

**MINUTES FROM THE HAMDEN VETERANS COMMISSION,
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITY ROOM, MILLER COMPLEX,
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2015**

Commissioners Present: Mr. Best, Ms. Goodwin, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Laffin, Mr. Lewis
Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Oakes, Mr. Shepard, Mr. Shultz, Mr. Weil

Commissioners Absent: Ms. Lupi

Guests: Phil Goodwin, Marshal Cutler, Fred McCarthy

Approval of Minutes – October 6, 2015 – **APPROVED.**

Veterans' Day November 11th at 11:00 a.m. – Mr. Goodwin had 100 copies of the Rotunda brochure printed. Discussion began on where to place them. The Rotunda? The Government Center? What about the display case donated by the Library? Build a stand? Some felt the display case was too large for the Rotunda. In addition, accessibility to the Rotunda is limited. Mr. Oakes thought the Lobby of the Government Center to the right of the entrance on the first floor would be a good location. For the December Meeting - We need to make a decision as to where to put the display case and what to put in it. We can also discuss putting someone in charge of changing the items on display every 4 or 5 months.

Mr. Lewis is taking care of the program. We have a student to play Taps. The young ladies from DECA will lead the Pledge. Honor Guard – HPD & HFD. And, the student who won the essay contest will read his essay, “The Meaning of Veterans”. There was a question as to Kim Renta playing the chimes. Mr. Oakes said there are some problems (technical) with that, but he will ask.

There was brief discussion about the wreaths, chairs, microphone, etc. Wreaths will be delivered directly to the Rotunda the morning of the ceremony. Mr. Oakes asked that all help with the transport of the wreaths from Memorial Town Hall to the Monument. It was agreed “we'll do it the same as last year”.

Mayor Leng and Vera Morrison will be the speakers. Neither Rosa DeLauro or Richard Blumenthal have been heard from yet.

Veterans' Ceremony – Davenport/Dunbar – Mr. Oakes reported Davenport/Dunbar will be holding their Veterans' Ceremony on Friday, November 6 at 10:00 a.m. Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman will be attending. Last year the DAR donated a bench to be placed outside by the flagpole. Wreaths will be placed outside at the flagpole and then they'll move inside for speakers. All are welcome!

Mark Frazee, Head of Volunteer Services at West Haven VA – Mr. Frazee was not present. Mr. Lewis will do some follow up and get the lists of items (donations) they can accept. Mr. McCarthy asked if Mr. Lewis could provide him with an updated Benefits Book.

Glass Top Table from Library – Mr. Oakes asked all Commissioners to give some thought as to the placement and contents of the Table. He would like the HVC to come to a decision at the December meeting.

Braveminds Steps Up for Veterans Families – November 5, 6-8:30 p.m. at the West Haven Veterans Museum. Braveminds is an organization for caretakers of vets with TBI & PTSD.

2016 Meeting Schedule – Ms. Gaiolini distributed copies of the proposed 2016 Meeting Schedule for discussion/review. There were no changes. The 2016 Meeting Dates were accepted as presented. Ms. Gaiolini will make arrangements for the room reservation and forward the schedule to the Town Clerk's Office.

Mr. Weil shared info on Korean War Medals. The Korean Government is giving Ambassador of Peace Medals to veterans of the Korean War. Vets just have to hand in their 214's that show Korean service. Get copies to Mr. Weil and he will forward to Nick at Rosa DeLauro's office. Mr. Oakes asked if that service IN Korea? Or DURING Korean War? Mr. Weil will get clarification and report back.

Mr. Oakes extended congratulations to Mr. McCarthy for being elected into the American Legion Hall of Fame.

Mr. Oakes also mentioned Justin Nash, organizer of VETS ROCK. He'd like to invite him to come to one of our meetings.

4 HVC members are going to West Woods School on November 10th at 1:00p for the annual get-together with the kids.

Mr. Weil reported a number of people have asked about the Vet ID Card. It's for anyone who does not have a VA Medical Card. Mr. McCarthy added that AAA can renew licenses and if you bring your 214 they can put a flag on it... Discussion moved to Discounts available to veterans at various businesses.

Mr. Mitchell had questions about the Rabbi/donations, the QUA dinner and the Nomination Forms. asked about the Rabbi that had been in contact with Mr. Oakes.

Mr. Oakes explained that he spoke with the Rabbi and 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.

Regarding the status of the Nomination Forms: Ms. Lupi, Mr. Laffin & Mr. Weil have worked together on fine tuning the form. More info will be provided at our next meeting.

QU Dinner – In the past the Veterans at QU have held a dinner around November 11th. HVC Members were all invited. Mr. Oakes thinks the number of invited guests has been limited somewhat this year due to an increase of QU Veterans attending and other guests. He will check into it let everyone know if the invitation is still open or if all spaces are filled.

State Street Cemetery – Ms. Lupi was unable to attend tonight's meeting but did send in a report that there is another clean up scheduled Saturday, November 7th around 9:15. A dumpster has been rented – which will make it possible for even more cleaning to be accomplished without making several trips back and forth to the dump.

Mr. Mitchell & Mr. Johnson have attended Vet4Vets meetings where they met Mr. Cutler who is here tonight.

Fred McCarthy – Updates on the CT Veterans Legal Center, the Sailors, Soldiers & Marines funds and homeless veterans in CT. “If you're saddled with a general discharge, you're not eligible for everything”. The CT Vet Legal Center has hired a lawyer and staff to bring up to date the discharges. There are 635 homeless vets documented in CT. He spoke of a veteran in Hamden, who was living in his car at the St. Ann's Church parking lot. Darlene Butler (Hamden Community Services) helped with getting him an apartment and a job.

He spoke of Harkness House & Homes for the Brave – facilities & programs that offer veterans help with housing, training, job placement, etc. There are 5 homeless vets in Hamden. “You gotta sit down and talk to them. He spoke of Christmas donations from the Legion to Rocky Hill & West Haven VA. “Think of everything you can do to help somebody”.

Mr. Shultz reminded the Commission that November 10th is the 240th Birthday of the USMC.

Mr. Mitchell noted that at the Vets4Vets Meetings there have been questions about Military Funerals. Mr. Laffin said the program has been “re-supported” but at only 75%. The Adjunct General allows squads of 3. Any Vet in CT gets a free Military Funeral. Contact the Waterbury Armory for info on the Military Honors Program.

Mr. McCarthy added you can go through Brendan Sharkey's Office. The Funeral Directors make contact for Military Honors. Mr. Oakes noted that the Funeral Home also orders the foot stone.

Mr. Lewis informed all the Grand Opening of the CT State Veterans Memorial Museum is Monday, November 9th at 1:00pm. (Minute Man Park)

Mr. Oakes reported he spent about an hour with a woman from the Hamden Post/Chronicle. She is writing an article on the Hamden Veterans Commission. Who we are, what we do, etc. The article should appear in next week's edition.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:38 pm.

Submitted by: Deborah Gaiolini
Deborah Gaiolini, HVC Clerk