

**VETERANS MEMORIAL ISLAND SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, June 7, 2023 – 9:30 a.m.
City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida**

PRESENT: Chairman, John Matthews; Vice Chairman, Michelle Dale; Members: Curtis Paulisin, Melissa Arndt, and Carolyn Lange **Also Present:** City Attorney, John Turner and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Chartier

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) May 3, 2023

Mr. Matthews made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 3, 2023 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting. Mrs. Dale seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

5. NEW BUSINESS

A) Cenotaph Marker Request for SPC Bakari Mosley – Mr. Wendell Mosley

Mr. Matthews stated that they received a request for a cenotaph marker for SPC Bakari Mosley and the family is here to speak with them. He said they have the application along with the supporting paperwork, and everything looks in order.

Mr. Wendell Mosley said that he is Bakari Mosley's father and he introduced his wife and the other family members that were in attendance. He said he is here today to request that his son Bakari Mosley be honored on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary with a cenotaph marker. He stated that his son was born and raised in Vero Beach and he graduated from Vero Beach High School. Sadly he passed away while on active duty due to a motorcycle accident. He said his son was a kind, brave, and intelligent young man. He loved his time in the military and his son would often call him and tell him about his daily adventures. He loved to be serving this Country and he would have continued to proudly serve if his life had not been cut short. He asked the Committee to respectfully consider his request to honor his son with a cenotaph marker.

Mr. Matthews stated that this is a wonderful way to honor him for his service.

Mrs. Lange said they are sorry for his loss.

Mr. Matthews made a motion to approve the application request for a cenotaph marker for SPC Bakari Mosley to be placed on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. Mrs. Lange seconded the motion.

Mr. Paulisin mentioned that Fort Bliss, Texas, where SPC Mosley was stationed, is where he also served, so it is near and dear to his heart and he knows that area well.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Matthews said they are proud of his service and sacrifice and now he will be honored on the Island with all the other heroes.

Mr. Paulisin asked Mr. Mosley if he has been in touch with the Veterans Service office to make sure that SPC Mosley, as a Veteran, and the family have received all the benefits they are entitled to.

Mr. Mosley replied yes, Ms. Arndt has been assisting them.

Mrs. Lange asked if someone will notify the Mosley family when the cenotaph is placed on the Island.

Mr. Matthews replied absolutely. The family will also have the opportunity to gather and perhaps have a Veterans organization there to play taps, have a rifle volley, etc. They have time to plan for that after the marker is installed.

B) Request for use of the Island for a Veteran Memorial Service for SGT Kenneth Bryant

Mr. Matthews stated that they also received a request to use Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary for a memorial service for SGT Kenneth Bryant. He said the request was submitted by Sheryl Glenn and they anticipate approximately 20 family members to attend the service on June 16, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. He said that SGT Kenneth Bryant was honorably discharged and the paperwork is in order.

Mr. Matthews made a motion to approve the application for a memorial service for Kenneth Bryant on June 16, 2023. Mrs. Dale seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

C) Request for use of the Island by the Alzheimer & Parkinson Association of Indian River County - Mrs. Margaret Cunningham

Mr. Matthews said they received a request to use the Island from the Alzheimer & Parkinson Association of Indian River County, which they have been doing for many years. The application states it is for their annual fundraiser, but fundraising is not allowed on the Island. However, their event takes place at Riverside Park and they only use the Island for part of their walk. They have always been respectful and they show dignity and decorum when they are on the Island. The date of the event is November 4, 2023, but they might not be able to go on the Island because of the bridge replacement.

Mr. Matthews made a motion to approve the application subject to availability to access the Island. Mr. Paulisin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A) Recap of the Merchant Marines Monument Unveiling – May 22, 2023

Mr. Ross Rowlinson, Merchant Marines, said he would like to thank everyone on the Committee for supporting and making this monument a reality and everyone in the community who attended the ceremony on Maritime Day. He would also like to thank the Public Works Department and all the employees who worked on the project.

Mrs. Lange said it was a beautiful service and they had a great turnout. It was nice to see some of the Veterans there.

Mr. Rowlinson said it was a very special day. They had a special event on a national holiday and Mr. Rob Medina, Representative from Congressman Bill Posey's office, presented a local 100-year-old Merchant Marine with the Congressional Gold Medal. He said Mr. Michael Hyde wanted to be here today and he sends his regards and his appreciation to everyone as well.

Mr. Matthews said he recently attended the 1st Marine Division meeting in Orlando. He told them about the Merchant Marine monument and he showed them the program from the ceremony. He said they were proud to hear about it.

B) Recap of Memorial Day – May 29, 2023

Mr. Matthews stated that the Memorial Day ceremony was another successful event on the Island. He said the Veterans Council of Indian River County oversees the two (2) main ceremonies on the Island, which are Memorial Day and Veterans Day. He said they printed 1,400 Memorial Day programs and almost all of them were handed out, so they assume there were over 1,000 people on the Island. He gave a brief recap of the events from the ceremony and who participated. He announced that Mrs. Michelle Dale honored the World War II (WWII) Veterans and their names were listed on an insert in the program.

Mrs. Dale reported that they added some names to the list on the day of the ceremony, so there were at least 10 to 12 WWII Veterans.

C) Update on the Bridge Replacement

Mr. Matthews said he heard that they are going to close the bridge on July 11, 2023.

Mr. Matthew Mitts, Public Works Director, explained that the City contracted with Shoreline Foundation to build the bridge and they are in the procurement phase. They want to minimize the downtime to access the Island, so they required the contractor to have all of the equipment and supplies on-site before closing the bridge. They have an approximate four (4) month construction schedule and they should be starting around July 9 – 11, 2023, but they will announce the exact date as they get closer. He said the construction should be completed sometime after November 11, 2023.

Mr. Matthews reported that the Veterans Day ceremony will take place at the Grand Pavilion at Riverside Park because they will not be able to use the Island.

Mr. Mitts said that the City will still be responsible for maintaining the Island so they will store their equipment on the Island and the contractor will be responsible for transporting the City employees back and forth.

Mrs. Lange asked when was it determined that the bridge needed to be replaced.

Mr. Mitts replied that he does not know the exact date but several years ago all of the bridges in the State were inspected by the State of Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). He said the inspection report indicated there was some required maintenance work to be done. The City hired a structural engineer to inspect the bridge and follow up on the maintenance, but they reported that the bridge needed to be replaced as soon as possible. Following that, the City took some preventative measures to slow down the corrosion and to keep it safe for pedestrian access. However, they had to decrease the load weight limit on the bridge so now they can no longer drive heavy equipment across the bridge, which prevents them from doing certain construction and maintenance projects.

Mr. Matthews said that people cannot see the corrosion because it is the rebar underneath that is rusting and causing the concrete to crack.

Mr. Mitts said that is correct, corrosion happens because of the salt water. The current bridge was built in 1988 and since then engineering standards have changed for coastal construction. He stated that Kimley-Horn and Associates is the contractor for the structural engineering components and Shoreline Foundation will do the construction. They are proud to have them on board and ready to get the project moving forward.

Mrs. Lange asked what is going to happen to all of the beautiful trees just on the other side of the bridge that line the causeway.

Mr. Mitts replied that they are trying to minimize the impact in the construction area and he is not aware of any work being done that far onto the Island, so those trees will remain intact.

D) Update on the Stage and World War II Tribute

Mr. Tony Young stated that the WWII tribute is moving along. He said yesterday he received an email from Schulke, Bittle & Stoddard, LLC, which included an invoice for the work they did. He estimated that the cost was going to be about \$4,000, which Schulke already reduced down from \$7,000. However, when he looked at the invoice it was zeroed out, so Schulke, Bittle & Stoddard covered the entire cost of the structural engineering services they provided for the project. He said this past weekend the WWII Tribute Committee attended the Veterans Fest at the Indian River County Fair Grounds to help get the word out to the community about the project. They will also have the opportunity to speak about the WWII tribute on June 17th at the Mary Snyder / Vietnam Veterans Golf Tournament and at the Elks Lodge on Father's Day, June 18th, 2023. He announced that they anticipate doing a groundbreaking when the bridge is completed and inspected, so it might be in December or even early 2024. He mentioned that the 21st Amendment Distillery has sold 91 bottles of their limited edition bourbon and the proceeds are helping to defray the cost of the project. Also, the tile work to make the ribbons for the medals is being worked on by Sharon Sexton and Glenda Taylor. He said the City has been working with them and he would like to thank them for all of their support.

Mr. Matthews explained to people in the audience and the viewing community that they are constructing a permanent stage on the Island, which will also be a tribute to WWII Veterans. He held

up a photo of what it will look like (on file in the City Clerk's office) and explained what the medals are that Mr. Young mentioned earlier.

Mr. Young said that on Memorial Day, they recognized the nine (9) WWII Veterans who are honored with cenotaph markers, and with the Gold Star Mothers help they have been able to reach out to the remaining WWII Veterans who are still with us in the community.

Mr. Matthews said it takes financing to make this project happen so if anyone is interested in making a donation it would be appreciated.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

None

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mrs. Dale stated that she has been working with Mr. Young on getting the WWII Veterans together for luncheons. Every couple of months they hold a get-together at the American Legion to share their stories and they are thrilled to do it. The American Legion has been so gracious to sponsor the WWII Veterans and pay for their lunches. Sometimes the information the WWII Veterans share touches the families and children of other WWII Veterans who have passed. She said she has gotten to know many of these Veterans and it is one (1) of the most heartwarming things she has ever done.

Mrs. Dale mentioned that the Gold Star Mothers State convention was held in Vero Beach on May 6, 2023, and the Gold Star Mothers from the west coast of Florida were very impressed with Vero Beach, the guest speakers, and the entire convention.

Mrs. Dale announced that on November 5, 2023, they will be holding their 5th annual walkathon for military Veterans suicide awareness. She has already been promoting the event and she has flyers. She said if anyone needs more information about the event they can contact her.

Mrs. Dale explained that while she was on the Island recently she observed a family who had a couple of small children and a dog. At one point she observed the children playing with a toy truck around the cenotaph markers and tossing a frisbee at the flag pole. She spoke to the family about the Island being a place of honor and respect and not a park for children to play in. She said the parents replied that they did not know because it was not written on the sign. She believes that when they finish the bridge they need to make sure the sign is up to date and that it states it is not for recreation and it is for remembrance and honoring the fallen.

Mr. Rowlinson suggested posting something on the gates so that people see the notice before they enter the Island.

Mrs. Dale asked if the City has information on all of the memorials on the Island and when they were erected. She said if there is nothing already, perhaps their Committee can work with the City to have all this information publicized so the public can access it.

Mr. Paulisin announced that they have about 220 golfers signed up for the annual Vietnam Veterans Golf Tournament. They will utilize both golf courses at Sandridge Golf Club. The money they raise goes to help provide homes for the homeless Veterans in Indian River County. The tournament will be held on June 17, 2023, and the cost is \$75.00, which includes lunch at the Indian River County

fairgrounds. He recognized several of their great sponsors but he said there are many more. He said he is looking forward to seeing everyone there.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) July 5, 2023

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee is scheduled for July 5, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

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