

VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, April 20, 2006
County Council Room and Kona Mayor's Office (Via Videoconferencing)
3:00 p.m.

Present

Members

Denny Austen
Don D. Bennett
Penny Fox
Richard Highley
Louis Kaoiwi
Morris Kihara
George Mukai
Patrick Pavao
Hideo Segawa
George Yamamoto

Kona Mayor's Office (Via Videoconferencing)

Members

Richard Stevens

Guests (Kona)

David Carlson
Manuel Delo Santos
Antonio Gaspar
Boss Hanato
Minoru Hanato
Herb Lum
Joe Pretsch
Lee Pretsch
Alfredo Tobias

Guests (Hilo)

Ex-Officio (Hilo)

Patricia Engelhard, Director, P&R
Keith Ribbentrop, OVS

Also Present (Hilo)

Nathalie Santos, Secretary

Absent

Roy Hinokawa
Wendall Kekumu
Gilbert Sampaia

CALL TO ORDER

- Chairman Richard Highly called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm

STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No Statements from the public.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS MINUTES – MARCH 16, 2006

- The minutes of the March 16, 2006 meeting were approved as submitted.

REPORT ON CEMETERIES – STATE VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

Hawaii Island Representative Mr. Herring Kalua

NO REPORT

Mr. Kalua absent - He traveled to Kona to attend a meeting at the West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery this morning with state officials from Oahu.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

VETERANS CEMETERY II – EXPANSION PROJECT

Director Engelhard reported status has not changed since last month's meeting.

Expecting required improvements to be completed by July.

VETERANS CEMETERY III – WEST HAWAII

(Reforestation Project)

Vice Chairman Stevens again invited everyone to the next planting scheduled for April 28th. The opening ceremony/planting will begin at 9am and lunch/social will be held at 11am. The Keiki Planting will comprise of many different schools ranging from elementary age children (5th graders from Holualoa School have committed). Tomorrow students from Hualalai Academy will be marking the planting locations.

The Greenhouse is coming on the 21st, also working on the sign project and getting topsoil for roadside planting.

VETERANS CEMETERIES - BURIAL TIMES

(Funding for Improvements, Expansion of Grave Sites and Graveliners)

Chairman Highley reported that he, Delbert Nishimoto and Director Engelhard met today at 2pm to discuss burial times. They reviewed Rule 7, which states that burial times will be at the discretion of the Director. The Director has designated two burial times in the morning and one in the afternoon. If the burials go into lunch break by union workers between 11am and 12 noon, the families will be required to pay overtime. Mr. Nishimoto went to see the head of UPW and there is no way they will back down. The final conclusion of the meeting was not to change the rules, but to instead work with it and see what happens.

VETERANS CEMETERIES I AND II

Columbariums

Director Engelhard reported that she took Mr. Kalua to see the niches and he understands what needs to be done to make columbariums useable and will report back to Mr. Morita.

VETERANS CEMETERY III - WEST HAWAII

Chairman Highley said the meeting held this morning at Veterans Cemetery III - West Hawaii with Mr. Ralph Morita and staff member Joseph of DAGS; Herring Kalua, State Veterans Advisory Board-Hawaii Island Representative; many members of various Veterans organizations, Council Members Virginia Isbell and Pete Hoffman; representatives from Cindy Evans' office and Ed Case's office was good. They discussed burial availability at Cemetery III and the importance of preparing the second section so that veterans families don't get turned away and have to bury loved ones elsewhere.

Chairman Highley also reported that the \$300,000 from the State legislature has been released. Colonel Cruickshank told him the 1.2 million dollars would be part of the funds secured from the Veterans Administration. The revised master plan will be worked on beginning May or June and is expected to take approximately six (6) months to complete. The plan will then be submitted to Veterans Administration to release the funds to continue project. He asked if there were any comments or questions about items discussed at the meeting.

Mr. Minoru Hanato of DAV said veterans in attendance stressed the importance of installing graveliners quickly. State representatives will try to push project and asked if anyone knows of somebody that could manufacture concrete graveliners on this island. There will be another meeting with state representatives in July after they gather more information. Will work with them closely and continue to push the issue of quick expansion.

VETERANS CEMETERY III - WEST HAWAII

Vandalized Road Sign Repaired

Mr. Hanato thanked Herring Kalua for requesting that the vandalized sign on the Highway be replaced.

APPRECIATION - FORMER CHAIRPERSON LOUIS KAOIWI

Former Chairperson Louis Kaiwi served for many years in various capacities on the Veterans Advisory Committee. He was honored with a lei from the Department of Parks and Recreation, a plaque from members of the Veterans Advisory Committee, a Certificate of Appreciation from Mayor Kim presented by Managing Director Dixie Kaetsu, and a summary read by Director Engelhard describing his sixteen years of volunteer service to the committee.

Louis Kaiwi thanked Director Engelhard, Mayor Kim and the Managing Director for helping to get what is needed for the cemetery. He also thanked everyone for working together as one team.

Managing Director Dixie Kaetsu thanked all members for serving on the committee and for their hard work and dedication. She then presented Mr. Kaiwi with a Certificate of Appreciation from Mayor Kim.

Refreshments will be served following the committee meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

MAINTENANCE FUNDS FOR VETERANS CEMETERIES ON THE BIG ISLAND

Chairman Highley said that the County of Hawaii is receiving \$22,500 for maintenance of all three cemeteries. During today's meeting, Colonel Cruickshank acknowledged that these cemeteries are also under his office and he has already solicited additional funds for maintenance of these cemeteries. Chairman Highley encouraged members to write letters to their congressmen supporting Colonel Cruickshank's request for additional funding.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

NO REPORT

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NONE

MEMBERSHIP - VACANCIES

It was announced that Mr. Antonio Gaspar would be nominated to represent the American Legion on the Veterans Advisory Committee filling Peter Callahan's vacancy.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 18, 2006 at 3:00 p.m. in the Hawai'i County Councilroom and video-conferencing at the Kona Mayor's Office.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 3:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathalie Santos, Secretary