

**VETERANS MEMORIAL ISLAND SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, July 5, 2023 – 9:30 a.m.
City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida**

PRESENT: Chairman, John Matthews; Vice Chairman, Michelle Dale; Members: Curtis Paulisin, and Melissa Arndt **Also Present:** Public Works Director, Matthew Mitts; Assistant City Engineer, Danessa Chambers; City Attorney, John Turner and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Chartier

Unexcused Absence: Carolyn Lange

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.

Mr. Matthews said he is sad to announce the passing of Mr. Marty Zickert. As a sign of respect, he suggested observing a moment of silence.

The Committee members and the audience respectfully observed a moment of silence in honor of Mr. Marty Zickert.

Mr. Matthews said that Mr. Zickert was considered one of the top leaders within the Veteran community. He did so much and his absence will be greatly missed. He said regardless of his final resting place, a memorial service will be held for him in Vero Beach.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) June 7, 2023

Mr. Matthews made a motion to approve the June 7, 2023 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting minutes. Mrs. Dale seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Tony Young, World War II (WWII) Tribute Committee, said he would like to recognize and express their appreciation for the gift from the Brackett family to be used towards the WWII tribute and stage. He said he knows that Mr. Robbie Brackett understands the importance of the Island and on behalf of the WWII Tribute Committee he would like to thank him for that contribution.

Mr. Matthews said that was a generous donation. They still need more and anyone can donate to this project.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A) Cenotaph Marker for SPC Bakari Mosley

Mr. Matthews reported that a request to use funds from the Veterans Memorial Island account for a cenotaph marker for SPC Bakari Mosley was submitted to City Council and it was approved at their meeting on June 20, 2023. He said the marker will probably not be ready before the bridge is closed. He suggested holding a memorial service for the Mosley family once the marker is placed.

Mr. Matthews shared some information about SPC Mosley and mentioned that he will now be honored on the Island forever.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A) Update on the Bridge Replacement

Mrs. Danessa Chambers, Assistant City Engineer, reported that the bridge replacement schedule has been delayed in two (2) categories; one (1) is the procurement of materials and the other is turning the electricity off to the bridge and Island. They found out that the City cannot shut off the power because the transformer and the service to the bridge are owned by Florida Power and Light (FPL). She said they had to schedule the shut-off through FPL and the earliest they can do it is near the end of July. They hope that the procurement of the materials will fall in line with FPL so they can start working in the first or second week of August.

Mr. Matthews asked if they will reroute the traffic at the roundabout outside of the bridge.

Mrs. Chambers explained that they will be closing the road and area between the bridge and the boat docks to use it as a staging area for the smaller construction materials. People will need to use the east entrance to access the boat dock. The larger materials will be staged at the old Power Plant property and they will barge them to and from the Island as they are needed. Once they start the construction they will close the roundabout, but access to all the parking spaces will still be available. They will remark and stripe the area of the roundabout and make it more like a two-way street instead of a circle.

Mr. Matthews asked if it will be more towards the end of August before the bridge is removed.

Mrs. Chambers replied yes. They will remove the flag once the power is turned off because they can no longer illuminate it at night. They will also be subject to FPL's timeline on the tail end because FPL will have to reconnect the electricity once the project is complete.

Mr. Matthews said they are in the process of putting a new plaque on the Alex MacWilliam monument but he is not sure if that will be done before the bridge construction. He asked if there are plans to reconstruct the stone base.

Mr. Matthews Mitts, Public Works Director, reported that the plaque has been shipped out for repairs thanks to a generous donation. However, he has yet to receive confirmation regarding its return date from the foundry.

Mr. Matthews said that the monument is surrounded by vegetation, but he is uncertain if they can trim back the growth or possibly move the monument forward so it is more visible.

Mr. Mitts said they are open to input from the Committee or if there is a consensus on what they would like to have done.

Mr. Matthews suggested that the Committee members visit the site and bring back their suggestions so they can continue this discussion at their next meeting.

Mrs. Chambers stated that based on their current delays with the bridge, their estimate for reopening is near the end of December, but there will still be about 30 more days of work until it reaches completion. They were having trouble getting the poles for the two (2) light fixtures on the bridge so they switched to a similar style that they can get a couple of months sooner. They are not going to hold up the project for two (2) lights because they can be installed after the construction is complete.

B) Update on the Stage and World War II Tribute

Mr. Young stated it is truly remarkable to witness the community's response to this project. He mentioned that Schulke, Bittle & Stoddard wrote off all their charges for their structural engineering services, which is a testament to the unity of this community. He said he spoke with many individuals at the Vietnam Veterans Golf Tournament and it had a significant impact on him. Many of the Vietnam Veterans have contacts with the WWII generation and there is a common denominator between those generations of warriors. The legacy of the Island extends out to the families in the community and there are often artifacts left at the cenotaphs or the Gold Star Grove trees. He thanked the community for all their support.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

Mr. Matthews stated that there are Veterans who served in both WWII and the Korean War. He mentioned over the years he has met Veterans who also served in Vietnam, so they survived all three (3) Wars.

Mr. Matthews stated that Mrs. Carolyn Dean gave him the plans for Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. The plans were drawn by her late husband and very talented architect, Mr. John Dean. If anyone wants to look at them they are welcome to do so and then they will be donated back to the City. He said when the Island was first created it was full of Australian Pine Trees with trails and people would sit on orange crates during the ceremonies. The Island has grown and gone through significant changes since then. He said he is not sure if there is a historian for the City, but he thinks these plans should be preserved for the future.

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Ms. Arndt said if there is a historian, her predecessor left behind a file cabinet full of maps, documents, and other materials related to the Island that she would happily share.

Mr. Paulisin reported that they had another incredible golf tournament with a record-breaking 262 golfers. He thanked the Mayor for attending. They raised approximately \$30,000 for the Veterans in the community and the money is going to help support the triplexes that house the Veterans. He said it meant a lot to the Veterans to see the Mayor, members of the City Council, and the County Commissioners there showing their support.

Mrs. Dale announced that they are working on their Annual Walk-A-Thon for military Veteran suicide awareness at Riverside Park on November 5, 2023. She said the profits will go to three (3) organizations that support Veterans to help them with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Mrs. Barbara Ruddy, WWII Tribute Committee, said she often hears of a historian being mentioned here as well as at the WWII Tribute Committee meetings. She suggested if there is not a formal person in the City, someone should put it on an agenda to appoint a historian. With all this information about the WWII tribute and the other organizations that are involved, it would be beneficial to have a historian preserve it all.

Mr. Matthews said perhaps when they build the monument they could do a time capsule along with it. The Island is a tribute to all Veterans in Indian River County, so there might be items and information that the County would like to include. He stated that this Committee does not have the authority to create a new Committee, but he is not sure if an individual historian would be the right choice either. He is not sure how other communities handle it, but this can be discussed again.

Mrs. Ruddy replied that a time capsule would be a great addition and they can include some of the items they have.

Ms. Arndt asked what would they need to do if they wanted to move forward with finding a historian.

Mr. Matthews recommended that they first confirm if there is a historian and then proceed from there.

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, said the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee could make a recommendation to City Council to add that position. City Council can give their input and if they choose to do so, appoint a suitable person to serve as a historian for the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) August 2, 2023

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee is scheduled for August 2, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 9:56 a.m.

/rc