

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

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 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 Shakhovich, Commissioner
Josh Smith, Commissioner
Kiniko Willingham, Commissioner

FINAL AGENDA & MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Orozco called the meeting to order at 5:12 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Ryan Antes, Sylvia Contreras, Ricky Fernandez, Mike

Present: Shakhovich, Kiniko Willingham, Juanita Doplemore and Gustavo Orozco

Commissioners Carlos Gonzalez

Excused:

Commissioners Josh Smith

Absent:

1. 18-067VA Recommendation to approve minutes for the Veterans Affairs Commission meeting held on October 11, 2018.

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

Yes: 7 - Ryan Antes, Sylvia Contreras, Ricky Fernandez, Mike Shakhovich, Kiniko Willingham, Juanita Doplemore and Gustavo Orozco

Excused: 1 - Carlos Gonzalez

Absent: 1 - Josh Smith

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Alexandria Aguilar, a student at California State University Fullerton, introduced herself. She chose to attend the Veterans Affairs Commission's meeting to fulfill a coursework requirement.

REGULAR AGENDA

CHAIR REPORT

Chair Orozco reported on a very busy week of Veterans Day-related activities. On November 9, Habitat for Humanity's Vets Build took place at Century Villages of Cabrillo in Long Beach. Many volunteers, both Veterans and non-Veterans, participated in various site improvement projects involving painting, tree trimming and gazebo construction. On November 10, the 22nd annual Long Beach Veterans Day Parade and second annual Veterans Day Celebration (street fair) took place in North Long Beach. It was a success by all accounts, with 200 different groups marching in the parade and many parade watchers staying for the street fair afterwards. On November 11, Councilmember Lena Gonzalez (CD 1) held a Veterans Day "paint night" at Pinot's Palette, which was attended by Veterans from the community. Moving forward, Gonzalez expressed interest in making paint night a recurring event and working with the Commission to organize such events and promote them in a timely manner. Other councilmembers are also seeking the support of the Veterans Commission and the Veterans community at large to make events like "paint night" a success. Orozco is on the Veterans Day planning committee; he and other Commissioners have helped to plan or participated in Veterans Day-related activities in various ways.

STAFF REPORT

Staff expressed appreciation to everyone who assisted with or participated in the Veterans Day Parade and Celebration on November 10. For the first time, the Commission had a booth at the street fair to meet and greet local Veterans and collected a total of 12 contact information forms (wherein local Veterans expressed interest in being interviewed or participating in a focus group as part of the strategic planning process). Staff announced that Chair Orozco will soon become the chair of the Veterans Day Parade, which may open up new opportunities for the Veterans Commission's involvement with this annual event in the future.

Staff also expressed appreciation to everyone who assisted with, participated in or attended the Partners of Parks' Lone Sailor Memorial Recognition Ceremony on October 13. This well-attended event represented a successful collaboration between the Veterans Commission and Partners of Parks. Finally, staff reported on a positive outcome of the event: a dialogue between American Gold Star Manor, Partners of Parks and the Veterans Commission, which will continue to grow and involve other Veterans community stakeholders. Staff and the Commission chair attended a meeting in early November at AGSM, which is seeking partners, input, and data on the local Veterans community per its own strategic planning process. Staff also reminded Commissioners to complete their ethics training, as required, by December 28, 2018.

2. 18-068VA Recommendation to discuss Veterans Commission Strategic Plan

Staff reported on the stakeholder interview process to date. Staff is handling the interview scheduling based on the Commissioners' availability (per a Doodle poll). In addition, we now have access to an intern, Zeena Aljawad, in Councilmember Richardson's office. She is assisting with keeping our list of stakeholder interviewees current and determining the best digital options for storing and accessing strategic planning-related files. Interviews have been conducted so far with Council Districts 2, 3 and 4 (Pearce, Price and Supernaw). Interview dates are pending with Council Districts 1, 6 and 8 (Gonzalez, Andrews and Austin). A discussion followed during which Commissioners added some new names to the interviewee list and suggested that we reach out more regularly to the Long Beach fire and police departments (LBFD and LBPD). Not only are they on our stakeholder interviewee list, but it is also important to keep the conversation going on the fireworks and Veterans with PTSD issue.

This VA-Agenda Item was received and filed.

3. 18-069VA Recommendation to discuss holiday celebration at December meeting

Next month, we will add a holiday potluck to our December meeting agenda. Commissioner Doplemore suggested we add a white elephant gift exchange to the festivities. Discussion followed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Doplemore, seconded by Commissioner Shaknovich, to approve recommendation to add a white elephant gift exchange (with gifts valued at \$25 or less) to the December meeting and holiday celebration.

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

Excused: 1 - Carlos Gonzalez

Absent: 1 - Josh Smith

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CD 1 Commissioner Kiniko Willingham will resign from the Veterans Commission in February, 2019, because she has accepted a position at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Loma Linda, CA.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Per Chair Orozco's report, and his upcoming position as Chair of the Veterans Day Parade Committee, the Commission may be more involved in planning the Veterans Day Parade and Celebration. Hence, the parade and celebration will be a regular agenda item.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Orozco adjourned the meeting at 6:08 p.m.