



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

**MINUTES**

**Wednesday, March 3, 2021**

**Meeting Held Electronically**

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

**STAFF:** Kelly Corsette, Communications/Public Affairs Director

**1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call**

Chair Palmer called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

Members present as listed above.

**2. Discussion and possible action to approve February 3, 2021 Commission meeting minutes**

COMMISSIONER RAGOLE MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 3, 2021 VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER ZIOMEK SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR PALMER, VICE-CHAIR PULK, COMMISSIONERS MONROE, RAGOLE, STEMPILO, AND ZIOMEK VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSIDENTING VOTES.

**3. Presentation and discussion about the Town of Gilbert Veterans Advisory Commission and community sponsorship of the USS Arizona nuclear attack submarine (SSN-803)**

Victor Mai gave a presentation introducing the Town of Gilbert Veterans Advisory Commission, established in June 2020. The Commission consists of veterans, non-veterans, military spouses, and Town Council liaisons. Three task forces have been formed as a tool for achieving their goals.

The Veterans Events Task Force recently sponsored a socially distanced ceremony at the new Gilbert Regional Park that opened in November of 2020. The task force has been granted latitude in supporting strategic planning and event planning.

The Veterans Wellness Task Force strives to offer support and to connect veterans and their families to wellness resources.

The U.S.S. Arizona Task Force was started in July of 2020. The ship sponsor, Nikki Stratton, is the granddaughter of U.S.S. Arizona attack survivor Donald Stratton. The task force is designed to be active for 30 to 40 years and will operate as a non-profit 501(c)(3), supported by the Navy Phoenix Chapter and the Navy United States Chapter. A primary goal is to collaborate over the next three to five years as the ship is commissioned, start engaging crew members and staff, invite community involvement, and identify sponsors.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions. Commissioner Ragole said that Post 44 would be interested in partnering on the U.S.S. Arizona project. Commissioner Ziomek mentioned that the Thunderbird Veterans Memorial could be a resource as well.

Commissioners expressed interest in networking with the Gilbert Veterans Advisory Commission.

#### **4. Discussion and possible recommendation(s) to the City Council and staff regarding specific veterans' protections in proposed anti-discrimination ordinance**

Mr. Corsette presented the Human Relations Commission's (HRC) proposed anti-discrimination ordinance. He said that in August 2020, the HRC recommended to the new Council that they pursue an anti-discrimination ordinance that would address gaps in federal, state, and local law that ultimately could result in persons being denied service or housing in Scottsdale or potentially denied employment, particularly in small businesses. During their February retreat, City Council directed staff to move forward with drafting the ordinance. The City of Mesa recently approved an anti-discrimination ordinance that includes a specific protection for veterans, which prompted staff to contemplate the need for a veterans' protection section in Scottsdale's anti-discrimination ordinance.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the addition of a veterans' protection section to Scottsdale's anti-discrimination ordinance is necessary or appropriate. As part of their discussion they reviewed the definition of a veteran and whether the ordinance would also include active duty, Reserves, National Guard, and their spouses. Commissioners felt that they would be interested in having more time to gather and review information.

Mr. Corsette explained that if City Council were to decide to include veterans, they would consider any recommendations that the Commission put forward. He noted that City of Mesa's ordinance uses the term "veterans' status" and references Federal Law 38-USC-101(2).

Commissioners debated about the City's intent in creating an anti-discrimination ordinance and whether discrimination against veterans is an issue in Scottsdale. Concern was expressed that inclusion in an anti-discrimination ordinance might be seen as offensive to some veterans.

Mr. Corsette said that the HRC would be receiving a detailed presentation on the proposed ordinance during their meeting on March 8th. City Council is scheduled to discuss the topic during their March 23rd work study session. The VAC could table their recommendation until after those two meetings if they would like to consider the comments of the HRC and Council members. Another option would be to schedule a special meeting prior to the City Council work study session. The item is scheduled to be considered by City Council for action on April 20, 2021.

Commissioner Ragole indicated that he would be interested in knowing what happened to prompt Mesa to add a veterans' section to their anti-discrimination ordinance. He noted that there are laws in place that protect veterans. He asked staff to provide information on what more an anti-discrimination ordinance would do for veterans that is not already taken care of at the Federal level. He said that he was not prepared to make a recommendation at this time.

COMMISSIONER ZIOMEK MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL THAT AN ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ORDINANCE INCLUDE VETERANS, ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS, NATIONAL GUARD, RESERVES, AND SPOUSES OF ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS AS PROTECTED GROUPS. COMMISSIONER STEMPIL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FIVE (5) TO ONE (1) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR PALMER, VICE-CHAIR PULK, COMMISSIONERS MONROE, STEMPIL AND ZIOMEK VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. COMMISSIONER RAGOLE DISSENTED.

## **5. Update and discussion about Veterans AZ – video/podcast discussion program**

Mr. Corsette gave an update on the progress of the video/podcast program. He presented the new graphic that was created for the program and noted that he will be discussing a detailed production plan with the video team tomorrow. He is hopeful that interviews can be recorded later this month and the first episode published in early April. He asked that Commissioners help in identifying interesting people and organizations to be profiled in the program.

## **6. Commission members' reports, updates, and suggestions for future agenda items**

Recommended future agenda items included:

- Inviting Senator Sinema's veterans' representative to speak about the veterans' bills that are going through her office
- A count of visitors to the Veterans' page on the City website

Commissioner Stempil announced that the Scottsdale Chapter of the Korean War Veterans will be holding an in-person meeting with social distancing protocols in place on April 3, 2021 at the Disabled American Veterans on 79<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **7. Adjournment**

COMMISSIONER ZIOMEK MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER RAGOLE SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR PALMER, VICE-CHAIR PULK, COMMISSIONERS MONROE, RAGOLE, STEMPIL, 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 6:25 p.m.

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