

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

PRESENT: Chairman, John Michael Matthews; Vice Chairman, Curtis Paulisin; and Member: Melissa Arndt **Also Present:** Assistant City Attorney, Jenny Flanigan; Assistant Director of Public Works, Richard Mutterback; and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Chartier

Excused Absence: Michelle Dale

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.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) June 1, 2022

Mr. Matthews made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2022 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting. Mr. Paulisin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Barbara Ruddy, World War II (WWII) Tribute Committee member, said she provided the Committee members with a copy of the flyer about the WWII Tribute that she distributes throughout the community (on file in the City Clerk's office). They need to raise about \$400,000 for the tribute to be built on Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. She is passionate about this and she conveys that when she hands out the flyers. They need everyone in the community to make an effort to be a part of this tribute no matter if it is a small, medium or large donation. She asked the Committee members to spread the word to help raise the funds. She explained that the Cultural Council of Indian River County is handling the administration of their donations and expenditures and their address is on the flyer. She stated that she will meet with anyone or any group to speak about the project or to pick up checks.

Mr. Matthews stated that it will take about six (6) months of designing and another year or more for the construction of this project. If they can collect enough funds to get the design process done, that would be a significant step. He explained that they have about \$30,000 collected and a local family has committed to donating \$100,000 from one (1) of their foundations. He believes there are a lot a people who would like to be involved at a significant level.

Mr. Matthews asked to discuss item 6 next, which is an update on the WWII tribute and stage.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A) Proposed Monument – The Iraq and Afghanistan War Memorial Foundation

Mr. Matthews explained that the Iraq and Afghanistan War Memorial Foundation sent a letter to Mr. Robbie Brackett, Mayor, who forwarded it to the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee to consider. The Foundation's idea is to build a monument to the Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans. They are looking for a City that would take it on and it would be the State monument for the 355 Floridians that lost their lives. It would be similar to the Vietnam War memorial and be made of black granite and list the names of those that were lost. He feels they need to find out more about it and he is curious to know why they would not want to put it in their own community in Dunedin, Florida. He explained that he spoke with the Next Generation Veterans about this, because they should have some input too.

Mr. Paulisin stated that he briefly looked at it, but he would like to know the total dimensions of it. If they come before their Committee he would ask some questions to clarify things.

Mr. Matthews commented it is possible that another city has agreed to accept it, but he will follow up on this letter and invite them to a future meeting or at least ask them to send more information if it is still an option. The Foundation is planning on doing the fundraising for the monument. It is possible the City would accept the monument since a spot on the Island was already selected for a monument to honor those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

6. OLD BUSINESS

This item was discussed after item 4.

A) Update on the Stage and World War II Tribute

Mr. Matthews stated that the estimated cost for the stage and WWII tribute is about \$400,000. There will be no cost to the City and once the project is completed the organization will donate it back to the City.

At this time, a short video that was created by Mr. Scott Johnson, Architect, was shown of what the new WWII memorial and stage could look like.

Mr. Matthews said he would like to see this completed as quickly as possible, especially for those WWII Veterans who are still with them.

Mr. Paulisin asked Mrs. Ruddy if they have a website that people can go to and pay electronically.

Mrs. Ruddy stated that Ms. Alicia Quinn, Cultural Council Operations Manager, is handling their administration, so she will ask if that is possible.

Mr. Paulisin said he believes that people from other counties or other states might be more receptive to making donations if they can do it on-line.

Mr. Matthews said a website would be a good idea even if people cannot donate it can be used to promote the project.

Mrs. Ruddy said there was an idea proposed about having a time capsule incorporate into this tribute, so maybe the Committee would like to discuss that and approve it to be part of the design.

Mr. Matthews commented that the City owns the Island and City Council will make the final decision, but a time capsule is something they could recommend.

Mr. Rob Medina, Representative from Congressman Bill Posy's office, said he would like to commend the Committee for taking the initiative to make this project possible and to have a stage. He likes that they are going to have the proper shade over that area. He said he agrees with the idea of being able to go to a website and donate a few dollars, because every little bit will help. He is positive that the Veterans in the community will share it with other Veterans all across the country.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

Mr. Matthews announced that he will be going to Washington, D.C. to attend the 1st Marine Division Association reunion, which is the highest decorated division of the Marine Corps. They will tour the U.S. Capital, Henderson Hall, and visit the national memorials and museums around Washington, D.C. They will have a dinner at the Marine Barracks, also known as "8th & I," which is the oldest active post in the Marine Corps.

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mr. Paulisin said he would like to send condolences out to the family of Mr. Eric "Rip" Wieler, who passed away. Mr. Wieler served on the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee for many years and he was a great man.

Mr. Paulisin stated that he went with the Mayor, Mr. Robbie Brackett, and Mr. Matthews to a re-grand opening at the Winn Dixie store on Oslo Road. Winn Dixie presented them with a \$1,000 check for the Veterans homes in Indian River County. He reported that they had over 200 golfers at the Vietnam Veterans annual golf tournament and they raised \$35,000. He said the money they raise stays in Indian River County to help the Veterans. He explained that Indian River County Veterans are their first priority for support, but they can help Veterans from other counties if they have funds available.

Mr. Matthews commented that when the Committee wrote the Ordinance for Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary, Mr. Wieler was an important part of creating the wording for that. He noted that Mr. Wieler served during the Vietnam War from 1968 to 1969 as an Artillery Officer in the Marines and he was also a member of the 1st Marine Division Association. He was a great guy and very active in the community.

Ms. Jenny Flannigan, Assistant City Attorney, announced that she is starting a new position in August and this will be her last meeting with the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee. She thanked them for being such a great group to work with.

The Committee members thanked her and wished her well.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) August 3, 2022

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee is scheduled for August 3, 2022 at 9:30 a.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 9:59 a.m.

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