

**MINUTES FROM THE HAMDEN VETERANS COMMISSION,
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITY ROOM, MILLER COMPLEX,
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2012**

Commissioners Present: Mr. Conway, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Laffin, Mr. Lewis
Mr. Oakes, Ms. Pavlis, Mr. Shultz

Commissioners Absent: Mr. Best, Mr. Deutscher, Mr. Weil

Guests: Mr. Howland, Mr. McCarthy, Mr. Mitchell

*****ATTACH SCHEDULE
*** ATTACH UPDATED CONTACTS**

Approval of Minutes – October 2, 2012 – **APPROVED.**

American Warrior Dinner – October 14th, 3-7 p – Hamden Elks. \$10/pp. Mr. Laffin & Mr. McCarthy reported the dinner was “fairly successful”. They brought in \$4050 – which will send another 13 veterans from Hamden. Mr. Johnson expressed his disappointment in the lack of members present from the Commission. He feels it’s very important to show support to the people who are there. Mr. Laffin thanked those who contributed and noted that our dinners are not drawing as many as they used to because it’s not ‘unique’ anymore.

Mr. Mitchell inquired about the cost. “It’s about \$350 per veteran”, Mr. McCarthy stated. Mr. Lewis added that the volunteers/escorts pay their own way. Mr. Conway expounded on his experience last year and encouraged all who have the opportunity – “If you can do it, it’s unbelievable!”

Mr. Johnson commented on his trip stating, “Coming home on the plane they give you an envelope, a manilla envelope, with letters from your family and the kids in the grade school – thanking you for participating... *that* is the most emotional thing... when you start reading those letters. That alone was worth the trip.”

Veterans Day – Mr. Oakes confirmed that we will hold our ceremonies at the monument in front of the Middle School. In the event of rain we can go indoors. Wreaths will be ordered by Mr. Oakes tomorrow. All are invited to luncheon at the Elks Club at 1:00.

Mr. Conway made the following motion: “Unless the veterans organization comes forward to get their wreaths, they will not be provided or paid for by the HVC or the Chairman of the Commission”. Mr. Johnson seconded. The vote was unanimous. Motion passed.

Freedom Park – There’s a meeting this Thursday at 11:00 at the Park to discuss plantings, shrubs, etc. “They (PW) have done a wonderful job”.

HVC Meeting Schedule – **Approved.**

Memorial Town Hall – Mr. Oakes reported, “I can’t report anything. Rich DiSantis hasn’t gotten back to me”. He did say, “It’s a disgrace in there.” He will follow up & hopefully will have something to report at the December meeting. Mr. McCarthy added, “Some rocket scientist took a

grinder to the wall. Made the surface porous – it used to have a shine. The grinding marks & swirls all in the wall.” He asked the representative from the company and DiSantis, “who ordered this? This is an historical landmark. You have to conform to the rules & regulations of rehabilitation. Nobody knows nothing.” Mr. Conway added, “they changed the historical integrity of the building with that ramp. They’re not supposed to change the exterior...”

HMS Veterans Essay Winners – Mr. Oakes informed the HVC, “For the first time ever, 3 students from the same school came in 1st, 2nd, & 3rd in the Essay Contest put on by the Navy League of CT. The 7th Graders from Hamden Middle School wrote essays on the meaning of veterans. There was supposed to be a reception up at the Hall of Flags but that was rained out by Storm Sandy. Now they’ll read their essays at 10a on Thursday at the Veterans, Rocky Hill. The boys were also in the Hartford Veterans Day Parade.”

Hiring our Heroes – The American Legion in West Haven was hosting a seminar/workshop but had to cancel due to Hurricane Sandy. Mr. Oakes will contact Nancy Dudek (Hamden Chamber) about rescheduling and possibly holding the workshop here in Hamden at Thornton Wilder. Make it a county-wide event as Mr. McCarthy suggested. There was discussion on what kinds of information and assistance would be offered. Mr. Mitchell pointed out that it’s often very difficult to translate military experience into civilian type situations.

Veterans Needed at Schools – “We should be all set”. November 9th - 9:00a at West Woods (Abner, Joe Myjack & 4 or 5 grandparents of West Woods students). 1:00p at HMS (Desert Storm, Iraq & Afghanistan). Kay Colello will be there as well.

DECA – Mr. Laffin reported their first event was Movie Night Out in the courtyard for elementary school kids. They sold popcorn & beverage for \$5. A little overpriced for that age group & activity. He asked about inviting them to an HVC meeting adding. Mr. Johnson spoke on the junior CERT team. “Theses kids want to do something”.

Ms. Pavlis had comments regarding the job work shops suggesting that perhaps students (college) could reach out to veterans. A sort of mentoring program... assisting with writing resumes, job applications, etc.

Contacts at Local Universities – Mr. Oakes reported that Laura McKay, SCSU, provided contact info at Central & Western Universities. Ron Weil has the contact at Eastern. Larry DiNardis gave him the name at UNH. We will add the University Contacts to our Vets Contact List.

He reported that Wreaths Across America is not coming to Hamden this year. Beecher & Bennett will take orders for wreaths and have them available for pick up at their location on Whitney Ave.

Mr. Oakes also reported that House of Heroes participated in the Hartford parade and just by being in the parade, a whole bunch of volunteer groups have contacted them. They have also received a large grant from Home Depot. He’d like to have Steve Cavanaugh & Bill May come back with an update on the expansion of their organization.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:23 pm.

Submitted by: _____
Deborah Gaiolini, HVC Clerk