

VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, June 19, 2008, 3:00 p.m.
Prosecutor's Office (Hilo) and Kona Mayor's Office (Via Videoconferencing)

Present

Members

Carolle Brulee-Wilson
Penny Fox, Chair
Edward Lee, Vice Chair
George Mukai
Delbert Nishimoto
John Young

Kona Mayor's Office (Via Videoconferencing)

Members

Antonio Gaspar
Minoru Hanato
Richard Highley
Robert Welter

Guests (Kona)

Boss Hanato
Thomas Leone

Ex-Officio (Hilo)

Patricia Engelhard, Director, P&R
Joseph Flores, OVS

Also Present (Hilo)

Nathalie Santos, Secretary
Herring Kalua - State Veterans Advisory Board - E HI Representative
Herbert Lum - State Veterans Advisory Board - W HI Representative

Absent

Don Bennett
Wendall Kekumu
Gilbert Sampaia
Norman Stahl
Richard Stevens
George Yamamoto

Call to Order

Chairwoman Penny Fox called the meeting to order at 3:07 pm - (10) members present.

STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS MINUTES – April 17, 2008 (The May 15th Meeting cancelled - No Quorum)

- The minutes of the April 17, 2008 meeting were approved as submitted.

REPORT ON CEMETERIES – STATE VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

Hawaii Island - East Hawaii Representative Mr. Herring Kalua

Hawaii Island - West Hawaii Representative Mr. Herb Lum

Mr. Herring Kalua - Report

Veterans Cemeteries I & II - Columbariums

Mr. Kalua reported that this months State Veterans Advisory Board meeting was cancelled.

Mr. Herb Lum - Report

Veterans Cemetery III - West Hawaii

Mr. Lum reported that the VA has authorized the Office of Veterans Services to award bids for Phase IIC at Veterans Cemetery III - West Hawaii. OVS is in the process of providing information to VA so that the funds can be awarded before June 30th. Bids are on schedule.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Veterans Cemetery III - West Hawaii

Reforestation Project

Mr. Gaspar said he has nothing new to report. The next planting project will be held sometime in September 2008, but unsure of the exact date.

NEW BUSINESS

National Association of State Veterans Homes (NASVH) Conference - Summer 2009

Rene Dela Cruz, Executive Assistant to the Mayor announced that NASVH is planning to hold their 2009 conference in Hilo and feature the Yukio Okutsu Veterans Home. He is meeting informally with various veterans organizations and assisting with this conference at the request of the Mayor who was approached by representatives of Hilo Medical Center Administration and the Okutsu Veterans Home Administration. They are looking at a couple dates in August, but dates are not confirmed because they are checking with Senators Akaka and Inouye first. The goal is to have a good conference, promote the aloha spirit and show case the new Hilo Veterans Home. The Mayor wants to show that this is a Veterans Home that also belongs to the community. Presently the facility is only filled to about 1/3 of its capacity and they are experiencing challenges.

Rene attended today's meeting to introduce himself and ask for any suggestions about the Veterans Home and the conference. Rene can be contacted at B-961-8508, via email rdelacruz@co.hawaii.hi.us or by calling the Mayor's Office. He will be a part of the planning committee along with representatives of HMC and Avalon.

Mr. Nishimoto said that the National representatives are coordinating the conference and have selected the site. The Veterans Home in Hilo will be hosting a luau, the rest of the events are being planned at the National level.

Rene will help with planning transportation, tours, VIP volcano viewing tour and whatever the County can do to bring out the welcome wagon. David Kowalski, regional vice president of Avalon Health Care will be attending this years conference to get an idea of what its like and bring back information for planning next years conference.

Mr. Nishimoto shared that the Mayor doesn't want the Veterans Home to be institution like, where you go to rest and see the end of life. He wants it to be a residence, people to join hands, talk story and develop a comradeship.

Mr. Young said the residents are very receptive of visitors. Movie Tuesdays are held at 2pm and Game Thursdays at 2pm - Bingo is held on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Afternoon visits (after 1pm) are better and the residents love cookies.

Mr. Nishimoto said a Day Care Program would begin soon. The Day Care program will actually bring in more funds than the regular fulltime program.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Veterans Advisory Cemetery III - West Hawaii - Gate Closure

Director Engelhard reported that she wasn't able to obtain funding for next fiscal year to close the gate at Veterans Cemetery III - West Hawaii.

Mr. Highley said that is sad and asked if the Council wouldn't put it in the budget.

Director Engelhard said it didn't make it through the administration's budget request. Annually there are many requests from every department and not all requests can be funded, although this was high on the priority list (top 5 of 30 items) we weren't able to get it through. The Council didn't even see it because it didn't get to them so it's not their fault.

Mr. Kalua asked the amount requested for that service and Director Engelhard responded \$25,000.

OVS Mark Moses Visited Mayor Kim

Director Engelhard shared that Mark Moses attended a meeting at the Mayor's Office recently to discuss the County's obligation to maintain the veterans cemeteries. He wanted to clarify that the County is required to maintain the cemeteries. The County of Kauai didn't know that it was their responsibility, they thought it was the states so he decided to meet with neighbor islands to clarify maintenance responsibility. Director

Engelhard said that we knew it is the County's responsibility, but feel that the State should assist more financially.

Mr. Moses said that the veterans cemeteries on the Big Island were fairly well maintained.

West Hawaii Today - Obituaries - Request Flag Photo for all Veterans

Guest Mr. Tom Leone of the Korean War Veterans requested assistance to ask the Editor of the West Hawaii Today to insert a photo of the American flag alongside the name of all deceased veterans in their obituary section. He has written letters to all veteran organizations on the west side requesting support, to the Editor of West Hawaii Today and visited him personally to request they begin inserting the photo. The Editor saw a sample in the Honolulu Advertiser, but told him they can't do anything unless the funeral homes inform them it is a veteran that passed away. Mr. Leone sent letters to the mortuaries and has not yet heard anything.

Mr. Herb Lum said the publisher doesn't want to do it and suggested rather than reinventing the wheel, check with the Honolulu papers to see how they do it.

The committee will send a letter requesting a little flag be inserted in the obituary of a deceased veteran.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on July 17, 2008 at 3pm.

Meeting will again be held in Hilo at the Office of the Prosecutor and in Kona at the Mayor's Office.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathalie Santos, Secretary