



Long Beach Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter #756
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Long Beach, California 90809
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February 16, 2015

Kasia McDermott
Budget Delegate for Parks, Recreation, and Marine
2760 Studebaker Road
Long Beach, California 90815

Subject: Proposed Refurbishment of Long Beach Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Houghton Park

Dear Ms. McDermott:

We appreciate your presentation at our Chapter Meeting at the Gold Star Mothers' Home on February 5, 2015. It was most informative and we realize that we may not have provided a complete and detailed history and position.

We would like to thank you for your interest and support in upgrading the Long Beach Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Houghton Park. This Memorial is the ONLY one in the City of Long Beach dedicated to Vietnam Veterans and is a Landmark of the City. This is one of our most important projects and like many efforts that followed Vietnam veterans; this Memorial was due solely to the efforts of Long Beach veterans who fought in Vietnam. Accordingly, we have a most personal and emotional stake in this Memorial.

We are most concerned about the potential damage and disrespect to the Memorial area if the fence is removed. We have been provided no plan for increased maintenance or security in the Houghton Part area. If vandalism and/or damage occur do we have guarantee from Parks and Recreation that the damage will be repaired and that a new fence will be constructed?

To review our position, after many man-hours of perseverance this wonderful memorial was dedicated on November 10, 2001 to the Long Beach Veterans who gave their lives for their country in Vietnam. This area was to be a place of peace and contemplation for all who chose to stop there. It is to be a place of memory and respect.

Since the time of dedication that objective has not been achieved. Trash had accumulated, plant maintenance was not accomplished. Graffiti was drawn on the benches and splotches of unmatched paint were used to wipe it out. The landscaping plants were trampled



and homeless people were sleeping on the benches. Even more sacrilegious the flag was desecrated and then stolen. The helicopter itself was damaged by foreign objects and windows were broken.

A helicopter, while highly symbolic to these veterans, is an attractive climbing tower and play attraction to kids of many ages and this causes concern for their safety.

Subsequent to these events, the City of Long Beach has enclosed the Memorial with a wrought iron fence at significant expense, which has provided shelter and security and reduced vandalism to the Memorial. We are truly grateful to the city for this. At the time of the enclosure the City assured the Chapter that Park Personnel would open and close the fence during the week to allow access to the Memorial. That did not happen. You mentioned several times that the Memorial was open approximately 5 times a year and seemed confused that perhaps we had some control over access. We have experienced the same frustrating problems gaining access. This has impeded our ability to visit as well as the ability as the citizens of Long Beach and especially the neighbors in North Long Beach.

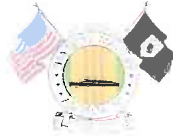
We have been given no reasonable excuse for the limited access to the Memorial, and the issue regarding master keys, etc. makes little sense to us. There are a number of ways to correct this situation and we will be more than happy to meet with Park Personnel at their earliest convenience to find a reasonable resolution to this problem. (Please contact Conrad Gomez at 562-882-1374 or me at the number below.)

We are looking forward to working with the Parks and Recreation Committee to improve the experience of Houghton Park in North Long Beach. Our veterans and their families grew up there and live there, as well. Our only and our most crucial request is the fence should remain in place to ensure the shelter and security of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial unless strong guarantee of security and maintenance is provided by the Department of Parks and Recreation. If damage and vandalism occur, the Department would agree as soon as possible build a new fence to protect the Memorial.

If you have any questions or would like additional information please contact me at these contacts: phone: [REDACTED] or Email: [REDACTED]
Thank you, once again, for your interest and support.

Yours truly,

Max Stewart
President



Cc: Mayor Robert Garcia
333 W. Ocean Blvd. (14th floor)
Long Beach, CA 90802
Phone 562-570-6801

Council Member Rex Richardson
Council District 9
333 W. Ocean Blvd. (14th floor)
Long Beach, CA 90802
Phone: 562-570-6137







These pictures are in Lakewood Deville Park
as you can see will kept and left unsecure.

In 2014 the brass plaque with the Lakewood
Fallen Veterans names
was stolen from the Memorial.

Leave the fence up to maintain the security of the
Long Beach Vietnam Veterans Memorial



IN REMEMBRANCE OF THOSE OF LAKEWOOD
WHO DIED IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY
DURING THE VIETNAM CONFLICT

ALFRED ALVARADO
THOMAS F. BARTH
BRIAN W. BATES
GALE L. BROWN
MARC A. BROWN
RICHARD ALLEN BROWN
CHARLES MIKE CASTILLO
LEONARD J. CHISLOCK
JERRY WAYNE DEARING
JAMES L. HARNDEN
PAUL JAMES HARRISON
DENNIS L. HAYES
RANDALL S. HILL
HUGH BRYANT HOLMES
MARK R. HOLTOM
ALAN M. HORN
SYDNEY CLAUDE HOWARD
JAMES ARTHUR JACKSON
DONALD GENE KING
ANDY KNEVELBAARD
ALFRED H. KUNKEL, JR.
ROGER MARSHALL

JOHN McFARLANE
JOHN B. MECKEL
JIMMY A. MILLER
RICHARD HERSCHEL MILLER
JOHN H. MOONEY
THOMAS RICHARD MURPHY
STEVEN C. OWEN
CRAIG D. PINCHOT
DAVID RICHARDSON
JOSEPH MICHAEL ROMERO
SCOTT LAWRENCE SCHMIDT
GLEN SHROPSHIRE
MARSHALL F. SMITH
DONALD E. SORENSEN
CHRISTOPHER A. SOUZA
ALAN W. THORNTON
DOUGLAS VANDE VEGTE
STEPHEN THOMAS VOLZ
CRAIG WILLIAM
ERNEST H. YOUNG
LEE ZOELLER

REDEDICATED BY THE LAKEWOOD CITY COUNCIL
MAY 29, 2006

Long Beach Chapter #756
Supports the following Organizations

Long Beach VA Hospital its Programs

National Service Officers (they help Veterans attain their benefits)

Homeless Program (financial support for food and clothing)

Vet to Vet Combat PTSD Group (Veterans helping Veterans)

Blind Center

Taking Veterans on outing such as Disneyland , Knott's Berry Farm, Angel Games and to Edwards Movie Theater at the Long Beach Town Center and to restaurants in the Long Beach area.

American Gold Star Home and Manor (Chapter holds it meeting there)

Fisher House Program at the Long Beach VA the construction that will maybe have ground breaking this year.

Gave out Holiday meals to 25 needy families

Gave out financial support to the U . S . Army troops(Reserves) who were deployed to Iraq.

Had a Moving Wall Event (The Viet Nam Wall Replica) at Houghton Park in 2002.

Support the Long Beach Veterans Parade every year.

The Chapter helps out all Veterans from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan to any conflict we been in.

Face book Page Long Beach VVA 756

web page www.vva756.org

in process

Vietnam Veterans of America - Chapter 756
"WELCOME HOME"



Max Stewart
President

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application on reverse

Vietnam Veterans of America - Chapter 756
"WELCOME HOME"



Conrad Gomez
Secretary / Treasurer

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application on reverse