

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

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2023
HEALTH DEPARTMENT MAIN BUILDING
2525 GRAND AVENUE, LONG BEACH, CA
90815, ROOM 204, 5:00 PM**

Jesse Blanco, Chair
Lance Santiago, Vice Chair
Ryan Antes, Commissioner
Sylvia Contreras, Commissioner



Juanita Doplemore, Commissioner
Ricky Fernandez, Commissioner
Mike Shakhovich, Commissioner
Josh Smith, Commissioner

REGULAR MEETING - 5:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 5:19 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Also in attendance: Gina Overholt, Taylor Gentry, Gus Orozco, Erica Valencia-Adachi, Joey King, and Jeff Williams. Gentry is with the National Guard (on Redondo), Soldier & Family Readiness. Williams is Director of Community Engagement for Mayor Richardson's office.

Commissioners Ryan Antes, Sylvia Contreras, Mike Shakhovich, Josh Smith and
Present: Lance Santiago

Commissioners Juanita Doplemore, Ricky Fernandez and Jesse Blanco
Excused:

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Taylor Gentry spoke; he recently transferred to the California National Guard Armory in Long Beach (on Redondo). The Soldier & Family Readiness Group (SFRG) for which he works provides resources for soldiers within the guard community, including financial assistance, job referrals and education-related information. They also work with Veterans. SFRG trains volunteer groups who serve as liaisons between units and unit command.

23-004VA Recommendation to approve minutes for meeting held on February 8, 2023.

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

Yes: 5 - Ryan Antes, Sylvia Contreras, Mike Shaknovich, Josh Smith and Lance Santiago

Excused: 3 - Juanita Doplemore, Ricky Fernandez and Jesse Blanco

CHAIR'S REPORT

Priority: virtual meet and greets with Veteran-Serving organizations. More Commissioners signed up to schedule and participate in these meet and greets. Ad hoc subcommittee finalized the questionnaire. Chair also covered banners program and memorial date event planning.

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Items presented: The recently revised Commissions Handbook covers a range of topics, including documents Commissioners are required to submit (annually or bi-annually) such as Form 700 and ethics training. Commissioners are required to complete a sexual harassment training. They are also eligible for compensation. Draft of first Office of Veterans Support newsletter completed. Other items covered: update on website improvements, social media posts/topics; non-profit fiscal agency partnerships (not a priority at this time); a potential Commissioners retreat in the coming months; Veterans banners program, and Memorial Day event planning.

REGULAR AGENDA

23-005VA Recommendation to Discuss Priorities for Office of Veterans Support

Staff shared a Save the Date for Honoring Our Heroes - A Sunset Ceremony. A Veteran in our community proposed to local Long Beach theaters that Veterans be eligible for discounted theater tickets. A motion was made per the Veterans Commission supporting this request (via a letter of support). The motion was withdrawn. It may be revisited upon obtaining more information about this proposal.

This VA-Agenda Item was withdrawn.

23-006VA Recommendation to discuss Veterans banners program.

No motion made for this item. Commissioners explored possibilities for moving the banners program forward. Council could grant special events the authority to waive the fee for this City-sponsored program. The Artesia Project (major improvements to three miles of Artesia in North Long Beach - CD 9) may be the location of a secondary pilot program (in addition to other potential CDs (2 & 4), and Council offices and other sources could be approached for cost-sharing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.