

**MINUTES FROM THE HAMDEN VETERANS COMMISSION,
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITY ROOM, MILLER COMPLEX,
TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2015**

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

Commissioners Absent: Ms. Mitchell, Mr. Shultz

Guests: Mr. McCarthy, Mr. Ken Neveski, Mr. Elijah Neveski, Ms. Park

Approval of Minutes – April 16, 2015 – APPROVED

Memorial Day Parade 2015 – Mr. Laffin reported the next meeting is this Thursday at 2:30. They will look things over, see what hasn't come in yet. 26 groups are definitely coming. He's heard nothing yet from the Veterans' organizations. Parade Orders will go out Wednesday. The process will be the same as last year with more attention to the vehicles. Rules & Regs will also be sent early. This will allow plenty of time for each of the organizations to go over everything with the kids and their parents. Everyone will know ahead of time! Line of March will go out as soon as it's available.

He has not yet had any volunteers to assist with vehicles. Mr. Johnson reported the CERT Team does not have enough people available. Mr. Howland volunteered to help out with the vehicles. Mr. Laffin also reported he is waiting to hear back from HPD. Any vehicles parked in front of HHS or CVS should be given a ticket. Discussion continued on marchers, floats, vehicles, etc.

The Divisions will be the same as last year: 1st – Mr. Weil & Mr. Tito
2nd – Mr. Best & Mr. Goodwin
3rd – Mr. Mitchell & Ms. Lupi

Mr. Oakes has received many calls from individuals who are not pleased that their nominee was not selected as a parade marshal for this year. This led to a group discussion again about forming a committee to compose written guidelines. There needs to be a policy/procedure in place. And an actual Nomination Form. Having written guidelines in place will help to assure that recommendations are based on specific criteria.

Veterans Awareness Day 2015 - Ms. Lupi reported the Blind & Disabled Veterans will be attending. They have requested a table by the door. They would also like the group announced. Mr. Oakes has been meeting with Dan Levy and “We have enough Veterans but we don't have enough students”.

North Haven High will not be coming this year. There was discussion on other schools that could be invited. Possible invites: Branford MS, Amity MS, St Stephens & St Rita's. We do have for the first time Veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom & Iraqi Freedom! As we lose WWII & Korean Veterans we seem to be having more & more of the young vets coming.

Mr. Weil reported the Commissioner for Veterans Affairs will not be able to attend. Lt. Governor Wyman will not be able to come either. Waiting to hear from Senator Blumenthal's office.

Aaron Hawkins (Hawk), will be the guest speaker. He's a 1999 graduate of HHS. He's a security officer at the Middle School “and the kids love him”. He's very involved in coaching track and football and volunteers as a coach for basketball. He is also a veteran of Enduring Freedom & Iraqi Freedom. Mr. Oakes added that “he's the motivational type and he's very involved with kids”.

Mr. Oakes reported that QU is all set for breakfast for & lunch for Vets. Also new this year a woman from the Blue Star Mothers will be participating. Korean War Veterans are coming as well as lots of Vietnam Vets. Mr. Weil would like to meet & go over the lists. Ms. Lupi stated they need to be very specific with the groups – what do they want to be known as.

Town Hall Rotunda – Ms. Lupi reported the TSA (HMS) competition was April 26th. Unfortunately the flyer they designed and produced on the Town Hall Rotunda did not win. There will be an award ceremony at HMS on Tuesday, May 26th from 6-7:30p All are invited to attend. Mr. Oakes noted that he has asked the TSA students to march in the parade.

State Street Cemetery – Mr. Howland reported their first clean up will be May 9th. Ms. Lupi added that one of the women from the Historic Properties Committee might be there as well. There is money available for repairs of stones, signs, etc. Mr. Howland added: “now we can put flags on these graves”.

Elijah Neveski, Member of Troop 608, addressed the HVC and briefly explained his proposal for an Eagle Scout Project at the Veterans' Memorial. Ken Neveski stated the paperwork had been filed and he also provided copies of the proposal. Scope of work would include weeding, planting red, white & blue flowers, laying down new mulch, trimming bushes and repair to the existing bench.

There was brief discussion about lighting and the flags at the Memorial.

Flags on Veterans' Graves – Mr Oakes reported there is one date change: Change May 16th to Sunday, May 17th at 1:30pm 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). Ms. Park w/take care of Beaverdale. The Jewish Cemetery has already been done.

Veterans' Room in Memorial Town Hall – Mr. Oakes reported that it is not *our* room, but a conference room that we can use for meetings. Not an office. No display area and no space for wall hangings. It's simply a conference room across from Kim Renta's office with a conference table and chairs.

Quilt from Library – Ms. Lupi reported the quilt is 7' x 9'. “It's huge! It needs to be hung properly. It is absolutely awesome”. It was suggested the quilt be hung in the Rotunda or at HMS Auditorium.

Fisher House Fund Raising at Shop Rite – Mr. Johnson is handling the scheduling. CERT Teams will be there every Saturday during June. There is still a need for Fridays & Sundays to be covered.

“House of Heroes” – Mr. Oakes met with Cody Freer. There will be a Fundraiser – May 22, 2015, at American Legion Post #88. Post 88 has donated the use of the downstairs room for the event.

Veterans Wall at Hamden High School – 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. He also reported there are 6 HHS graduates going into the military – they are Future Veterans of Hamden. There will be an honors night. They will wear a red rope & cords.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by: Deborah Gaiolini
Deborah Gaiolini, HVC Clerk