



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

MINUTES

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

**Scottsdale Fire Station 602 Community Room
7522 E. Indian School Rd
Scottsdale, AZ 85251**

PRESENT: Chairperson Pulk Pete Palmer; Vice-Chair Denise Pulk; Commissioners, Land Anderson, Mark Ashley, Deborah Dominick, Steven Jackson, and Joel Stempil

STAFF: Kelly Corsette, Communications/Public Affairs Director; Christy Hill, Citizen Liaison

1. Call to Order/ Roll Call

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

Members present as listed above.

2. Discussion and possible action to approve January 5, 2022 commission meeting minutes

COMMISSIONER PALMER MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 5, 2022 VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER STEMPIL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR PALMER, VICE-CHAIR PULK, COMMISSIONERS ANDERSON, ASHLEY, DOMINICK, JACKSON, AND STEMPIL VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

3. Presentation, discussion, and possible recommendations regarding Arizona Governor Doug Ducey's veterans' initiatives programs

Alyssa Salvaggio, Senior Policy Assistant with Governor Ducey's Office, gave a presentation outlining veterans initiatives and programs coming out of the governor's office. At the conclusion of the last legislative session in June 2021, the budget was successfully passed,

which included the elimination of all state income taxes on veteran military pensions, funding for a new veteran home in Mojave County, and support for 12 new veteran benefits counselor positions at the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services.

Governor Ducey announced during the January 10, 2022 State of the State Address that he has proposed establishment of a tuition waiver scholarship program for spouses of veterans. This is a key initiative and a budget priority for the Governor's office. Draft legislation is completed and the process is being finalized. They are hoping that the legislation will move seamlessly through the legislature. Ms. Salvaggio commented that the Governor is very supportive of the veteran community.

The Arizona Coalition for Military Families, Arizona Department of Economic Security, and the Department of Administration have teamed up to work on an initiative that focuses on recruiting and retaining veterans in state government job opportunities. A marketing campaign is forthcoming for that program.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions. Ms. Salvaggio explained that the funds to support the 12 veteran benefits counselors were appropriated in last year's budget. They have recently begun the hiring process for those positions.

Ms. Salvaggio said that scholarships for children of veterans and property tax exemptions for veterans at certain levels of disability are topics that have been discussed in the past. She will share with the Governor's office the VAC's interest in reopening those discussions.

Ms. Salvaggio said that she will share a link to the statute that has the official State of Arizona definition of a veteran. She will also work with her team to put together a one-pager for the Commission, highlighting veterans' data that has been collected over the past year. She will check to see if the department has information on veteran-owned businesses in the state and specifically in Scottsdale. She also will look into the status of the grant reviews for the veteran donation fund grants available through the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services.

Ms. Salvaggio clarified that the scholarship program for veterans' spouses is limited to certifications, associates degrees, and bachelor degrees. It does not cover master's level programs.

4. Facilitated discussion and possible action to update the Veterans Advisory Commission Work Plan

Chair Pulk said that she, Vice-Chair Jackson, Mr. Corsette, and Ms. Hill met in advance of the meeting to discuss the groundwork for tonight's meeting.

Christy Hill facilitated a discussion about the 2022 strategic plan. She reviewed steps that would be taken as part of the evening's discussion and narrowing down the list of strategies related to the tasks outlined in the Veterans Advisory Commission ordinance.

Commissioners reviewed the VAC work plan and tasks outlined in the ordinance. They participated in an Environmental Scan exercise, focusing on what they think is important at this time in the current environment. They also participated in a Victory Circle exercise, where they discussed Mayor and Council seeing value in the work of the VAC; creating a roster of all veterans in Scottsdale, creating awareness with veterans and the greater community in

Scottsdale; creating a paper veterans information booklet for those who are not computer literate; growing veterans programs, including “stories on street corners”; making the Commission a more diverse organization; data collection; and a veterans platform on NextDoor. Lastly, they went through an exercise to prioritize strategies related to the tasks outlined in the ordinance.

Priorities for the 2022 Veterans Advisory Commission Work Plan are as follows:

Task 1: Advise City Council by making recommendations on Scottsdale City directed military and veteran programs, policies and practices

- Develop/Recommend new City of Scottsdale programs, legislative policies or information, and practices to support veterans

Task 2: Educate the community on the status of military veterans’ rights, needs and contributions to our community

- Augment website information with all active duty, National Guard, caregiver, and additional veteran resources
- Generate a City of Scottsdale survey to identify veterans and other demographic information
- Create remembrance programs such as street corner naming and family member stories
- Expand broadcasting to other social media platforms

Task 3: Identify and recommend programs and agencies that can strengthen and provide support for veterans seeking personal and professional enhancement services

- Liaise with other Veterans Advisory Commissions
- Identify programs and organizations that provide services and support for veterans
- Develop a concept for a City-sponsored information platform to inform and direct veterans personal and professional enhancement services

Ms. Hill will create a document outlining the topics discussed; this document will be on the March agenda for adoption. As part of the agenda item, Commissioners can identify if they would like to take the lead on particular tasks.

Commissioners expressed an interest in communicating with Mayor and Council about the work plan in advance of the next meeting. Mr. Corsette will put together a memo outlining the work plan and ask for input. He will also communicate with Chair Pulk and Vice-Chair Jackson about scheduling a meeting with the Mayor sometime in the next couple of months.

5. Commission members’ reports, updates and suggestions for future agenda items

Commissioner Palmer said that the Quality of Life pamphlet has been finalized and is ready for posting on the website. In the future the pamphlet could be produced in print form if needed. He noted that it has been found that National Guard members who have not served under federal orders do not get any VA benefits.

Commissioner Stempil asked why there is not an area specifically for veterans in the Scottsdale Life publication. Mr. Corsette explained that the publication is the Parks and Recreation department's list of classes and programs. Unless there are offerings available specific to veterans, nothing would be listed.

Commissioner Ashley said he has a contact with the City of Peoria who is willing to give a presentation about how they set up their veterans' community garden. Vice-Chair Jackson recalled that he mentioned during a previous meeting that a Parks and Recreation Commissioner was hoping to start a community garden and that consideration could be given to the possibility of including a veterans' component. Mr. Corsette undertook to reach out to the Parks and Recreation department to find out if there are continuing discussions about a community garden.

Mr. Corsette said that Commissioners will be receiving an invitation to participate in riding in the Parada del Sol on the City's L-O-V-E statue float. The parade is scheduled for Saturday, February 5th. Those who are interested in participating can contact Amy Herring for further details.

Chair Pulk thanked Commissioner Dominick for her contributions to the Commission and wished her well in her future endeavors.

9. Adjournment

VICE-CHAIR JACKSON MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER STEMPIL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR PULK, VICE-CHAIR JACKSON, COMMISSIONERS ANDERSON, ASHLEY, DOMINICK, PALMER, AND STEMPIL VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

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