

**MINUTES FROM THE HAMDEN VETERANS COMMISSION,
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITY ROOM, MILLER COMPLEX,
TUESDAY, MAY 1, 2012**

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

Commissioners Absent: Mr. Best, Mr. Weil

Guests: Ms. Eastburn, Mr. Howland, Mr. May, Mr. McCarthy, Ms. Parks

Approval of Minutes – April 3, 2012 – **APPROVED.**

Veterans Awareness Day – May 25, 2012 – Mr. Oakes reported that he will be meeting on May 10 with Mr. Ortoleva, Mr. Conway, Mr. Weil and Mr. Levy at QU. They will finalize plans for setting up (electrical, video, etc.). This year, we can get in the gym on Thursday afternoon to set up.

Mr. Levy had expressed concern that we're not getting the numbers (veterans). Follow up calls will be made to confirm the veterans who will be attending. We have "an abundance" of students.

New Groups – POW/MIA Table. Mr. McCarthy has the updated info on POW/MIA. Mr. Ortoleva was asked to include some related questions in the Student Handbooks.

Laotian Group – They are a group of people who are now American citizens living in the U.S. They were in Vietnam, basically working for the American Government, rescuing people. Helping us on the ground.

Upcoming media events include programs with CPTV and WQUN.

Memorial Day Parade – Mr. Oakes reported that the CT Alumni has committed to us. We have a lot of music this year. HHS & HMS combined, Wintergreen and New Haven schools.

There's some question regarding the Flyover. Gerry Tobin has been in touch with Washington. They asked Ms. Tobin what type of aircraft she was requesting to which she responded, "Give me whatever you have!"

Convertibles are still in demand. Grand Marshal Billy Gargano will be driven by his daughter. Mr. Laffin will provide a jeep as will Ken Gertz. Connie Vitale's car will be in use again this year. Vera Morrison will need car as well. Mr. Shultz noted he needs 2 boy scouts to carry the banner.

Flags – The flags have been received. The Boy Scouts will be helping out placing flags on veterans graves. Jane Parks will take care of Beaverdale. The local funeral homes have again donated \$250 each and will have flags available at their locations. Flags will also be in the Mayor's Office.

“Fisher House CT” - Mr. McCarthy gave an update on Fisher House. He met with Harry Garofalo. Currently, the 4 Shop Rite stores are participating in the fund raising efforts. They will start on May 26th and go thru June 30th. “Harry had a premonition that we’ll make \$45,00.00”. Some other fund raising events include: The Mercedes Raffle, Buy-A-Brick, and the big dinner at Aqua Turf in September.

House of Heroes – Ms. Eastburn gave an overview of the organization and introduced Bill May, the president & chairman. Founded in 2000, House of Heroes provides small home repairs at no cost to military and public service veterans (Police & Fire) or their spouses. He distributed info regarding their CT Chapter Launch being held Memorial Day Weekend and the 3 CT veterans who will receive home repairs – one of whom is a Hamden resident.

The House of Heroes will hold a Pep Rally at the Hamden Plaza Saturday, May 26th at 7:00 am. They will proceed from the Rally to the 3 veterans’ home projects in Hamden, Meriden & Stratford. There will also be flag raising ceremonies at each of the veterans’ homes between 2-4 pm. Each veteran will also receive a tri-fold flag in a case. Mr. May feels, “We should honor people before they die”.

On Memorial Day, the House of Heroes will be marching in our Parade - with a float - accompanied by the Hamden High Dance team.

Freedom Park - Mr. Oakes reported the Town has gone out to bid for the new tree.

Community Salutes – Mr. Laffin has communicated with both the Guidance Office and the Principal at HHS. They were responsive to the program. There are still some details that need to be worked out.

Mr. Conway made a motion to invite the Future Veterans (Community Salutes) to march as a unit in the 2012 Memorial Day Parade. Mr. Laffin seconded. The vote was unanimous.

Trip to Washington – May 26th – Mr. Lewis will be one of the escorts.

There was discussion regarding communications for the Parade. Mr. Conway stated he needs to get CERT to relinquish some radios. Mr. Ortoleva suggested paying for radios from Utility Communications for a minimal amount of money - “it could help solve a lot of our problems”. Mr. Conway will forward his contact info for Utility to Mr. Ortoleva.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:48 pm.

Submitted by: _____
Deborah Gaiolini, HVC Clerk