

City of San Antonio's Veterans Advisory Commission (VAC)

Minutes- **DRAFT PENDING VOTE**



The Veteran Affairs Commission (VAC) held a meeting at Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 9186, 650 VFW Blvd, San Antonio, TX 78223, San Antonio, TX on 20 March 2023. At 6:30 pm, the Chair called the meeting to order.

Representatives conducted the Pledge of Allegiance. The Co-Chair called on Secretary to conduct Roll Call.

- **Representatives In Attendance:** D3 Edward Fears, D4 / Co-Chair Juanita Sepulveda, D5 John Gauna, D8 Tracy Potts, D9 / Secretary Burt Quintanilla, D10 Kevin Crozier.
- **Representatives Not in Attendance:** D1 Cris Vieyra Jr (excused- personal), D2 Burrell Parmer (professional), D6 VACANT, D7 VACANT, Mayoral/ Chair Richard Delgado Jr. (excused- professional)
- **Community Liaisons (CL):** Jason Opalinski (D2), JC Smith (D7), Mike McDonald (D10).

Additional attendees for record noted by Staff Liaison include:

- **CoSA Staff in Attendance:** Debe Clark (MVAD; VAC Staff Liaison (SL)).
- **Citizens:** Larissa Martinez (Circle of Arms)

Co- chair led the meeting through the following items.

1. Opening Remarks:

- a. Co-chair provided opening comments including thanking hosting location.
- b. Approval of last meetings minutes. Co-chair introduced item, 06 February 2023 Minutes. D10 motioned to approve with corrections. D5 seconded the motion. All in favor. **Item approved.**
- c. Co-chair asked if any public comment. None requested.

2. Representative Briefs:

- a. Secretary Brief.
 - i. Secretary stated Community Liaison Report received from some members and clarified point of contact for the reports. SL to trouble shoot technical error on form. **Attachment A** for consolidated report.
- b. SL briefed the following:
 - i. Administrative items:
 1. Announced Clerk Training released in batch. Discussion ensued including representatives encouraged to send the CL's training links for their awareness but not requirement to complete.
 2. Stated majority of website updates complete; pending method for including CLs.
 3. Stated meeting topics pre-determined in December to be edited to focus on committees in order to provide input into the strategic plan.
 4. Announced D6 pending appointment on 06 April. D7 appointment requested and vetting. SL clarified elections and hold over status and community liaison roles and appointments.
 - ii. Brief of Military and Veteran Affairs Department (MVAD) Items
 1. Reminded commission of upcoming engagement opportunities.
 2. Shared the pending change of Texas Veterans Network and Alamo Veterans Network. Discussion ensued.
- c. Appointed Representative Briefs:
 - i Areas of concern / need for assistance:
 1. SL shared follow-up on CoSA leadership training status for mental health awareness. SL meet with CoSA Mental Health who provided connection with CoSA HR who is adding related training into supervisor training. SL shared MVAD pushing HR to establish a Veterans Affinity group. D2 CL shared

status of veterans and expressed the concern of mental health being unaddressed in the veteran population. Particular emphasis on large organizations serving as a model and taking leadership.

ii. New initiatives / projects:

1. D8 shared special focus on greenways and whole health. D8 requested discussion on interest of commission to include as a priority effort. Co-chair stated important to ensure adding additional committees won't overload the members. Co-chair asked if any motions. D10 motioned D8 chair committee. Discussion ensued. **Tabled until May.**

3. Committee Updates:

- a. Veterans Day Committee: SL shared that committee provided report that is a draft of the committee proposal. Requested all members review and provide feedback to the committee prior to the next meeting. D9 shared the program is intended to kickoff in 2024. **See attachment B.**
- b. 2023 Strategic Plan Committee: Co-chair stated additional member needed. D8 stated committee looking to first have input from the subcommittees and input from the community. D8 proposes a survey is released to all the city through SA Speak to determine what their needs are and what they would like to see from the VAC. SL stated important to ensure the VAC is aligning with its mission. Co-chair reminded commission that the VAC was asked to know their CM's priorities and ensure the VAC is reflecting them. **See attachment C.**
- c. Housing Support Committee: D5 shared phone meeting conducted with D4 to discuss plan. Focus topic brief pending. **See attachment D.**
- d. Hidden Heroes City: Shared committee meeting monthly but added additional meetings as plan for summit. **See attachment E.**

4. Focus Topic: Veteran Housing Support Committee (D5)

- a. D5 presented the attached their plan for consideration of approval for inclusion in the Strategic Plan Committee. The Committee proposes the following:
 - i. A long-term focus on veteran senior retirement facility run by a non-profit.
 - 1.. D10 motioned the long-term focus is approved. D9 second to the motion. Discussion ensued. D2 CL shared married couples are not supported. Co-chair shared comparative facilities must be researched. SL shared that the motion is to establish the goal and the committee must create a plan. **Item approved.**
 - ii. Short term focus on preparing a step-by-step guide for VAC representatives to assist veterans with concerns in their districts.

5. Meeting End at 8:06pm with D3 requirement to leave.

The VAC continued an open discussion considering avoiding perceptive of being a resource provider but streamlining information; flow charts was a mutually agreeable way forward. Discussion to continue at next meeting.

Discussion on veteran parking privileges ensued.

Co-chair reminded commission the next meeting on 22 May at D10 field office with focus on Hidden Heroes City and Veterans Day Committee.

**Attachment A, B, C, and D follows.
No additional items follow.**