

**MINUTES FROM THE HAMDEN VETERANS COMMISSION,  
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITY ROOM, MILLER COMPLEX,  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2012**

**Commissioners Present:** Mr. Best, Mr. Deutscher, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Laffin, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Oakes  
Mr. Ortoleva, Ms. Pavlis, Mr. Shultz, Mr. Weil

**Commissioners Absent:** Mr. Conway

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

**Approval of Minutes** – June 5, 2012 – **APPROVED.**

**Fisher House** – Mr. Laffin reported “we’re pretty much done with Fisher House”. Mr. McCarthy gave a very detailed history/update on Kevin Creed and Fisher House CT. There was discussion about fund raising, tracking, and getting the ‘big contacts’. At this point, it is up to Kevin/Fisher House CT to take the responsibility and the initiative to move forward with various opportunities for the success of Fisher House CT.

**Freedom Park** – Mr. Oakes reported that work will begin the second week in September. The waiver for the new ‘living’ Freedom Tree was approved/passed by the Council. Mr. Oakes would like all to consider what might be done to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dedication of Freedom Park and the new tree.

**Memorial Town Hall** – The Rotunda is still not open. We can’t get in there yet. The new names have not yet been added (Gallagher & Bush).

**Homes for Heroes** – Mr. Oakes gave an overview of the organization and their events over Memorial Day Weekend 2012. Held a Pep Rally at the Hamden Plaza Saturday, May 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 am. They went from the Rally to the 3 veterans’ home projects in Hamden, Meriden & Stratford. The House of Heroes also marched in our Parade - with a float - accompanied by the Hamden High Dance team.

On September 22, House of Heroes will be at 26 Gillis St. Volunteers are welcome.

Mr. Weil reported on Bank of America ‘giving away foreclosed homes to veterans.’

**American Warrior Dinner** – Oct 14th, 3-7p - Hamden Elks. \$10/pp

**Veterans Day** – All agreed that the ceremonies should again be at the Monument.

**“Until Tuesday”** - Mr. Oakes passed around a copy of the book stating, “It’s a tremendous book!” Written by Capt. Luis Carlos Montalvan who was wounded in Afghanistan, it tells of his experiences and life with his service dog Tuesday. “We aren’t just a service dog and master, Tuesday and I are also best friends. Kindred souls. Brothers. Whatever you want to call it. We weren’t made for each other, but we turned out to be exactly what the other needed.”

Mr. Oakes has been emailing with Capt. Montalvan. There's also been discussion with Capt. Montalvan's publicist about bring him and the dog here! More to follow...

**Moving Wall** – Mr. Oakes reported there's been discussion about possibly bringing the Moving Wall back to Hamden. "It's a lot of work."

**Hamden Veterans Commission – 13<sup>th</sup> Year** – Mr. Oakes commented on the letter he sent to the HVC during the summer noting the rules of attendance.

**Connecticut Memorials to Veterans** – Mr. Lewis reported on 2 new memorials to veterans. CT Trees of Honor and the State Memorial for Veterans.

**V.A. Vehicles at Government Center** – Mr. Lewis shared info on the 2 vehicles assigned to visiting nurses out of the V.A. He noted there will be a Car & Cycle show on 9/23 at the V.A. From 10a – 2p Rain or shine. He also reported on the Camp Lejune water contamination issue. Legislation has been passed regarding care for veterans and their families who were at Camp Lejune during that time period (1957-1987).

**Veterans Wall – Maple Woods** -Thursday, Sept. 13 from 4-6:30p. Dedication at 5:30p.

Mr. Oakes presented to the HVC a poster board of photos that was donated by Harry Mansfield, of the Jewish War Veterans. There are different boards with photos highlighting different historical themes. The one tonight is on U.S. Presidents. He asked for input/suggestions as to what might be done with them? BOE did not want them. Who can we give them to? Where should they go? One idea was the Historical Society.

Ms. Gaiolini suggested contacting Mimise Coleman, Director of Arts, Recreation & Culture. The photos are historical in content, but art in their format. She also asked what the status was on space at the Memorial Town Hall? At one time the HVC had been promised space for an office. She feels strongly that since the Old Town Hall is a "Memorial" to our veterans and an Historic Landmark, why can't it be like a museum? We are always trying to find places to display various items of memorabilia - The Rotunda & the Old Town Hall should be a place where veterans, where everyone can go and view the the photos and historical items on display. What better place?

Meeting Adjourned at 6:52 pm.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deborah Gaiolini, HVC Clerk