

VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, July 17, 2008, 3:00 p.m.
Prosecutor's Office (Hilo) and Kona Mayor's Office (Via Videoconferencing)

Present

Members

Don Bennett
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
Robert Welter

Guests (Kona)

Thomas Leone

Ex-Officio (Hilo)

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

Also Present (Hilo)

Herbert Lum - State Veterans Advisory Board - W HI Representative

Absent

Richard Highley
Wendall Kekumu
Gilbert Sampaia
Norman Stahl
Richard Stevens
George Yamamoto

Call to Order

Chairwoman Penny Fox called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm - (10) members present.

STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

Mr. Thomas Leone confirmed receipt of the letter Chairwoman Fox sent to West Hawaii Today and Hawaii Tribune Herald requesting that a picture of a flag be inserted next to deceased veterans in their obituary listings. He reported that flags are still not being put in the obituaries and wanted to know what recourse they have.

Director Engelhard responded there is no recourse, if the newspapers refuse, we can't force them to do it.

Chairwoman Fox said she received a call from Lala of Cremation Services of West Hawaii who said its up to the newspapers if they are able to do it or not. As far as she knows, all of the mortuaries including her company are happy to request a flag be inserted when submitting obituary to the newspaper. Lala spoke to newspapers to see if it could be done and was told they would have to check their ability of being able to put it to print. Lala wanted us to know she supported request 100% and if there was anyway she could help to let her know. She also checked with other mortuaries and they feel the same way. Chairwoman Fox will call newspapers and make one final request, but she cannot force them to do it.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS MINUTES – June 19, 2008

The minutes of the June 19, 2008 meeting were approved as submitted.

REPORT ON CEMETERIES – STATE VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

Hawaii Island - East Hawaii Representative Mr. Herring Kalua - Absent

Hawaii Island - West Hawaii Representative Mr. Herb Lum

Mr. Herb Lum - Report

Veterans Cemetery III - West Hawaii

Mr. Lum reported that Mr. John Hao is acting as replacement to Major Mitsuyoshi who is either in Kuwait or on his way. Mr. Hao's specialty is in software and environmental concerns.

Bid openings for Veterans Cemetery III - West Hawaii - Phase III will be by July 31st. Prior to that bidders will be visiting the cemetery, that date has not been established. This is a slippage of June 26th, but the construction of January 2009 with completion by October 2009 remains the same. Phase IIC plans include solar for lighting and PA system in the committal area. This has nothing to do with solar requirements if we decide to drill for water, which is a completely different matter. Phase II contract is signed and completed. It is currently in the hands of P&R.

Previous discussions about columbariums caused some confusion whether there would be brand new ones and if the old ones would be used. Mr. Lum said it's a little of both, there will be four (4) new columbariums in the new site and the old columbariums would be moved next to the new ones. There will be a total of (8) columbariums. There was some concern about who would move the urns. Mr. Highley made it clear that the veterans did not have the capability to move urns. The current plans include hiring a contractor to move them. We don't have to be concerned about movement of urns since its in professional hands.

Mr. Lum said that Mark Moses feels there is no water issue as far as toilets are concerned and if necessary Parks and Recreation will ship water in. Somehow the water will be provided for toilets.

Mr. Hanato spoke to Gina of DAGS on Monday at the cemetery while she was at the site with contractors. Gina suggested they move the greenhouse to the south end of the cemetery and he responded that wouldn't be smart because the south end doesn't have water. He asked them to put greenhouse next to maintenance shed since it has water and wind blockage there. Gina said she would look into it.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Veterans Cemetery III - West Hawaii Reforestation Project

Mr. Gaspar reported some of the trees on the Kohala side of the road are drying out. He's concerned that some of the other plants are looking sickly and need to be checked out.

Mr. Hanato said P&R is checking the irrigation control and taking care of the problem.

Water Commitment - Kukio

Director Engelhard reported that Kukio is selling their water to a utility company and the utility company will bill us. The state arranged for 4,200 gallons of water and someone else arranged for 3,600 gallons of water, so they are committed to 7,800, however, they do not have to provide that for free. They have been giving it to us and they will continue to give as much as we need until the utility company takes over. When the utility company takes over, they will only commit to 15,000 gallons per day. We have been using in excess of 17,000 gallons a day, but most of that is for the trees. The dryland forest will have to stand on its own because the water cost will be higher than the Department of Water Supply's charges. So we may spend between \$3,000 to \$4,000 per month for that tiny cemetery.

Chairwoman Fox asked if anyone knows if the trees are able to stand on their own yet.

Director Engelhard said Dr. Stevens is supposed to be planting a dryland forest, meaning that all plants have to be drought tolerant.

Mr. Lum asked how long it takes to wean plants.

Director Engelhard said that Dr. Stevens is the expert.

Mr. Hanato said they will try to move the existing tank to the location where it could be used for toilets.

NEW BUSINESS

None

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Veterans Cemetery III - West Hawaii **Moving Urns/Water Tank/Trees Drying**

Director Engelhard said there is a lot of conflicting information. Gina told her this past Wednesday that P&R staff is suppose to move the urns. So the plan is for P&R to remove urns from columbariums and store them, the columbariums get moved and then P&R staff puts the urns back in the same niches of the columbarium.

Mr. Lum said that last Friday Mark Moses made a very definitive comment that the moving of the urns will be part of the contract and be done by experts.

Director Engelhard will clarify the conflicting information. She said she also noticed that the trees were dry. She's hoping that the trees that are being planted will be drought tolerant not just on the hill, along the sides of the entry road.

Director Engelhard read notes from a conversation with Gina of DAGS. She said there were at least 4 bidders for the new work to be done. Bid opening was going to be done by the 31st. Notice to proceed will be in January 2009 and they hope to be finished by November 2009. They will have to relocate the office and the portable building. The van that everything is stored in will have to be moved to the stock pile area where the dirt is piled. Director Engelhard told her we want them to salvage the fence and Gina wants P&R also needs to salvage the water tank, not that its supposed to go there. They want us to move water tank, maybe for the time being it will be moved and then taken care of later or maybe Gina doesn't have the same scoop as everyone else does it, but she's in charge of project and that's what she said. The tank can hold 5,000 gallons of water.

Mr. Hanato said the water tank is needed at the cemetery because it's used as an emergency water supply. Once the waterline was burnt and the tank water was used to water grass.

Director Engelhard said it makes sense that it remains there, but they said they want it out of there, she will talk to Gina again.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Outer Island Casket Vault Ordering Procedures

Mr. Joe Flores of OVS Office dropped off "Outer Island Casket Vault Ordering Procedures" form for information only. Chairwoman Fox said form was also faxed to Kona. Director Engelhard said members do not need to worry about procedures because P&R staff will handle orders.

Yukio Okutsu Veterans Home

Mr. Keith Ribbentrop reported that the Veterans Home is doing well, the residents are very happy and there has been a lot of change. He invited members to drop by for a tour of the facility. He also shared that if there are organizations that would like to hold meetings at the Home, if residents can participate, contact him to set it up. The Interim Director is Mr. Ramel Dela Cruz and he is a very nice guy and wonderful administrator.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on August 21, 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 3:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathalie Santos, Secretary