

**MINUTES FROM THE HAMDEN VETERANS COMMISSION,
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITY ROOM, MILLER COMPLEX,
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2015**

Commissioners Present: Ms. Goodwin, Mr. Howland, Mr. Lewis, Ms. Lupi
Mr. Oakes, Mr. Shultz, Mr. Weil

Commissioners Absent: Mr. Best, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Laffin, Mr. Mitchell

Guests: Phil Goodwin, Cal Shepard

Approval of Minutes – June 2, 2015 – APPROVED

Veterans Awareness Day 2015 – Mr. Oakes began discussion on redoing/updating the Question Book. Mr. Levy doesn't want to change much. Mr. Weil suggested they take a look at the questions and make some changes, more relevant to who's there now. Should the questions be generic or more specific? Ms. Lupi has copies and will go through them and report back at the next meeting. Mr. Weil added that it would be nice if the teachers would follow up after. Ms. Lupi agreed and felt we could come up with a list of activities the teachers could do as a follow up. Mr. Oakes will be meeting w/Dan Levy on Wednesday and will discuss further with him.

State Street Cemetery – Mr. Howland reported they did another clean up during the summer. Linda Curry has been keeping them informed about the Abandoned/Neglected Cemetery Account and has been in contact with the Town Attorney to apply for those funds – that's Strategy #1. Strategy #2 - They are looking into forming a non-profit called "Friends of State Street Cemetery" and applying for funding so they can do it on their own. Mr. Oakes noted the Town is getting or has received \$2000.00 according to Gail in the Mayor's office.

They are hoping to do another clean up this month and another before the end of the year. As Mr. Howland has stated, "it needs perpetual care".

Fisher House Fund Raising at Shop Rite – A little bit over \$82,000 was raised in the five stores. There was discussion on fund raising. Mr. Weil thinks we have been in that store too much? Mr. Howland and Ms. Lupi agreed. The same people come in week after week. Perhaps shoppers were turned off by the 'saturation' or overkill.

There was discussion on when building will begin. Mr. Lewis reported the VA has to do a full prep of the site. They have to take down the house and the site has to be "build ready". There is question as to whether the house/gate at the site is an historical landmark.

Quilt from Library – Ms. Lupi reported "It looks awesome"! She stated that once the quilt had been hung on the wall she saw things she hadn't seen before. She added that "Mr. Johnson was a great help and the BOE really came through".

Susan Clark, the creator of the quilt, is a Hamden resident. She explained to Ms. Lupi that different things in the quilt mean different things. She will be at the presentation which will be held on September 11th at 9:15a.m. in HMS Auditorium. She will talk to the students about the quilt and it's meaning. She is an award winning quilter and has dedicated this quilt to her father, a Korean War Veteran.

Ms. Lupi would like the ceremony to “stay intimate, simple”. Limit the number of students to 90. There will be a meeting with Dan Levy Wednesday afternoon (9/2) at 3:45p. Discussion continued on invitations - Who should be invited? All Council Members & BOE. Mr. Oakes has been in contact with Senator Blumenthal. He is checking his schedule and hopes to be in attendance as well.

Ms. Lupi added “the tie in with 9/11 is the solemnness of the day but also to let the students know that 9-11 has come out now as a day of remembrance and a day of service. So, Susan, in doing this quilt is giving back to her community and donating it to the MS... and then, what can the students do as far as giving back to the Town of Hamden”. Mr. Oakes thanked her for all her efforts on this project.

Brochure for Town Hall Rotunda – Ms. Lupi shared a color copy of the final draft of the Brochure for the Commission to review. There was discussion on printing costs, the number of copies, vendors, etc. Mr. Goodwin said he will take the copy and get back to her. Ms. Lupi told him we'd like to have it ready for Veterans Day.

Going back to the Quilt, Mr. Oakes asked if we knew anyone involved at 9/11 to speak to the students? Mr. Lewis & Mr. Howland suggested Bob Freeman. He went to WTC. Mr. Lewis will contact him.

Veterans Day – In the past, the HVC held a ceremony on the Sunday before Veterans Day. Mr. Oakes stated, “Last year for the first time it was *on* Veterans Day because we unveiled the names on the wall in the Rotunda. I personally felt that went very, very well”. He asked when the HVC wanted to hold ceremonies? On the Sunday before? Or on 11-11 at 11a.m.?

Ms Lupi made a motion to hold our Veterans Day Ceremony on November 11th at 11:00 a.m. in the Memorial Town Hall Rotunda. Mr. Lewis seconded. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Active Veterans Group at Davenport/Dunbar – Mr. Oakes will be communicating with the Vets Group at Davenport/Dunbar. They will also be holding a ceremony for Veterans Day. He plans to be at their meeting next week and will make sure they don't schedule theirs on the 11th.

Flags on Poles on Dixwell Ave – Mr. Oakes reported he's been working with Gail in the Mayor's Office on replacing old flags that are torn and ripped-but it's not done yet. He will have more info for the October meeting.

Stand Down – Friday, September 18th at the VA in Rocky Hill – Transportation is available from New Haven. Registration Forms must be completed if transportation is needed. They will leave New Haven at 7:00a.m.

Automobiles for Needy Veterans – Mr. Oakes told the Commission, “if any of you know a veteran that needs an automobile, the VFW has a form out for Veterans with financial problems. If a vet doesn't have an automobile but has a clean record, the only thing they would have to pay for is the registration and if there's any sales tax”. If you know of anyone please get in touch with Mr. Oakes and he will print out the forms and get them to you.

Requirements for Memorial Day Parade Marshals – Ms. Lupi has been working on a Nomination Form for Grand Marshals. She distributed “sloppy copies”– an outline - to start discussion and hopefully get input and support from all members. There were many comments.

Ms. Lupi received many suggestions as to how she should proceed.

She will search for info from other towns – How do they select their grand marshals? What is their criteria? Is there a formal application? How are nominations submitted? Mr. Weil offered his assistance. More info will be provided at the next meeting.

Mr. Lewis shared info on an upcoming event “Vets Rock”, November 11 at Mohegan Sun. There will be a Career Fair by Hiring Our Heroes, Workshops & Classes, A Veteran Art Show and Auction. Trace Atkins will perform in the Mohegan Sun Arena. The event will benefit “Til Duty is Done”.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Submitted by: Deborah Gaiolini
Deborah Gaiolini, HVC Clerk