

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

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8, 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 5:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Ryan Antes, Sylvia Contreras, Ricky Fernandez, Carlos

Present: Gonzalez, Mike Shaknovich, Juanita Doplemore and Gustavo Orozco

Commissioners Josh Smith and Kiniko Willingham

Excused:

1. 18-048VA Recommendation to approve minutes for the Veterans Affairs Commission meeting on July 11, 2018.

A motion was made by Commissioner Antes, seconded by Commissioner Shaknovich, to approve recommendation. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Ryan Antes, Sylvia Contreras, Ricky Fernandez, Carlos Gonzalez, Mike Shaknovich, Juanita Doplemore and Gustavo Orozco

Excused: 2 - Josh Smith and Kiniko Willingham

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Jamone Pili, a Veteran, member of the City's Citizen's Advisory Commission on Disabilities (CACOD) and a manager for the Motel 6 located at 7th and PCH, across the street from the VA Long Beach, addressed the Commission. The motel provides a "home away from home" for Veterans who utilize the VA hospital and their families. Pili expressed his gratitude for this nation's active duty and Veteran service members, for members of his own extended family for their generations of service, and for the Veterans Commission for its efforts. In addition, he shared the motel's renewed commitment to hiring Veterans and their family members through its "Operation Next Step" program.

REGULAR AGENDA

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Orozco did not present a report. The Chair asked that the order of items be changed, with action item number 6, Strategic Plan discussion moving to the top of the agenda. There was no objection to the change.

- 6. 18-053VA** Recommendation to discuss Strategic Plan - Ginger Lee, Bureau Manager, Collective Impact & Operations

Ginger Lee led the group in identifying agreements to help the strategic planning discussion run smoothly. The group agreed: 1) to listen with an open mind and to be respectful; to engage, ask questions and keep things positive; 2) to give proactive feedback: different points of view help to further develop ideas; 3) to be accountable by following through on a commitment to offer assistance, and, 4) to communicate effectively and often by being clear about when a response is needed or if it's not possible to respond within a specified time frame, et al.

The Commission reviewed a draft outline of the strategic plan. Discussion proceeded on the status of developing the plan. To date, planning activity has occurred on parallel tracks, one with a view towards the overall conditions and needs of Veterans in Long Beach, and the other with a focus on specific recommendations (projects). So far, Long Beach-based data has been hard to come by compared with more general data about Veterans. Uncovering and examining local data should not only be part of the strategic planning process but also inform the development of recommendations. With local data in hand, the Commission may explore the universe of possible solutions and then rethink or modify any recommendations accordingly. A brainstorming session followed with

Commissioners and staff identifying various organizations and agencies that may collect or have access to data on the local Veterans' population. Commissioners and staff agreed to contact specific organizations and report back at the next Commission meeting.

The Commission also discussed the concept of stakeholders and stakeholder interviews as part of the methodology for developing the strategic plan. Stakeholders may be defined as anyone impacted by the strategic plan's recommendations from City departments to Veterans themselves. At the next meeting, the Commission will identify stakeholders, develop interview questions and take on interview assignments.

A motion was made by Commissioner Antes, seconded by Commissioner Fernandez, to focus the Commission's efforts on uncovering local data over the next few weeks, which will, in turn, help develop recommendations for the strategic plan.

Yes: 6 - Ryan Antes, Ricky Fernandez, Carlos Gonzalez, Mike Shaknovich, Juanita Doplemore and Gustavo Orozco

No: 1 - Sylvia Contreras

Excused: 2 - Josh Smith and Kiniko Willingham

2. 18-049VA Recommendation to discuss economic development *ad hoc* subcommittee report - Commissioners Fernandez and Doplemore

Commissioner Doplemore has reached out to Orange County Goodwill's Tierney Center for Veterans and to the Long Beach Main Library's Veterans Resource Center (VRC). Questions to consider: how might a resource like Tierney be brought to Long Beach? How can the Commission promote or otherwise support the VRC? Discussion ensued on the feasibility of creating a Commission website or expanding the current landing page to provide links to resources like Tierney and the VRC.

This VA-Agenda Item was received and filed.

3. 18-050VA Recommendation to discuss under-represented groups *ad hoc* subcommittee report - Commissioners Willingham and Smith

Neither Commissioner attended the meeting so there was no report.

4. 18-051VA Recommendation to discuss information, resources and social support *ad hoc* subcommittee report - Commissioners Shaknovich and Ryan

Staff forwarded the social media guidelines to Anabell Chavez, part of the Public Information Office housed within the City Manager's office, who reviewed and approved them.

A motion was made by Commissioner Antes, seconded by Commissioner Shaknovich, to approve the revised Social Media Guidelines document.

Yes: 7 - Ryan Antes, Sylvia Contreras, Ricky Fernandez, Carlos Gonzalez, Mike Shaknovich, Juanita Doplemore and Gustavo Orozco

Excused: 2 - Josh Smith and Kiniko Willingham

5. 18-052VA Recommendation to discuss awareness and recognition *ad hoc* subcommittee report - Commissioners Orozco, Contreras and Gonzalez

At its meeting on August 6, the subcommittee explored options for commemorating Veterans in creative ways, such as programming Veteran-focused events and activities at Veterans Park in CD 7 around Veterans Day, Memorial Day or one of the military branches' birthdays.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Orozco announced the US VETS' 11th annual "Honoring Those Who Served" luncheon, which will take place on September 14 at the Hyatt Regency. Council members have been invited.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioner Doplemore proposed the Commission's participation in the Veterans Day Parade as an agenda item for the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Orozco adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.