

**VETERANS MEMORIAL ISLAND SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, October 5, 2022 – 9:30 a.m.
City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida**

PRESENT: Chairman, John Michael Matthews; Members: Melissa Arndt, Michelle Dale and Carolyn Lange **Also Present:** City Attorney, John Turner; Assistant Director of Public Works, Richard Mutterback; and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Chartier

Excused Absence: Curtis Paulisin

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Matthews called today's meeting to order at 9:32 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) September 7, 2022

Mr. Matthews stated that there is one (1) correction on page 5. Under item 7-C) the date of the memorial service for Mr. Rip Wieler is listed as November 12th, but it should be November 6th.

Mrs. Dale made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 7, 2022 Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee meeting with the one (1) correction made. Ms. Arndt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

5. NEW BUSINESS

None

6. OLD BUSINESS

A) Update on the Stage and World War II Tribute

Mr. Matthews said they are making progress on the World War II (WWII) tribute and stage.

Mrs. Barbara Ruddy, WWII Memorial Committee, stated that they are doing well and they have raised \$150,000 of their \$400,000 goal. She said no amount is too large or too small and they would like everyone to participate.

Mr. Tony Young, WWII Memorial Committee, announced that the planning for the tribute is proceeding very well and they should have a surveyor at Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary this week to do the survey. Their intent is to have the initial proposal submitted to the City's Planning Department as soon as possible. He said they will need to have Riverside Park reserved for May 2023 for the Memorial Day ceremony, because the Island will most likely not be available. He has not been out to the Island recently, so he is not sure what it looks like after the hurricane.

Mrs. Lange replied that it is pretty messy.

Mr. Young said in the past they have had volunteer groups help clean it up, but hopefully it is not as bad as previous times. He thanked the City staff, Planning and Development Department, and Public Works for sitting down with the WWII Memorial Committee and helping them put this all together. He said he received a call about highlighting the Merchant Marines with a tribute on the Island. He explained that the tribute is designed independent of any branch of service. It is designed to recognize the War (WWII) and it has the logo of the Naval Air Station, the Victory Medal, the Discharge Medal, and the Theater of Operations Medals, which apply to all branches of the military from WWII. He said there are still WWII Veterans living here and they will be a part of the Veterans Day ceremony, so he is looking forward to that. He said the Gold Star Mother's Day ceremony was beautiful.

Mr. Matthews clarified that the Merchant Marines from WWII are considered Veterans, but that does not apply to all Merchant Marines.

Mr. Young answered that is correct, just during that time frame. Now that the Government has recognized the Merchant Marines service in WWII, there is a possibility that the Veterans Memorial Island Committee might receive a request to recognize them with a service marker on the Island.

Mr. Richard Mutterback, Assistant Director of Public Works, reported that the design process is complete for the bridge and it has entered the bid phase, which is a 90 to 120 day process. They have been given a tentative completion date of September, 2023.

Mrs. Lange asked when will they start the construction.

Mr. Mutterback explained that once the bid process is complete, which takes three (3) to four (4) months then it will be up to the contractor who wins the bid to schedule the work. He stated that the contractor will be required to procure all of the materials before they can start construction. The supply chain for raw materials is getting better, so hopefully that will not take too long. He explained that they are housing a lawnmower and some equipment so they can maintain the Island while the bridge is constructed and they will use a ferry boat as transportation over to the Island. He said the Public Work's staff and the Engineering team will be meeting with Florida Department of Environmental Protection tomorrow to schedule the trimming of the mangroves.

Mrs. Lange said she walks the Island several days a week and it is a memorial sanctuary. She knows there is a sign that states no bicycles, radios, dogs, etc., but those types of activities are happening a

lot. Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary is one (1) of the few outdoor spaces in Vero Beach that has a few rules. She feels it is important that they maintain the integrity of the Island. She thought that they should consider having an attractive, larger sign at the entrance to the Island that stipulates what the rules are.

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, said if the Committee is interested, they could probably start drafting an Ordinance. If there was something previously adopted they could word it specifically to Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary with the rules.

Mr. Matthews read the list of restricted uses from the City Resolution #2019-16.

Mr. Turner said they could use those rules as a basis for a sign stating they are per City Resolution, but it does not have enforcement like an Ordinance. They could create an Ordinance that would allow the City's Code Enforcement Officers or the Police Officers to start enforcing it.

Mr. Young added that the Committee could request the City Attorney to draft the appropriate wording for an Ordinance and then they can recommend to City Council that they review the matter and consider the Ordinance as a follow up to the concerns raised at their meeting.

Mr. Matthews said they have always viewed the Island as having the same decorum and dignity as a cemetery. He would like to know if Crestlawn Cemetery has an Ordinance regulating any rules.

Mrs. Ruddy suggested the best time to incorporate a new sign is when the bridge is being rebuilt. They might also want to have the sign lit so people can see it at night.

Mr. Matthews said the WWII tribute and stage is going great. They have great leadership, funds are coming in, they have a great design, and the City is pleased with the direction they are taking.

B) Veterans Day Ceremony – November 11, 2022

Mr. Matthews said that Veterans Day is one (1) of the most important days on a Veterans calendar along with Memorial Day. He gave a brief recap of the events that will take place during the Veterans Day ceremony on November 11, 2022. He announced that Mrs. Dale will be there to help escort the WWII Veterans up onto the stage.

Mr. Matthews asked if they might consider displaying a “coming soon” sign to bring attention to the plan for the WWII Memorial and stage. The sign could include information or a QR Code so people can find out more about the project and how they can donate.

Mrs. Lange announced that Mr. Bob Cook passed away on September 26, 2022 and there was a celebration of life service for him this past Monday at Calvary Chapel. Mr. Cook was a Marine and he passed away just two (2) months short of his 97th birthday. He always had tremendous, moving stories about what he did. He actually enlisted in the military at age 15 and never went to high school.

Mr. Matthews added that Mr. Cook was a Marine and WWII Veteran and was well loved in the community.

Mr. Matthews said if the “coming soon” sign is something they would consider, he will pay for it.

7. CHAIRMAN’S MATTERS

None

8. MEMBER’S MATTERS

Mrs. Dale announced that the Gold Star Mom’s walk-a-thon is on November 6th and they are still looking for sponsors, donors and walkers. This event raises funds to help Veterans who are struggling with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In the United States we lose 22 Veterans every day from suicide because of the battle they fight within. People can go to *ircgoldstarmoms.org* to register to walk, donate, or become a sponsor. The sessions they provide for the Veterans with Dogs for Life and the Mental Health Association are helping our local Veterans and their website contains testimonials from Veterans who have been helped by these sessions. A special guest this year is Mr. Chris English. He will be talking about his own struggle with PTSD and what he did to help save himself, which is now being used to help save others. The walk starts at 10:00 a.m., but for people who did not preregister that will start at 9:00 a.m.

Mr. Matthews stated that November is a busy month for Veterans. November 6th is the walk-a-thon, November 8th is the Navy League Council meeting, November 10th is the Marine Corps Birthday, November 11th is Veterans Day, November 12th is the Marine Corps Birthday Ball at Pointe West, and the Republican Women of Indian River County are having a Red, White, and Blue party to raise money for the WWII Memorial.

Mrs. Lange asked where is the Navy League meeting.

Mr. Matthews replied that it will be held at Pointe West and it is a dinner.

Mrs. Lange asked if all of this information is listed on a website for Veterans.

Mr. Matthew stated that their website is *Navyleagueofthetreasurecoast.com*, but people can also check the Veterans Council website for other events and meetings.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) November 2, 2022

The next meeting of the Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary Advisory Committee is scheduled for November 2, 2022 at 9:30 a.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Today’s meeting adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

/rc