Mayor’s Advisory Board on Veterans Affairs

Flash Minutes

1 December 2015

1. Meeting details:
	1. Regular meeting, Suite 540South, 441 4th Street, NW
	2. Convened at 1830 hrs, adjourned at 1940 hrs.
	3. Audio recording available at <http://www.bega-dc.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Vetren_12_01_2015.mp3>
		1. Secretary’s note: Board members are encouraged to listen to at least part of the audio to get a sense of how much the microphones do pick up – and how they do not pick up when the speaker is not next to an “on” mic
2. Board Members
	1. Voting Members Present (8): Wingo (chair), Pridemore, Lampkin, Dalzell, P. Brooks, Davis, Dier, Mack
	2. Voting Members Absent (6): Khan, D. Brooks, Locks (Parliamentarian), Perez, Patterson, Postell, Wynn
3. Votes taken (outside of approval of agenda, adjournment, and other routine actions): None
4. Other actions:
	1. Received planned presentations by local organizations supporting veterans:
		1. Diane Oliver - Housing Choice Voucher Program, DC Housing Authority
			1. 202-435-3302, doliver@Dchousing.org
			2. Described the use of “meet and lease” events where veterans seeking housing can meet with owners/managers of pre-screened properties
			3. Noted that vouchers require referral from VA Medical Center
	2. Received brief, informal presentations from outside organizations attending:
		1. Elisa Basnight, Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Center for Women Veterans, <http://www.va.gov/womenvet/>
			1. Discussed the “I Am One” campaign [www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/OutreachMaterials/ImOne/imone.asp](http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/OutreachMaterials/ImOne/imone.asp)
		2. Rebekah Mason, AARP, Legal Counsel for the Elderly
			1. 202-434-2120, rdmason@aarp.org
			2. Described the Veterans Assistance Project, which provides legal assistance, including accessing VA benefits
		3. Social media: Jesse Searls, DC Department of Employment Services; and Michael Fagens, USAF, speaking as a private individual
			1. Key points included:
				1. The importance of pictures for connecting with audience – making it relate to them, not be generic
				2. Don’t shout back to “trolls” – stay on message, be positive, and respond to legit complaints
				3. Have a system, a plan, and someone in charge
				4. Make sure whatever you post is authentic –“robots” can send messages automatically but it is ineffective if it doesn’t show real connection
			2. Board members can go through Brenda Hall to set up their own pages.
			3. Expect more ideas and guidance from Mr. Wingo after the new year.
		4. Constance Burns, retired military historian, National Association of American Veterans
			1. POC: 202-465-3296, burnsc1@verizon.net
			2. Expressed her concern about veterans’ caregivers, and particularly the lack of respite support for pre-9/11 veterans.
		5. Major Zachary Kinney (ret AF), Fort Lincoln Funeral Home and Cemetery, operated by Dignity Memorial, <http://www.dignitymemorial.com>
			1. Vet burial benefits a big issue in DC
				1. There is no veterans cemetery in DC

Quantico the closest for DC residents

Can’t go to MD or VA otherwise

* + - * 1. Most vets think VA is going to take care of all their burial needs
			1. POC: 301-887-4930, Zachary.kinney@dignitymemorial.com
	1. Two scheduled outside presenters did not attend and will be rescheduled:
		1. Polly Donaldson- THC Affordable Housing <http://thcdc.org/>
		2. Christy Respress – Pathways to Housing DC [www.pathwaystohousingdc.org/](http://www.pathwaystohousingdc.org/)
	2. Received updates from MOVA Director
		1. Described the process whereby MOVA partners with Office of Surplus Property to identify Veteran Service Organizations who can be conduit for excess federal furniture to be provided to veterans.
	3. Community input
		1. Mr. Tim McNeil noted that veterans eligible for VA care are required to go there before receiving care through Medicaid. This raises issues of equity and appropriate care, particularly for veterans who were victims of sexual trauma while in the service.
1. Due-outs from board members:
	1. Provide Ms. Pridemore proposed changes to draft Strategic Plan using Track Changes ASAP – voting item for January meeting
2. Upcoming meetings and events
	1. Monthly board meeting: 5 January 2016, Suite 540South, 1830 hrs. See <http://www.bega-dc.gov/board-commissions-meetings/mayors-advisory-board-veterans-affairs> for agenda and details.
		1. Vote on Strategic Plan
		2. Vote on proposed by-law amendment: Amend Line 111.7 to read “All votes shall be done by voice Vote. Following the voice vote, any member may call for a roll-call vote. If the call is seconded, a roll call vote will be conducted.”
	2. Mayor’s Holiday reception, Tuesday December 8, 5:00 p.m.
		1. John A. Wilson Bldg, 1350 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, 1st Floor Front Entrance Hall
		2. RSVP to: <http://wilsonholidayreception.eventbrite.com>

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen R. Dalzell

Secretary