



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

MINUTES

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

**Witzeman Public Safety Building
8401 E. Indian School Road
Scottsdale, Arizona 85251**

PRESENT: Chairperson Pete Palmer; Vice-Chair Denise Pulk; Commissioners Don Ford, Marie Monroe, Mike Ragole, Joel Stempil, and Steve Ziomek

STAFF: Kelly Corsette, Communications/Public Affairs Director; Christi Hill

GUESTS: Troy Friedman, Tempe Veterans Commission

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Palmer called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Attendees stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Discussion and possible action to approve November 13, 2019 Veterans Advisory Commission meeting minutes

COMMISSIONER ZIOMEK MOVED TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 13, 2019 VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER STEMPIL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR PALMER, VICE-CHAIR PULK, COMMISSIONERS FORD, MONROE, RAGOLE, STEMPIL, AND ZIOMEK VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

3. Discussion, public comment and possible direction regarding the Veterans Advisory Commission Objectives and Work Plan

Christy Hill reviewed the tasks outlined by City Council as part of the Veterans Advisory Commission enabling ordinance and facilitated a discussion about the Commission's draft work plan. She reviewed the steps that would be taken as part of the evening's discussion and narrowing down the list of priorities.

The group talked about areas of importance to Scottsdale veterans and their families and contemplated discussion points posed by staff for each enabling ordinance task. Staff will create a draft work plan based on tonight's discussion. The draft work plan will be agendaized for further discussion and action as part of the Commission's January meeting.

Discussion points resulted in the following recommendations:

1) Advise City Council by making recommendations on military veteran programs, policies and practices designed to improve the quality of life for veterans.

- Create a list of verified veteran-owned businesses. Resources could include Southwest Veterans Chamber of Commerce and Arizona Coalition for Military Families.
- Research veteran-focused organizations within Scottsdale
- Make proposals to the City of Scottsdale regarding veteran activities. City of Scottsdale currently participates in the East Valley Regional Veterans Treatment Court program.
- Obtain information about the demographics of veterans currently living in Scottsdale and the number of veterans currently employed by the City of Scottsdale.
- Consider areas where the City of Scottsdale could incentivize veteran employees.
- Inquire about the number of persons experiencing homelessness in Scottsdale that report being veterans during the Point-in-Time count (The next count will be January 28, 2020). Mr. Corsette confirmed that Point-in-Time questions do include a question about veteran status.
- Create a resource list of veterans' programs available in Scottsdale. Organizations to contact could include the VFW, American Legion, and HeroZona Foundation.
- Propose that a portion of the City of Scottsdale Percent for the Arts program be dedicated to veterans' art and/or historical markers.

2) Educate the community on the status of military veterans; rights, needs and contributions to our community.

- Look into areas that non-profit organizations are currently addressing Veterans' needs.
- Inquire with City of Scottsdale Human Resources about the percentage of City employees who are veterans and how many veterans submitted applications and were not hired.

- Suggest creating a program to offer a pay differential for employees on active duty.
- Amend the purpose of the Veterans Advisory Commission to include all aspects of military duty, including veterans, active duty, reservists, and family members.
- Create an education resource list for active-duty and veterans. Scottsdale Community College and ASU Tillman Center offer programs.
- Establish a transitional education program that would offer resources for veterans transitioning back into the community and/or returning to school.
- Initiate creation of social media opportunities such as an e-newsletter and a Facebook page.
- Develop a communication plan.
- Initiate a program for military storytellers to publish their personal and/or historic stories. Resources could include the Scottsdale Republic and the Scottsdale Progress.

3) Recommend ways to strengthen existing services for military veterans while pursuing the creation of new program and service opportunities.

- Identify the needs of homeless veterans, if there are any, in Scottsdale.
- Reach out to the State of Arizona, federal government, Concerned Citizens of Scottsdale Partners for Paiute, and the Human Services department to learn about possible resources that are available.
- Act as a referral source for veterans.

Commissioner Stempil presented a list of ideas that included:

1. Identify financial needs of veterans who are homeless and how the Commission can help them obtain Financial Aid to find a home rather than the street. The Commission can do this by reaching out to the State of Arizona Veterans' Organization and getting in touch with organizations that have received financial resources from the state or Federal Government.
2. Institute a financial education program for Veterans. Have them meet with a certified financial planner, who is also a fiduciary, to hold meetings to explain the options available to them and their families. The veterans would then be able to utilize the advisor or choose another advisor to implement a program.
3. Use the VA, and State of Arizona Veterans and their expertise to assist Veterans suffering from PTSD or more importantly are at risk for suicide. The Commission can try to get the Veterans together with the experts in the counseling or medical field.
4. Use Veterans Organizations, such as the American Legion, DAV and VFW to help identify things that they might do to facilitate the Commission's mission. Open houses and meetings could be held to ascertain the needs of veterans. Attendees could be referred to the Commission. Resources can then be used to help the Veterans.

Troy Friedman, Tempe Veterans Advisory Commission, gave words of advice to the Commission. He offered himself as a resource to the Commission and suggested that the City

of Scottsdale consider bringing a counselor from The Reveille Foundation to the Human Services Campus as a resource for veterans.

4) Assist in creating and supporting a community connection point to inform, guide and direct military veterans seeking personal and professional enhancement services that may include education, mentoring, workforce support, and health and wellness.

- Create referral and resource list for veterans, including specific resources for disabled veterans.
- Ensure that the City of Scottsdale remains ranked highly as a Veteran Friendly City and find ways to improve that rating.
- Propose the creation of a program to help veterans in transitioning back into the community. Veterans in Transition Advocacy Liaisons (VITAL) could include relationships with organizations in the community that offer counseling, financial advisement, and other services to veterans on a voluntary basis.
- Create a "Welcome Wagon" type program for veterans new to the community. Experience Scottsdale would be a good resource for this program.

5) Advise and make recommendations on other issues and matters relating to military veterans as the City Council may direct.

- The Veterans Advisory Commission will be prepared to receive Council recommendations.

Brief discussion ensued regarding assigning Commissioners to specific tasks. It was consensus of the Commission to further discuss assignments as part of the January agenda once the draft plan has been completed. Commissioners who are unable to attend the January meeting will let the chair know the areas they are interested in working in advance of the meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2020.

4. Public Comment

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

5. Adjournment

COMMISSIONER ZIOMEK MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER RAGOLE SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR PALMER, VICE-CHAIR PULK, COMMISSIONERS FORD, MONROE, RAGOLE, STEMPLIL, AND ZIOMEK VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

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