that quiet part of the Park across from the Sanctuary.

Mr. Matthews stated this meeting is televised, so people in the community are hearing his comments.

Mr. Paulisin said now that this was mentioned he will take a walk out there.

Mr. Matthews said even if it does not impose on the Island they would still hear it.

Mr. Markir explained that Pickleball is a popular growing sport, especially in Vero Beach. He said Pickleball University, who made these proposals, stated that they have not explored any other locations in Vero Beach. There are a lot of other locations that are centrally located that are easy to get to that can handle the parking and especially the growth. The people who are opposing this do not dislike the sport, but they feel it is just the wrong location.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A) Request for use of the Island – Alzheimer & Parkinson Association of Indian River County on November 13, 2021

Mrs. Peggy Cunningham, Executive Director of the Alzheimer & Parkinson Association, said this is their 7th year requesting to use the Island and it has been such a major part of their walk. Their goal is to improve the quality of life of those families who are caring for someone with dementia and those managing movement disorders. Their event is called A Walk to Remember and is normally held in November around Veterans Day. In the past they have been granted use of Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary as part of their walk route. They inform the walkers that when they are on the Island it is a time of reflection and it is a quiet place. She explained that they bring the Veterans up on the stage and the Honor Guard starts the walk. They are requesting again to be able to include the use of the Island for that part of their walk. Their event is on Saturday, November 13, 2021. It is a good fundraiser and awareness raiser.

Mr. Matthews said the stage she mentioned is not on the Island, but it is located Under the Oaks. Mrs. Cunningham replied that is correct. Under the Oaks is where all the activities take place. Their sponsors and health care providers will have booths to provide information to the public.

Mr. Matthews stated that their event is a worthy cause and they have been approving this event for many years.

Mr. Herman made a motion to approve the application request from the Alzheimer & Parkinson Association. Mr. Paulisin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

B) Request for use of the Island - Promotional Ceremony for Christie Lemond June 26, 2021

Mr. Matthews explained that he received a call from Captain Christie Lemond who is being promoted to Major and wanted to hold her promotional ceremony on the Island. He thought she was filling out the application and he assumed she would be at the meeting today. He stated that military promotions, retirements, and Veteran memorials services are all appropriate to be held on the Island. He is sure that Captain Lemond will come and talk with the Committee before the June 26, 2021 ceremony.

C) Christmas Decorations for Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary – Mr. Bill Baysura

Mr. Bill Baysura, Indian River County resident, said he has lived here since 1990 and is very involved with the community. He said his farther served in the military, but he did not. He is at a point in his life where he wants to start giving back. The idea he has was sparked when he visited Fort Pierce where their waterfront was all lit up with Christmas lights and it looked so festive and seasonal. He thought they could come up with a plan to add some Christmas lights to Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. It would be very respectful and they could keep the lights along the walkways and brighten up the canopy of trees during the holidays. If he does fundraising it will all go back into the Island.

Mr. Matthews explained that the City Ordinance does not allow fundraising on the Island, but people can donate to the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary account. He is not sure about the electric part of this, but they have some time to look into that. Mr. Baysura said it was just an idea

he wanted to bring forward to see if it would be possible. It would allow people to enjoy an evening visit to the Island.

Mr. Paulisin said another problem might be the upkeep by the City. Mr. Baysura said they will have volunteers in place from his office or from a Veterans association that would be there a few hours a night. As far as the electric, if it was necessary he would provide a generator. He can do a fundraisers to cover those expenses.

Mr. Matthews said this is kind of a new idea that he has not thought about. He would suggest that they table this item until their next meeting to give them time to look into it further.

Mrs. Lyon explained that McKee Botanical Gardens has beautiful luminaries along their walkways during the holidays and they are battery powered. She asked what time does the Island close or is it open all night. Mr. Matthews replied that it is always open.

Mr. Paulisin suggested that Mr. Baysura prepare a written or working proposal for them to look at. Mr. Baysura said absolutely, there are probably several ideas he can put in a proposal. He believes the Island is a gem and they need to take advantage of it in the evenings. He said there are a lot of people in Indian River County that don't even know the Island is there.

Mr. Matthews said the example of the lighting at McKee Botanical Gardens might be useful. He requested that Mr. Baysura put together a proposal with the details and bring it back to their next meeting for the Committee to review. This will also give the Committee time to talk with the City to see how something like this might affect them.

Mr. Matthews stated that they will put this on next month's agenda.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A) Update on World War I Monument

Mr. Matthews stated that their Committee has been working on a World War I (WWI) monument for several months now. He said In Washington D.C. they are also creating a WWI monument. He explained that the founder who had the vision to create the Island was a WWI hero and there is no monument to honor his conflict, so the Military Officers Association is leading the charge of designing a WWI monument for the Island.

Mr. Carlos Halcomb, Indian River Chapter of Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), said with him today is Mr. Mike Di Scipio. They have been working together on this project and they hope to get the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee's approval so they can move it on to City Council for consideration and approval. If not for Mr. MacWilliam and him working as a State Legislature to create this Island, we would not have it today. It has become a place for the community to share moments, celebrate, come together, and to teach their youth about services and sacrifices that were made. At this time he gave a short Power Point presentation (on file in the City Clerk's office). He said WWI was supposed to be the war that ended all wars, but it has changed warfare for the last century. There is one thing that everyone thinks of with WWI and that is the doughboy coming out of the trenches and over the hill. It is this image that they want to put on the Island. He explained that they have the molds and they delivered them to a bronze foundry in Sanford, Florida. They are in good condition and usable, and MOAA has the funding for it. The recommendations they received for the size of the base that the statue will sit

on will be roughly 54 inches wide, 48 inches tall, and 40 inches deep. It will be black granite that they can etch into so it will be relatively maintenance free. It will be constructed at no cost to the City, but they would request help by the City's Public Work's department to create the concrete base. After the base is made the company will come in and cover it with the granite. When the statue is complete, the bronze foundry will deliver the statue and install it on the pedestal. The height of the bronze statue is 67 inches, so the total height with the base is about 9 ½ feet tall and it will weigh about 400 pounds. It should not require much heavy equipment to move it from the road, across the bridge and onto the base, so it will have minimal impact on the Island. They are hoping to get this on the May 18, 2021 City Council meeting agenda. If it is approved then they can let the foundry know they can start, because it takes three (3) months to complete. Their goal is to have it installed by Veterans Day in November.

Mr. Matthews said that sounds like a great idea. It should have been the first monuments on the Island when Mr. Alex MacWilliam was here. He said personally he feels that most of the monuments on the Island are too small. This monument will be looking out over the Island and somewhat symbolic. He does not believe there is a height restriction for the Island, but it is pretty tall. It probably would not be right to just place it on the ground with a marker next to it. Mr. Halcomb replied that they talked with the companies that produce these statues and they said if they are not placed on a high pedestal, then children will want to climb on it.

Mr. Herman suggested that instead of the monument reading "In honor of Vero Beach Veterans" that it be reworded to say "In Honor of all World War I Veterans of Indian River County". It is not just for the veterans of Vero Beach, or Fellsmere, or Sebastian, etc., it is for all of them.

Mr. Matthews stated that the words need a little tweaking and he would suggest that the red Poppy flower shown on the side of the base be moved to the front and have one (1) on each side of the years. Mr. Halcomb stated that they wanted to keep it as simple as possible, because they can always go back and add information to the other three (3) faces at later dates. Their budget only allows them to add 15 words to the base at this time. He said the changes they requested are all appropriate.

Mr. Mike Di Scipio asked since they don't have an exact design will that hold them up from getting approval. Mr. Matthews replied that he did not think so.

Mr. Halcomb stated that the MOAA organization thinks this monument is fitting and appropriate based on the Islands creation and creator.

Mr. Herman stated that he thinks they are going to have a problem with the height, because the Gulf War monument was not even this tall. Mr. Paulisin replied that the Gulf War monument also had audio and it was very large. Ms. Fallon said it was going to be 16 feet around, so it was humungous. Mr. Matthews stated that there was a discussion about the height, but the reason it was not approved for the Island was that it was too heavy and the heavy equipment that was needed to create it.

Mr. Matthews explained that the doughboy mold already exists and they are getting to use it for free. The funding is already done, so it will not cost the City anything except to help create the cement base. If they wanted a smaller one (1) made they would have to pay \$20,000 to create a new mold.

Mr. Paulisin asked if anyone had the chance to speak with the MacWilliam family.

Mr. Matthews replied yes. He spoke with a few family members and they were thrilled with the idea. They asked to be notified so they could be present for the dedication.

Mrs. Lyon asked if they have spoken with the City staff or the Public Work's department about the weight and getting it onto the Island. She said it is incredible that the money was raised so quickly and that MOAA stepped up to handle it all. She thanked them.

Mr. Richard Mutterback, Assistant Public Work's Director, stated he had a conversation with Mr. Di Scipio and informed him of the weight restrictions for the bridge and that cement trucks cannot cross over it. When they are making the pedestal they will have to use mobile carts to get the cement there. He said the Public Work's department is looking forward to helping them any way they can with the manual labor. He asked Mr. Halcomb if they are going to have actual engineering designs for the base. Mr. Halcomb replied when they get with the granite company they will get a plan for what size the concrete base needs to be and then they will get with the City so they know how much cement and steel they will need.

Mr. Mutterback stated that for liability purposes, they would like some type of engineering designs because of the height and weight. Once they have the design he can give them the cost for the materials. He asked Mr. Di Scipio if they figured for the cost of the materials for the pedestal in their budget. Mr. Di Scipio replied yes, it was a separate budgeted amount from the statue.

Mr. Matthews stated that today they are looking for the Committees thoughts and approval, but City Council will have the final say. There are still a lot of details that will need to be approved and they will not be able to move ahead until City Council gives them the okay.

Mr. Mutterback stated that Public Work's will give their approval, based on seeing the final design for the pedestal.

Mr. Di Scipio explained that this is the last time these molds will ever be used.

Mr. Herman asked if they thought about lighting the statue. Mr. Halcomb replied no, that is something to include in their discussions. He said when lighting something it adds costs and he does not know where the money would come from for the electric and the maintenance.

Mr. Paulisin made a motion to accept the monument with the change they discussed.

Ms. Fallon said the word "all" needs to be in the wording as well.

Mr. Herman stated that it needs to read Indian River County not Vero Beach.

Mr. Herman modified the motion requesting to change the wording on the monument to read "In honor of all Indian River County Veterans, World War I, 1917-1918" with a poppy flower on each side of the date. Ms. Fallon seconded the motion.

Mr. Matthews stated that eventually they will need engineering designs for the pedestal, because they cannot build it just by the sketch he provided. Mr. Halcomb replied that with their approval he will get with the granite company to determine the amount of materials and the cost. After that he will get with the Public Work's department for them to review and hopefully approve before the May 18, 2021 City Council meeting.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Scott Boatright, Vice President of the Republican Veterans Club of Indian River County, announced that at their last meeting, their club voted in favor of donating \$500 to the City for Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. He said \$250 is designated for the upkeep of the Island and \$250 is for the WWI monument.

Mr. Matthews and the Committee members thanked him for the donation.

B) Memorial Day Ceremony – May 31, 2021

Mr. Matthews stated that the Memorial Day ceremony is scheduled to take place on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary on May 31, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. They will have golf carts to help transport people who need assistance getting over to the Island. They encourage people to arrive early as people gather and to listen to the band playing. He gave a brief overview of the Memorial Day program and said they will have the traditional sights and sounds.

C) Update on a Stage for Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary

Mr. Matthews explained that they do not currently have a stage for the Island, because the old one (1) was scrapped and it is too soon to buy another stage. He said what the County is willing to do for Memorial Day is to have risers that will accommodate the podium for the speakers. The people who are normally on the stage will be in chairs on the ground behind the speaker, so there probably will not be any shade.

Mr. Halcomb said at the last Veterans Council meeting they discussed the need for a new stage. The type of portable stages that the City uses are rather expensive. They discussed the idea of using the circular area where the permeant seating is located to build a concrete stepped structure type stage. It would face the seating and have removable aluminum poles with a detachable canvas covers for shade. This is just an idea, but it would be simple for upkeep. The Veterans Council has their meeting today at 1:30 p.m. and this will be an item for discussion.

Ms. Flanigan said she would like to follow up on the flag pole ball that was replaced on the Island. She explained that the Veterans Service Office requested to have it so they could display it in their office. She said Mr. Monte Falls, City Manager, wrote a letter to Mr. Herman approving their request (on file in the City Clerk's office) and Mr. Mutterback will provide him with the ball. Mr. Herman thanked the City and he will display a copy of the letter so everyone will know where it came from and the history about it.

Mr. Halcomb reported that he was at Young Park and the lanyard for the flag pole had snapped. He was able to secure one (1) of the ropes to the cleat, but he could not reach the other one (1).

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

Mr. Matthews reported that they are getting ready to take the molds off the walls for the Words From War monument. He is not sure when the dedication will be yet, but they are making progress.

Mr. Matthews reported that they will be doing repairs to the bridge leading to the Island in the distant future. They need to plan on not having access to the Island during that time.

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mr. Paulisin announced that the Veterans golf tournament is filling up, so if anyone still wants to join they can go to vbirc.org. All the proceeds will go to the homeless housing for the Veterans of Indian River County. He said they currently have 30 beds for homeless veterans. They are also talking with the organization called Every Dream has a Price about building another triplex for the female homeless Veterans.

Mrs. Lyon asked what is the date of the golf tournament. Mr. Paulisin replied that it will be on Saturday, June 19, 2021. Registration starts at 7:00 a.m., tee off is at 8:00 a.m., and they will have military honors before it starts.

Mr. Herman said he would like to let the City know it has been a good opportunity to serve on the Veterans Memorial Island Committee for many years. He announced that he is retiring at the end of the month, so this is his last meeting. His replacement has been selected and the City has his application to fill the Veterans Service office seat on the Veterans Memorial Island Advisory Committee.

Mr. Matthews thanked Mr. Herman for all he has done for the Committee and also for all the Veterans and their families he has helped in the county.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) June 2, 2021

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee is scheduled for June 2, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

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