

REVISED

**MINUTES OF THE HAMDEN VETERAN'S COMMISSION,
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITY ROOM, MILLER COMPLEX,
TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 2009 AT 5:30 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Mr. Conway, Mr. DiSorbo, Mr. Mallory, Mr. McCarthy, Mr. Oakes, Mr. Ortoleva, Ms. Pavlis, Mr. Shultz, Mr. Slater, Mr. Weil

Guests: Mr. Corso, Ms. Parks

Approval of Minutes – May 12, 2009 – APPROVED.

Ms. Parks thanked the HVC for the honor of being Grand Marshal for the 2009 Memorial Day Parade.

Veterans Awareness Day – May 22, 2009 – Mr. DiSorbo stated, "It was wonderful. It was a beautiful time. I've heard nothing but great reviews. A lot of the parents come into the store and they all say it was wonderful". Mr. Slater noted that he brought three new people and "they were so impressed". He also asked about sending out Thank You letters to the participants. Mr. Oakes agreed and stated he would like to send a letter to the President of QU and Gina and the people that worked with Mr. Ortoleva as well.

Mr. Oakes expressed his concerns over the gym being turned into offices. Discussion moved to possible alternative locations for VAD. Mr. Weil also noted that the recruiters present were very impressed with the event and next year they will come and expand! Mr. Shultz stated, "Blumenthal sending that letter tells us how much they hold it (VAD) in esteem. He just thinks it's the greatest thing in the world".

Although initially food had been an issue, the sandwiches provided by QU were considered by many in attendance better than the prepared lunches in previous years. Mr. Oakes thanked Mr. DiSorbo for the cake and in appreciation, presented him with a DVD done by a friend of his in the 101st Airborne.

Ms. Pavlis reported that she did speak with Lisa Angel who gave her the name for the training person to contact and will start communication with her for next year. Mr. Ortoleva suggested that going forward we might want to make some extra effort to get some more current veterans inside with tables and displays. There was discussion about the kids coming back and the problems they have. Mr. McCarthy expressed some concerns; "I want to draw the line - where

we don't look like we're endorsing any particular service by having an overwhelming presence of the National Guard Reserve. I love the military dogs. I spoke with Sheila about a military field hospital - let them see exactly what it's like. Where do you draw the line between a recruitment tool and just a display?"

Mr. Weil stated the issue had come up when they invited the local recruiting company. He asked Mr. Levy if that was going to be an issue and he said no. Mr. Oakes added that he's had kids tell him they're going into the service when they get out of high school - joining the service because they don't know what they want to do and they can get an education. "I think, until we get some feedback from parents, I think we go ahead and invite them".

Memorial Day Parade – May 25, 2009 – Mr. Slater began stating, “We stepped off right on time!” There was a ‘little emergency’ with one of the Grand Marshals. Discussion on emergency procedures, CERT teams, and radio communications. Mr. Conway explained he had a discussion with the Fire Chief regarding CERT (Civilian Emergency Response Team). They are allowed to do 2 civic events a year (covered by insurance). One being the fireworks, the other the parade. The Chief wants to create a volunteer force out of CERT that doesn't fall under the guise of CERT. The biggest thing that helps us with CERT is the communication aspect. There will be more discussion on this in the future.

CERT falls under the state Homeland Security Act, but there's guidelines on the state as to when they can be activated. They're only supposed to be activated for emergencies. Major fires, storms, disasters. They have training in basic first aid, CPR and minor crowd control.

Discussion moved to the signs posted as HHS and the baseball organizations.

Mr. McCarthy had one suggestion, "I wish the Parade Committee would control the "politicking". It was really something that disheartened me when I saw some the actions of some of these people coming down." (The Hamden Republican Committee and Scott Jackson). Mr. Slater stated the 2 Grand Marshals suggested the Commission send a letter to the Chronicle/Post regarding politicians handing out literature during the parade. This is to honor the veterans. Mr. McCarthy feels it's not the time or the place. Ms. Pavlis stated, “It's not only about honoring the veterans, it's about “honoring the dead” and agreed this behavior is “totally inappropriate”.

There were also concerns/complaints about marchers throwing candy and other materials into the crowd. There are the safety issues of children running out into the street in front of marchers and vehicles to retrieve the candy - as well as the potential for someone being injured by objects being thrown.

Mr. Conway thanked all for their help with the parade - the parade went off basically without a hitch. There was brief discussion on the service at Memorial Town Hall regarding the speakers, traffic and noise issues.

Hamden Middle School Mural – May 27, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. – Mr. Oakes stated, “It went very well. There were great comments”.

Rivers to Recovery – Mr. Oakes reported that on June 16th from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the Legion Post he and Mr. McCarthy are hosting a Surprise Party for Peter Laffin. (This is a program in Utah where they bring disabled veterans from Iraq & Afghanistan and teach them how to fish. Dan and Peter Laffin went out there and they loved it so much that Peter is going back in July and will spend a month helping these veterans from all over the U.S. teaching them the outdoors & fishing. When Mr. Oakes found out he was spending his own money, he came up with the idea of a fundraiser.)

Mr. McCarthy reported that everything is being donated. The hall, the clean up, 17 pounds of macaroni, sauce. “100% donations... every penny that is made goes right to him”. Suggested donation of \$10. Mr. DiSorbo will provide the bread!

Veterans Open House & Screening – June 3rd from 9a – 2p at Post 88 – Mr. McCarthy stated, “I hope very vet in Town can come!” There will be a complete nursing staff, blood pressure & cholesterol screenings, a chiropractor, a social worker and a veteran’s advocate. Updated Benefits books will also be available.

Flag Day Ceremony – Larson Place - Friday, June 12th at 10:00 a.m. Mr. Oakes added that they need a few veterans in uniform. He also mentioned he will be contacting Susan Byseiwicz regarding the veterans at Larson Place who did not receive their certificates. He will try to arrange for a presentation there in the fall.

MIA - Missing In America - Thursday Mr. Oakes went to Rocky Hill Veterans Cemetery and participated in the burial of the remains of 2 WWII veterans. It was on TV and the newspaper. They had died many, many years ago and no one had claimed the remains. There's an organization nationwide that is doing this for veterans. If no one claims the remains they provide a ceremony up there. He's been working with Linda Schwartz and they buried the two last Thursday and there's one more to be buried sometime in the fall.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Deborah Gaiolini, Commission Clerk

***** REMINDER - NEXT MEETING - SEPTEMBER 1st *****