

**CITY OF LONG BEACH  
VETERANS AFFAIRS  
COMMISSION MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2017  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT MAIN BUILDING, 2525  
GRAND AVENUE, ROOM 204, 5:00 PM**

Carlos Gonzalez, Chair  
Mike Shaknovich, Vice Chair  
Ryan Antes, Commissioner  
Sylvia Contreras, Commissioner



Juanita Doplemore, Commissioner  
Ricky Fernandez, Commissioner  
Gustavo Orozco, Commissioner  
Josh Smith, Commissioner  
Kiniko Willingham, Commissioner

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**FINISHED AGENDA AND MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Gonzalez called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**Commissioners** Sylvia Contreras, Juanita Doplemore, Ricky Fernandez, Gustavo

**Present:** Orozco, Josh Smith, Kiniko Willingham, Mike Shaknovich and  
Carlos Gonzalez

**Commissioners** Ryan Antes

**Excused:**

- 3. 17-014VA** Recommendation to approve the minutes for Veterans Affairs  
Commission meeting on August 9, 2017.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Orozco and seconded by  
Commissioner Smith to approve recommendation.**

**Yes:** 8 - Sylvia Contreras, Juanita Doplemore, Ricky Fernandez,  
Gustavo Orozco, Josh Smith, Kiniko Willingham, Mike  
Shaknovich and Carlos Gonzalez

**Excused:** 1 - Ryan Antes

**4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public were present.

**REGULAR AGENDA**

5. Veterans Celebration Update, Shawna Stevens, Chief of Staff for Vice Mayor Rex Richardson

Alyssa Gutierrez, Business and Community Relations Manager for Vice Mayor Rex Richardson (CD 9), presented on the Veterans Day Celebration on Veterans Day, Saturday, November 11. The event encompasses the Parade, a Vets Fest focused on connecting Veterans with access to resources and services, and a Street Fair with live music, vendors, food, kids' activities and many other attractions made possible through partnerships with Parks and Recreation, Long Beach Public Library and other City departments, non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations and businesses.

The Parade begins at 10 A.M. and this year's new route follows Atlantic from South Street to Harding and ends in Houghton Park. The Vets Fest and Street Fair gets into full swing after the parade, around noon, and continues until 3 P.M. Gutierrez invited the Commissioners to volunteer to assist on the day of the event and to attend Parade committee meetings on the last Tuesday of the month and Vets Fest and Street Fair programs and promotions committee meetings on the last Wednesday of the month.

Some of the Commissioners expressed concerns about the celebration being well-attended because of a competing event at the Long Beach VA. Commissioners Smith and Orozco suggested that a shuttle ferry Veterans from the Parade to the VA and vice versa and offered to inquire about the matter.

6. 17-015VA Recommendation to discuss latest Long Beach Homeless Count, Teresa Chandler, Human Services Bureau Manager, and Shannon Parker, Homeless Services Officer.

Teresa Chandler, Human Services Bureau Manager, and Shannon Parker, Homeless Services Officer, presented on homeless services for Veterans in Long Beach. The Bureau has for 20 years secured Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grants and, applying HUD's Continuum of Care model, partners with and contracts out with 11 agencies to provide permanent and transitional housing and supportive services. Staff from all 11 agencies are co-located together with homeless services staff at the Multi Service Center (MSC) in West Long Beach.

Out in the field, the City employs a dynamic outreach effort, partnering with Long Beach Police and Fire to connect homeless Veterans to services. The national surge to end Veterans homelessness, led by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 2015, partnered the VA with HUD, which funded the provision of Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers and wrap-around services. Here in Long Beach, the effort ended chronic Veterans homelessness by the end of

2016, which means that every Veteran who wants to be sheltered may be. Chandler invited Commissioners to take a tour of the Multi Service Center and to the Homeless Services Advisory Commission meetings, which take place on the first Wednesdays of the month at 3:30 at the MSC.

**This VA-Agenda Item was received and filed.**

7. 17-016VA Recommendation per final discussion of Commission Goals and Objectives, Ginger Lee, Collective Impact and Operations Bureau Manager

Ginger Lee, Collective Impact and Operations Bureau Manager, led a review and discussion of a final draft of the Goals and Objectives document. Commissioners made minor edits to the four main goals, which address economic development, awareness and recognition, information, resources and social supports and under-represented groups.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Orozco to approve recommendation.**

**Yes:** 8 - Sylvia Contreras, Juanita Doplemore, Ricky Fernandez, Gustavo Orozco, Josh Smith, Kiniko Willingham, Mike Shaknovich and Carlos Gonzalez

**Excused:** 1 - Ryan Antes

8. 17-017VA Recommendation per Ad-Hoc Marketing and Website Subcommittee update, Mike Shaknovich and Ryan Antes

Commissioner Shaknovich distributed printouts of a draft Veterans Commission logo, which will go on the Facebook group page. He shared with the group some of the feedback he received on the draft from Health Department social media staff. He asked the group to give feedback, ideas and suggestions by Wednesday, September 27.

**This VA-Agenda Item was received and filed.**

9. 17-018VA Recommendation to discuss and appoint Standing and *Ad-Hoc* Subcommittees, Carlos Gonzalez

Due to the late hour, Chair Gonzalez recommended that this item be moved to

the October meeting agenda. The Commission verbally agreed.

## **10. STAFF REPORT**

Commission staffer Gina Overholt reported that she met with Rich Beam, Public Affairs Officer for the VA Long Beach. The conversation helped open the door to partnership and collaboration between the Commission and the VA and cross-promotion of VA and Commission initiatives and activities.

Overholt suggested that the Annual Report be an item on next month's agenda. She asked the Commission to think about what it has accomplished in its first year as the core content of the report and about the possibility of including brief profiles on each Commissioner.

Overholt noted that the November meeting will take place at the VA Long Beach and Gina Rawson, Women Veterans Program Manager, will speak.

## **11. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commission staffer Overholt distributed several flyers about various Veterans events and activities. These included a flyer on Veterans Suicide Prevention Month (September), containing references to services and resources, the Compton Vets Stand Down event this weekend, September 16 through 18, and three VA Long Beach events: VA Town Hall on September 26, VA Social Connection and Mixer on September 29, and the VA Patient-Centered Care Day on October 11.

Commissioner Doplemore announced that September is Preparedness Month and a free, community-wide event, "Ready Long Beach," takes place in Heartwell Park this weekend (Saturday, September 16).

Commissioner Orozco announced the first in a series of U.S. VETS-sponsored panels focused on Veterans' issues taking place on Friday, October 27, 9 a.m. at Villages at Cabrillo. This first panel focuses on the educational issues Veterans face after transition. (Commissioner Willingham will be one of the panelists).

Commissioner Contreras shared with the Commission her conversation with Council Member Al Austin about Fourth of July fireworks and how it affects Veterans. Austin suggested that the Commission brainstorm ideas on how to increase public awareness around this issue and how Veterans in our community may prepare themselves.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Gonzalez moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 p.m.