

Arizona Department of Veterans' Service Advisory Commission
3839 N. 3rd Street, Suite 209, Phoenix, AZ 85012
Thursday – January 13, 2010

MINUTES

Advisory Commissioners

Gary Fredricks, Chairman
George Cushing
Phil Hanson
Lori Kiefer
Jeffrey Olson
Lionel Sanchez
David Toliver, Sr.
Ken Yamanouchi

Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Joey Strickland, Director
Dave Hampton, Public Information Officer
Homer Rodgers, Assistant Deputy Director
Katherine Harding, Exec. Asst. to Director
Renee Dudden, Chief Financial Officer
Gabe Forsberg, Strategic Planner

Absent - Terrie Gent, Vice Chair

Guests

David Lucier, President - Arizona Veterans Foundation

Call to Order –The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Chairman Gary Fredricks. After the Pledge of Allegiance, he asked for a moment of silence in memory of those killed and wounded in the shooting in Tucson January 8, 2011. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and published.

Communications: There were three items received by the Commission:

- Emails from the Arizona Veterans Education Foundation reporting activities.
- Eugene “Geno” Talas sent information regarding acknowledging the contributions of the Hopi Code Talkers and attaching SCR 1009 (see handout)
- Letter from David Lucier, Arizona Veterans Foundation (see handout)

Agency Report

Director Joey Strickland asked his managers to provide updates for their specific areas of responsibility.

- Dave Hampton, Public Information Officer handed out a weekly legislative report. There are only 117 pre-filed bills this session.
- Renee Dudden, Chief Financial Officer reports the agency is in the middle of its fiscal year and is fiscally sound.
- Homer Rodgers, Assistant Deputy Director is in charge of the state veteran homes and the construction of state cemeteries.
 - Tucson Home:
 - Announced that the Tucson Home was 64% complete at the last on-site inspection.
 - There are 41 completed applications awaiting admission to the Home and 32 applications have been mailed to requestors, which have not yet been returned.
 - There is a meeting on the 27th of January to look at the most complete building. Col. Strickland invited Chairman Fredricks to drive down with him to that meeting.
 - After the Tucson veteran home is completed, the agency has long-term plans to open facilities:
 - 120 bed facility near Flagstaff
 - 90 – 120 bed facility in the Kingman area
 - 90 bed facility in Yuma
 - The \$5 million Sierra Vista cemetery expansion will include two additional columbaria built for cremated remains, 2 garden areas for in-ground burials, additional curbing, and road repair.

Commissioner Olson reported that communities would compete in Minnesota for cemeteries and homes because of the economic impact to their area (new jobs, etc.). Some municipalities would waive utility costs and take other measures to ensure the new construction was in their community.

Regional Meeting in Chinle 3-12-11

Commissioner Yamanouchi cautioned Commissioners Hanson and Sanchez on recognizing distinguished guests. It can be difficult for someone outside the Native American community to identify dignitaries. Commissioner Sanchez and Director Strickland will try to get a local organization to staff a table where the attendees can sign in without creating long lines and the dignitaries can be identified.

Chairman Fredricks suggested that the less critical official business (such as approval of the minutes) be deleted from the agenda for the Chinle meeting; the Commissioners unanimously supported the change.

Strategic Policy Objectives

Changes that were proposed by Vicechair Gent were discussed by Chairman Fredricks. With very minor modifications, the draft document was approved unanimously. Phil Hanson moved to distribute the document by letter to the Governor and her policy advisor, to the ADVS Director, the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, and each committee members of the House and Senate Committees that are assigned bills dealing with veteran issues. George Cushing seconded and it was unanimously approved. Chairman Fredricks will prepare the letters.

In addition, the Commission will prepare a recap of its activities during calendar year 2010. Director Strickland will create a skeleton document of the annual recap for final approval by Chairman Fredricks.

Recommendation Recap – a List of Recommendations from the Veterans Task Force/VRC

Each Commissioner is invited to select an open item from the matrix which was distributed, and serve as a champion for an issue of interest.

Arizona Veterans Education Foundation

Chairman Fredricks reported that this organization has briefed state lawmakers. He will contact Gene van den Bosch to brief the Arizona Board of Regents.

Veterans Cemetery – Cave Creek Right of Way Issue

The planning for future expansion cannot occur until the federal government requests that the City of Phoenix abandon the 32nd Street right of way. Director Strickland has made several phone calls to officials with the VA, but has not gotten response. If responses are not forthcoming, the Commission will put it on a future agenda.

Director Strickland invited Chairman Fredricks to attend the National Association of State Departments of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) meeting in early March. That will provide him an opportunity to meet key individuals who should be requesting the right-of-way abandonment.

Good of the Order

Commissioner Yamanouchi offered to develop a self-assessment for the Commission that would allow them to measure the performance of the Commission.

Commissioner Hanson asked that the meetings be held at the Arizona State Veteran Home. Director Strickland will have his staff take care of scheduling conference room A107 there.

David Lucier provided a short briefing on the Arizona Veterans Foundation activities at Arizona State University.

Chairman Fredricks adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m. The next meeting will be held February 10, 2011.