

VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, October 20, 2005
County Council Room and Kona Mayor's Office (Via Videoconferencing)
3:00 p.m.

Present

Members

Denny Austen
Richard Highley
Roy Hinokawa
Paul Johnston
Louis Kaiwi
Wendall Kekumu
Morris Kihara
George Mukai
George Yamamoto

Kona Mayor's Office (Via Videoconferencing)

Members

Richard Stevens

Guests (Kona)

Boss Hanato
Minoru Hanato
Herb Lum

Ex-Officio (Hilo)

Patricia Engelhard, Director, P&R

Also Present (Hilo)

Nathalie Santos, Secretary

Absent

Penny Fox
Patrick Pavao
Gilbert Sampaia
Hideo Segawa

NEW MEMBERS - SWORN IN

P & R Director Patricia Engelhard conducted a swearing in ceremony for the following two new members:

Mr. Don Bennett of HIVM, Inc.
Dr. Richard Stevens of Military Order of the Purple Heart

Call to Order

- Chairman Kaiwi called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Delbert Nishimoto

Temporary Columbarium – Veterans Cemetery III – West Hawaii - Update

Mr. Nishimoto reported that the contractor: Coppenberg Enterprises Inc. is presently installing the temporary columbarium - 96 niche unit (4 units of 24 each) at the West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery. The schedule is to pour concrete slab on Wednesday, October 19th, and installation of niches on Thursday, October 20th. The Federal VA will provide front covers for niches and markers upon urn occupation. Columbarium is similar to the units at the Punchbowl Cemetery.

New VA Director

Mr. Nishimoto announced that New VA Director Dr. James Gene Hastings would begin on October 30, 2005.

Veterans Cemeteries Burials

Mr. Nishimoto referred to the recent newspaper article about lack of burial times at Veterans Cemeteries due to the employee's union and strongly recommends that members review and enforce Rule 7. He said Rule 7 calls for burials between 8 am and 5pm. He also encourages families to utilize the committal shelter, hold services there and leave the casket with employees. He shared that direct burials are unsafe and not recommended.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS MINUTES – JULY 28, 2005

(August 18, 2005 and September 15, 2005 Meetings Were Cancelled – No Quorum)

- The minutes of the July 28, 2005 meeting were approved as submitted.

REPORT ON CEMETERIES – STATE VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

Hawaii Island Representative Mr. Herring Kalua was not present at the meeting.

Release of Funds – West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery – Design of Committal Shelter and Columbaria - \$25,000

Chairman Kaiwi reported that Governor Linda Lingle approved the Request to Release Design Funds for \$25,000 for the Committal Shelter and Columbaria at West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery III.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

VETERANS CEMETERY II – EXPANSION PROJECT

Director Engelhard said nothing new to report; the County has not yet accepted the project.

VETERANS CEMETERY III – WEST HAWAII

(Reforestation Project)

Richard Highley reported that he is pleased with progress on reforestation project. They have contacted Mr. Charles Whitney of the Whitney Pacific Corporation who agreed to bulldoze the road required to install the goat proof fence.

Dr. Richard Stevens said they expect about 100 volunteers to participate in another big planting project on the morning of Saturday, November 5th which should cover makai of the pu'u. Very thankful that project is receiving lots of support from veterans and the community including plant donations from Kukio and funds for the fencing project.

REPORT ON FUNDS RECEIVED FOR VETERANS CEMETERIES I, II and III

Chairman Kaoiwi reported that following his request to the Mayor and County Council, gates were installed at Veterans I and II and the Mayor has assured him that the solar light for the flagpole will be paid for. Louis heard that maybe HELCO would be providing the light, but if that doesn't happen he recommends someone from Kona follow up with P&R.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT – COLUMBARIUMS

No Report. Sub-Committee has not yet scheduled a meeting.

Although sub-committee members made suggestions on what should be done with the columbariums at Veterans I and II such as redesign, etc. they will schedule a meeting and discuss during that time. Results to be reported at a future Veterans Advisory Committee meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

BURIAL HOURS

Motion

Wendall Kekumu made a motion to have the County of Hawaii comply with Rule 7 relating to burial hours at Veterans Cemeteries and recommends if that cannot happen, Rule 7 be changed accordingly.

All members present voted unanimously in favor of this motion.

(Director Engelhard reported after the meeting that Rule 7 had been changed in March of 2002 to allow the Director to specify burial times since the employees work from 6:00 am to 2:30 pm weekdays, except holidays.)

URN VAULTS – VETERANS CEMETERY III – WEST HAWAII

Richard Highley reported that Twenty (20) urn vaults ordered last year to save space have just now been delivered and are on site.

Richard Highley expressed his gratitude to employees of the Department of Defense, Office of Veterans Services and especially the Department of Parks and Recreation for help in making improvements at Cemetery III. He understands from Kimo there are approximately 16 plots available at the cemetery. Anxiously awaiting the release of funds to expand the cemetery.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

VETERANS CEMETERIES I AND II – HOURS OF OPERATION

Director Engelhard announced that the gates have been installed and the hours of operation are 7 am to 7pm everyday of the week.

OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES LETTER TO CONGRESSMAN CASE REGARDING VETERANS CEMETERY III – WEST HAWAII

Erroneous Information

P&R received a copy of a letter from OVS Director Colonel Edward R. Cruickshank to Congressman Ed Case (copies were distributed) which stated that the County Department of Parks and Recreation is preparing to open the right side of the cemetery. Director Engelhard clarified that P&R is waiting for OVS since it is a CIP project, which is handled by the Department of Defense. She has responded via e-mail to OVS and included a copy of the July 29th e-mails to DOD on this subject.

TRAINING SESSION – CONTESTED CASE HEARINGS 101

Director Engelhard informed committee members they were invited to attend the Training Session called “Contested Case Hearings 101” in either Hilo or Kona on November 17th, 9am to 11am.

Locations:

(Hilo – County Council Room)

(Kona – County Council Conference Room – video conferencing)

MEMBERSHIP

Director Engelhard reported that four members’ terms will be expiring at the end of the year: Paul Johnston, Louis Kaiwi, Wendall Kekumu and Morris Kihara. She suggested that they contact their organizations and request they begin finding a replacement.

Chairman Kaiwi said that he occupies an Independent slot and represents the community. He is not attached to a Veterans organization so the Mayor will need to find a replacement for his slot.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

VETERANS DAY CEREMONIES

Hakalau Ceremony

Veterans Day Ceremony to be held on November 12th at 10:30 am at the Hakalau Veterans Memorial Park. If it rains, the ceremony will be held in the Capellas Gym.

Hilo Ceremony

Veterans Day Ceremony to be held at Veterans Cemetery I at 11 am.

Kona Ceremony

Richard Highly announced there would be a short ceremony at the West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery on Veterans Day, November 11th at 11 am. Joe and Lee Pretsch have organized a free appreciation luncheon at the Kealakehe School Cafeteria following the program. Tickets are being distributed for luncheon.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 pm

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on November 17, 2005 at 3:00 p.m. in the Hawai'i County Councilroom and video-conferencing at the Kona Mayor's Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathalie Santos

Secretary