

**MINUTES FROM THE HAMDEN VETERANS COMMISSION,
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITY ROOM, MILLER COMPLEX,
THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2015**

Commissioners Present: Mr. Best, Mr. Howland, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Laffin, Mr. Lewis
Ms. Lupi, Mr. Mitchell. Mr. Oakes, Mr. Weil

Commissioners Absent: Ms. Goodwin, Mr. Shultz

Guests: Mr. Neveski, Ms. Park

Approval of Minutes – March 9, 2015 – APPROVED

Memorial Day Parade 2015 – Mr. Laffin reported that participants are coming in slowly. The second reminder went out last month. The process will be the same as last year with more attention to the vehicles. He has the signs, the banners and the bunting for the reviewing stand. Parade Orders will go out next week. They will include the Rules & Regs: where to report, info on CERT, no throwing of candy/objects, etc. This will allow for plenty of time for the organizations to go over everything with the kids and their parents. Everyone will know ahead of time! 1 week before the parade they will send the Line of March.

Grand Marshal – Mr. Oakes & Mr. Laffin announced the names of the 5 nominees. Veterans Ray Sims and Fred Baselice and civilians Guy Ortoleva, Vera Morrison and Doc Messiah. The letters of recommendation and brief bio's were reviewed. It was agreed by all that “we have some outstanding people”.

After considerable discussion by the HVC Mr. Weil made the following motion:

“I make a motion that Ray Sims and Guy Ortoleva be accepted as Grand Marshals of the 2015 Memorial Day Parade”. Mr. Howland seconded. The vote in favor was unanimous. Motion Passed.

There was discussion again about forming a committee to recommend guidelines and present such to the full Commission for discussion and approval. There needs to be some sort of policy/procedure in place. Having written guidelines in place will help to assure that recommendations are based on specific criteria.

Veterans Wall at Hamden High School – Doc Messiah (HHS) developed this event to recognize former employees of HHS. Mr. Weil reported “it was a great job”. Mr. Mitchell added that it was “very impressive”. Mr. Laffin asked if you know of anyone who was not included or in attendance, to contact him or Doc Messiah and they will hand-deliver their coin and letter.

Veterans Awareness Day 2015 - Mr. Oakes reported that Mr. Mitchell & Ms. Lupi have been working very hard on VAD. There will be a meeting with Dan Levy on Monday at 4p. to see how far along we are. North Haven High will not be coming this year. Mr. Weil noted that he has met the new Commissioner for Veterans Affairs and has invited him to come to VAD.

Town Hall Rotunda – Ms. Lupi reported the TSA (HMS) flyer is “pretty much as we saw it at our last meeting”. There were a few grammatical & formatting revisions. The competition is April 25th. Mr. Oakes noted that he has asked the TSA students to march in the parade. Mr. Mitchell asked if there was an official photo. Ms. Lupi will check into that.

Hamden Chamber of Commerce Expo Fair – April 15th – “it was fantastic” reported Mr. Oakes. There were a fair number of veterans but there were not as many companies as last year. QU was there. “Save a Suit” went over very big – they gave away about 100 suits (shirts, ties, socks, etc). Women's attire included. Ms. Lupi reported that when she arrived around 4p that “everything went”.

Mr. Mitchell spoke of his cousin, a recently retired Chief Master Sargent. “The guys don't take advantage of Transition Offices. How do we get the military to step up”? Mr. Weil noted “the Marine Corps has programs where they train for 3 (or 6) months for jobs they're going to when they get out. Tyrone is right.”

State Street Cemetery – Mr. Howland reported their first clean up will be either May 9th or 16th. Ms. Lupi went to the Historic Properties meeting and reported the clerk had told her there is money available for repairs of stones, signs, etc.

Ken Neveski is here on behalf of his son who is seeking a sponsor and a project for Eagle Scouts. He asked if this could be a project he can take on. He can enlist 30-40 kids and there are adults who will assist with hauling stuff away. There was extensive discussion on the criteria for an Eagle Scout Project, age/time restrictions & liability issues. Mr. Mitchell suggested Doc Messiah might have something she needs help with. Brooksvale Park might also be a possibility.

Flags on Veterans' Graves – Mr Oakes needs help on the following dates: May 16th, Saturday at Hamden Plains (w/Troop #640). May 21st, Thursday at St Mary's (w/P Laffin & Troop #604) and May 23rd, Saturday at Washington Ave (w/Bill Earley). The 4 Funeral Homes (Beecher & Bennett, Howard Hill, Sisk & Torello) have all contributed again this year. Ms. Park w/take care of Beaverdale.

Veterans' Room in Memorial Town Hall – Mr. Oakes reported that Al Gorman said we could have a room at Memorial Town Hall! We will have a room for our meetings, we can set up an office, have info available, etc. It will be located across the hall from Kim's office.

Quilt from Library – Ms. Lupi reported the quilt is 7' x 9'. “It's huge! It needs to be properly. It is absolutely awesome”.

Branford Veterans' Commissioner – Branford is setting up a Commission like ours. Mr. Oakes has sent them a lot of material about what we do and our bylaws.

Fisher House Fund Raising at Shop Rite – We will be fund raising again like last year. Mr. Johnson will be handling the scheduling.

Mr. Oakes commented on the informative emails he's been receiving from Mr. Lewis about the VA and various lectures and guest speakers. He'd like to ask them to a meeting in the future. Mr. Lewis said Voluntary Services would be glad to come and talk to us.

Mr. Oakes also reported that he and Mr. Mitchell have been going to the Vets 4 Vets meetings organized by Suzanne Burbage here at the Miller Senior Center. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month. The meetings are very informative. They have met some great people & made new contacts.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:57 pm.

Submitted by: Deborah Gaiolini
Deborah Gaiolini, HVC Clerk