

**MINUTES FROM THE HAMDEN VETERANS COMMISSION,  
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITY ROOM, MILLER COMPLEX,  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2015**

**Commissioners Present:** Ms. Goodwin, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Laffin, Mr. Lewis, Ms. Lupi  
Mr. Oakes, Mr. Shultz, Mr. Weil

**Commissioners Absent:** Mr. Best

**Guests:** Mustafa Agdur, Brian Anderson, Susan Clark, Phil Goodwin, Cal Shepard  
DECA Members Brittney Stoyer, Brittney Cifarelli, Meghan Basilici,

**Approval of Minutes** – September 1, 2015 – **APPROVED.**

Mr. Anderson reviewed the DECA Program at HHS and introduced the 3 members of the club that are here tonight. He explained the state competition. About 1000 kids compete in about 40 events. The top 3 go on to international competition. This year is one of their most ambitious projects, “I Pledge to Pledge” with fund raising for Veterans (they want to tie in with Wounded Warriors). They are hoping to bring back the importance & significance of the Pledge of Allegiance.

High School kids often don't stand for the Pledge. This campaign encourages students (everyone) to not only stand up & pledge, but to submit videos showing kids with their hand over their heart, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. They are hoping “I Pledge to Pledge” will go viral (like the Ice Bucket Challenge).

Social media is powerful. Through emails, Facebook, You Tube, Twitter & their website they hope to get the message out *and* raise money for veterans. They are seeking input/advice from the HVC. Questions from the HVC included: What are you doing in the school? Home Room? How do you measure success? How do you accept donations? Online? Cash/Checks?

The young ladies all have a personal connection with veterans and thru their “I Pledge to Pledge” Program hope to encourage respect and honor to the Pledge, but to also increase awareness of our country's veterans and specifically, Wounded Warriors. They explained their website is paid for one year. Twitter & Instagram hits will measure their followers. They have a bank account through school. People can donate as much as they'd like via Pay Pal & Go Fund Me or send checks to their PO Box.

Ms. Clark suggested IMGUR – an adult offshoot of Reddit. Mr. Oakes will put in a good word with Don Weinbach/QU. Maybe they could lead the Pledge at QU hockey game. He asked Mr. Anderson keep in touch with Mr. Laffin. He also invited the ladies to attend the Veterans' Day Ceremony in the Rotunda at Memorial Town Hall on November 11<sup>th</sup>.

Scott Howland requested the following be read aloud and recorded in the Minutes:

“The September HVC meeting was my last, my term on the Commission expired in September. I would like to thank Abner and the members of the Hamden Veterans Commission for allowing me the pleasure of serving. I will make myself available to the Commission for Veterans & Memorial Day and for whatever assistance I can provide. My best to all. Sincerely, Scott”

**Eagle Quilt Dedication on 9/11** - Ms. Lupi reported “It looks awesome”! She introduced Susan Clark, the creator of the quilt, who stated, “it is permanently donated to You All”. Dan Levy looked at the Quilt hung on the wall outside the MS auditorium and said, “Ok. Now find me something for that wall”!!

Ms. Clark is an award winning quilter and had dedicated this quilt to her father, a Korean War Veteran. She explained that different things in the quilt mean different things and gave each member of the HVC a piece of the original 'draft' of the quilt. As she stated, “9-11 changed all our lives”.

Mr. Oakes presented Ms. Clark with a proclamation from the Mayor. Ms. Lupi added that they're working on a plaque also. Mr. Mitchell suggested a laminated photo of the quilt be hung in that lobby outside the Mayor's Office.

**Veterans' Day November 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m.** – Discussion began on wreaths and guest speakers. Ms. Lupi said she will talk to Dan Levy about the essay contest. She feels the kids should be recognized. Mr. Oakes added, “the new flags are in. They're not up yet, but they're in”. Mr. Mitchell had questions on the program. He and Mr. Lewis will connect.

**Veterans' Ceremony – Davenport/Dunbar – Mr. Oakes reported** Davenport/Dunbar will be holding their Veterans' Ceremony on Friday, November 6 at 10:00 a.m. The DAR donated a bench to be placed outside by the flagpole that was donated last year. Both he & Mr. Johnson attended last year and said it was a “great affair” and “very nice”.

**Veterans Awareness Day 2016** – Mr. Oakes reported we're moving back to Friday! He has asked QU to sponsor again this year. He began discussion on redoing/updating the Question Book. Mr. Mitchell stated, “it's easier said than done”. The questions are kind of 'dated', but Dan Levy doesn't want a lot of changes made. Perhaps we can change or add a few questions that are more relevant.

Discussion moved to teacher follow up. How to get the kids who attended the event to share their experience with those that didn't. Mr. Goodwin suggested that we make the kids earn the freebies. Whether it's a water bottle or a backpack or whatever, “make them engage”. If the students communicate with the Vets they will appreciate the give outs. They have to interact, ask a few questions for a give out. We should include that request in our communication with the vets as well.

Mr. Shultz added, “the more vets you have a table, the better. There's too many groups that aren't groups, there's only 1 person at the table”. Most agreed the number of students that participated last year was perfect.

Mr. Mitchell will coordinate w/Ms. Lupi & Mr. Weil and come up with a draft booklet which they will then present to Dan Levy for discussion.

**Coats for Veterans at VA Hospital** – The VA is collecting coats for Veterans. Please Contact Mr. Lewis if have coats (for men & women) to donate. Mr. Lewis will try to get someone from VA Voluntary Services to come to an HVC meeting and detail what other items can be donated.

**Temple Beth Shalom** – The Rabbi at Temple Beth Shalom has been in contact w/Mr. Oakes. They want to help veterans and they're looking for suggestions from the HVC. Mr. Oakes said they have a good group of vets, WWII, Korea and a few Vietnam. He will be meeting with the Rabbi next week to discuss further.

**“Wall that Heals”** - Manchester - Opening is October 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00a at Center Memorial Park on Main St. Closing ceremonies are Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup>. “Seven or eight years ago we had the Moving Wall here in Hamden – it was tremendous”. Mr. Oakes said the “Wall That Heals” was in Cheshire last year and suggested this may be something we (HVC) might want to think about.

**Wartime Service Medal from State of Connecticut** – October 9<sup>th</sup> 12:00 noon at Thornton Wilder.

**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 the grade of paper, 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.

**Flags on Poles on Dixwell Ave** – Mr. Oakes reported “the flags are in”.

**Requirements for Memorial Day Parade Marshals** – Mr. Oakes report there was an article about Parade Marshals (names of past marshals) and they've had only 1 response. This year will be Hamden's 80<sup>th</sup> Memorial Day Parade. Ms. Lupi reported that she has been doing some research and has found copies of what other towns/states use for their Nomination Form. Mr. Weil has offered his assistance on this project. More info will be provided at a future meeting.

Mr. Weil reported that Congress passed a law that every Veteran will have an ID Card. They were supposed to be issued October 1<sup>st</sup>. Funding is an issue. But, they are coming. There will be a nominal fee. He will provide updates as info becomes available. Mr. Johnson noted that Home Depot is back to giving discounts to ALL vets.

Mr. Weil also mentioned he went to a dining out with the Air Force ROTC from Yale. He met a woman who works with Vets, helps them prepare for college, get into college and do other things thru funding at Yale. She told him there is a mandate given to universities and Yale has to have 8% of it's workforce veterans. Yale doesn't even come close. So Yale is going to be hiring – with preference going to veterans.

Mr. Oakes mentioned the Veterans at QU hold a dinner every year which is held around November 11<sup>th</sup>. All are invited again. QU Hockey Team will also be wearing military jerseys during a game held on/around November 11<sup>th</sup>.

**State Street Cemetery** – Ms. Lupi reported that there are 14 Towns that have applied for funding for abandoned/neglected cemeteries. Hamden is one of the 14. We're still waiting on that. Linda from West Woods Academy & Eddie from On Broadway took a crew of people down there and did a huge clean up. You won't recognize the place. You can see that it's a cemetery.

There's talk of eventually renting a dumpster. More can be accomplished without making several trips back and forth to the dump. Scott is still looking into non-profit status. Mr. Oakes added that we still need to find out who is running that cemetery.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:48 pm.

Submitted by: Deborah Gaiolini

Deborah Gaiolini, HVC Clerk