

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

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 11, 2018  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT MAIN BUILDING  
2525 GRAND AVENUE, ROOM 204, 5:00 PM**

Gustavo Orozco, Chair  
Juanita Doplemore, Vice Chair  
Ryan Antes, Commissioner  
Sylvia Contreras, Commissioner  
Ricky Fernandez, Commissioner



Carlos Gonzalez, Commissioner  
Mike Shaknovich, Commissioner  
Josh Smith, Commissioner  
Kiniko Willingham, Commissioner

---

**FINISHED AGENDA & DRAFT MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Orozco called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**Commissioners** Ryan Antes, Sylvia Contreras, Ricky Fernandez, Carlos

**Present:** Gonzalez, Josh Smith, Kiniko Willingham, Juanita Doplemore  
and Gustavo Orozco

**Commissioners** Mike Shaknovich

**Excused:**

1. [18-042VA](#) Recommendation to approve the minutes of the Veterans Affairs  
Commission meeting held on June 13, 2018.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Antes, seconded by  
Commissioner Fernandez, to approve the minutes for the  
Veterans Affairs Commission meeting held Wednesday July 11,  
2018. The motion carried by the following vote:**

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

**Excused:** 1 - Mike Shaknovich

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A member of the public, Franklin Sims, a VA Claims Advocate, introduced himself to the Commission. He had no further comments.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

### **CHAIR'S REPORT**

At a special ceremony before last night's City Council meeting (July 10), the Mayor and Council recognized women's participation on the City's 28 commissions and other advisory bodies and their re-appointment to their respective bodies for a new term. More than half of the City's commissioners, 114 in all, or 52 percent, are women. The Chair congratulated the three women who serve on the Veterans Commission: Commissioners Willingham, Doplemore and Contreras.

US VETS is interested in partnering with the Commission to present a second panel discussion in November or December. The focus will be on transitioning Veterans and employment opportunities. Such a panel will explore, for example, how military skills may be re-interpreted to apply to civilian employment. Orozco asked the Commission to assist with identifying panelists and resources and with improving the processes involved with organizing and promoting the event.

The Council agenda item calling for changes to the ordinance and the handbook that governs the City's Commissions and other advisory bodies was pulled last from night's Council meeting (July 10). The new date for this item has not been determined.

The Long Beach Fire Department (LBFD) convened representatives of local Veterans organizations, the Veterans Commission's Awareness & Recognition subcommittee and staff person Gina Overholt, for a meeting to further discuss the City's Fourth of July fireworks and PTSD awareness campaign. LBFD is interesting in continuing to work together and with other Veterans organizations with the larger objective of addressing the dangers of safe and sane fireworks at the state level. The subcommittee's partnership with LBFD has produced a social media campaign comprising several illegal fireworks and PTSD messages which have been widely disseminated via the City's, LBFD's, Health Department's and Veteran Commission's social media networks. The Signal Hill Tribune published an article with an accompanying video about the campaign featuring interviews with Chair Orozco, Commission staff, LBFD's Public Information Officer and others. At the aforementioned meeting, the group also discussed a lawn sign component for the campaign and LBFD committed to printing these signs. Signs may not have been printed in time for this year's holiday but may be part of next year's campaign moving forward.

The Veterans Day Parade committee continues to its monthly meetings in preparation for the big event in November.

Orozco asked the Commission to take the time to re-read City Fabrick's 2017 "Honoring Our Long Beach Veterans" report. Ideally, the report may provide a foundation for an outreach process or strategy for the Commission to deploy to develop its strategic plan. While this report was not as comprehensive as it could have been, it does provide a picture of what already exists in the City in terms of celebrating and commemorating Veterans that may serve as a baseline. It includes ideas and perspectives gathered through City Fabrick's outreach to Veterans service providers, the North Long Beach Leadership Council and the Veterans Commission and makes recommendations accordingly. Staff will send out the report.

Orozco also reminded Commissioners to refrain from committing the Commission to becoming involved in events and activities without first bringing it the Commission. The Commission needs to be engaged in that conversation and the process is to agendize the item, discuss it and then vote on it.

2. 18-043VA Recommendation to discuss under-represented groups ad-hoc subcommittee report - Commissioners Willingham and Smith

This subcommittee did not have a report.

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

3. 18-044VA Recommendation to discuss economic development ad-hoc subcommittee report - Commissioners Fernandez and Doplemore

Commissioner Fernandez continues to seek connections with agencies and the military to recruit Veterans transitioning from the military for security-related employment opportunities. A discussion followed, in which the difficulties of connecting with the military's Transition Assistance Program (TAPs) and the need to connect or re-connect with organizations like the Tierney Center for Veterans Services, based in Orange County, were acknowledged. Finally, individual Commissioner's connections with local (Los Angeles and Orange County) military bases and various agencies and organizations were explored.

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

4. 18-045VA Recommendation to discuss information, resources and social support ad-hoc subcommittee report - Commissioners Shaknovich and Ryan

Commissioner Gonzalez has joined this subcommittee. Commissioner Contreras has reached out to CalVet, one of the new Veterans Resource Center's partners. A CalVet representative is interested in making a presentation at a future Commission meeting. Processes for communication between the City's commissions and the Council or for bringing recommendations to the Council are not spelled out in the City's commission ordinance and handbook. A revised ordinance and the changes that will be made to the commission handbook as a result will codify things that were heretofore assumed and clarify these processes.

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

5. 18-046VA Recommendation to discuss awareness and recognition ad-hoc subcommittee report - Commissioners Orozco and Contreras

Commissioner Antes distributed a revised Social Media Guidelines document, calling attention to the City's policy prohibiting advertising. As the Veterans Commission Facebook group page gains more followers, it receives more requests to post information that turns out to be advertising content. Social media content must be related to governmental or non-profit organizations. He recommended working with the new Veterans Resource Center, which provides links to various Veterans resources on its webpage (part of the Long Beach Public Library's site). He suggested as well that we encourage the various individuals and companies who approach us to connect with non-profit organizations. Discussion followed. Commissioners Antes and Orozco suggested that approval of the document be moved to the next Commission meeting so Commissioners can take the time to review it. Staff will send out the document via email. In addition, staff will forward the draft document to the digital communications staff in the City Manager's office for their review and input.

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

6. 18-047VA Recommendation to discuss Strategic Plan - Ginger Lee, Bureau Manager - Collective Impact & Operations

Commissioners paired off into their respective ad hoc subcommittees, Under-represented Groups, Economic Development, Information, Resources & Social Support and Awareness & Recognition, to brainstorm at least one specific

recommendation for the strategic plan, and to identify how, where and from whom data that support or justify their recommendations may be collected. Each subcommittee then reported out to the full group and an extended discussion followed. The subcommittees are tasked with further developing their recommendations and data collection strategies and reporting out at the next Commission meeting in August.

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

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no additional announcements.

## **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

At the next meeting, review and approval of the revised Social Media Guidelines will be agendaized.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Orozco moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 p.m.