

1 **VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD**
2 **CITY OF LAS CRUCES**
3 **July 27, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.**
4

5 **MEMBERS PRESENT:** Karen Woods, UMW of Southwest, Chair
6 Kyle Trout, Special Forces Association, Vice-Chair
7 Christine Sautter, MOAA
8 Hector Sanchez, Member at Large 2 - Student
9 Hubert L. Gay, Vietnam Veterans
10 James (JR) Turner, Member at Large 1
11 John Poland, American Legion Post 10
12 Mike Cano, Member at Large 3
13 Patrick Ramirez, VFW Post 10124
14 Victor Eres, Marine Corps League
15

16 **STAFF PRESENT:** Eric Enriquez, Assistant City Manager
17 Larry Nichols, Director Community Development
18 Cathy Matthews, Landscape Architect, Parks & Rec
19 Audrianna Sambrano, Administrative Assistant
20

21 **OTHERS PRESENT:** Dale Lawrence
22 Desiree Johnson
23 Dolores Archuleta
24 Michael Amaral
25 Montevis Price
26 Ray Maldonado
27 Rick Pineda
28 Scott del Oso
29 Tony Alvarez
30 Travis Rogers
31 Victor Sanchez
32 William Beerman
33

34 **I. CALL TO ORDER (9:05 a.m.):** Chair Woods called the meeting to order.
35

36 **II. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA:** Motion to approve agenda by Vice
37 Chair Trout, seconded by Board Member John Poland.
38

39 **III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**
40

- 41 a. The minutes from May 25, 2021, and June 22, 2021, were approved
42 with edits. Motioned by Board Member Mike Cano and seconded by
43 Vice Chair Trout.
44

1 **IV. OLD BUSINESS:**

- 2 a. Iraq/Afghanistan memorial: Mr. Gay stated that he will be having a
3 meeting with Parks & Rec for the foundation on August 2nd. The
4 Board has previously approved the monument to be placed where
5 the Korean monument was.
6

7 **V. NEW BUSINESS:**

- 8
9 a. **Marine Corps Monument:** Victor Eres, Marine Corps League, stated
10 that the monument has been taken to get refurbished.
11
12 b. **Korean War Monument:** Christine Sautter, MOAA, stated that the
13 kneeling figure will be painted black.
14

15 **VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATON:**

- 16
17 a. **VA Clinic:** Michael Amaral, El Paso VA, stated that the VA has Covid-
18 19 vaccines available at the main office only. Right now, the Veteran
19 population not counting who's been vaccinated is at about 37% and
20 the staff is at about 93.5%. William Beaumont has changed locations.
21 Mr. Amaral stated that if a referral is given to a Veteran for William
22 Beaumont, the referral will be for the new facility. The El Paso VA is
23 working towards getting a facility on the William Beaumont campus
24 within the next four years.
25
26 b. **Veterans Park Monthly Report:** Ms. Matthews stated that the
27 parking lot project is nearing final design. It is potentially over budget,
28 but they are looking for additional funding to complete the project or
29 to phase it. The Women's Veteran Monument has had electrical work,
30 light fixtures have been ordered, and the concrete was poured
31 incorrectly so it needs to be redone. All issues are being worked on.
32 Ms. Matthews also stated that Parks & Rec are working on a lighting
33 project for the pathways along the park. There will be about 10 light
34 fixtures that will match the future parking lot. It is anticipated that the
35 light fixtures will arrive in September. It is taking a while to order
36 construction supplies to the skyrocketing prices. By the end of this
37 calendar year, they hope to have the additional lighting on the pathway
38 completed.
39

40 Chair Woods had asked if there was going to be a delay in the parking
41 lot due to construction item prices. Ms. Matthews stated that yes, it
42 will affect the project as well as many other projects right now.
43

1 **Mike Cano, Member at Large 3**, asked if the pathway lighting will
2 be level with the concrete or elevated. Ms. Matthews stated that the
3 lighting will be elevated and on posts that are about 20 feet high to
4 have a larger light spread out of each light fixture.
5

6 c. **Dolores Archuleta**, stated that on Memorial Day weekend there was
7 a plaque added with 14 names on the Iraq/Afghanistan Panel. The
8 plaque took a long time to get the names on it. The process was started
9 in 2018. There is also a waiting list for the following: Korean War – 3,
10 Vietnam War – 9, Persian Gulf – 2. There are 28 POWs on the Wall:
11 WWII – 25 and Korean War – 3. The total names on the Wall are 8,032:

- 12 • Civil War – 108
- 13 • Sp/Amer – 102
- 14 • WW I – 337
- 15 • WW II – 2,666
- 16 • Korean – 1,019
- 17 • Vietnam – 2,530
- 18 • Gulf War – 479
- 19 • Iraq/Afg – 791

20
21
22 d. **Larry Nichols, Community Development Director**, stated that he
23 is now a member of the Vietnam Veterans Association.
24

25 e. **Montevis Price, El Paso VA**, stated that works with the Veterans
26 Treatment Court assisting Veterans to get registered with the court.
27

28 f. **Victor Sanchez, Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator**, stated
29 that the Veterans Treatment Court is to support Veterans with high
30 risk, high need, and mental health. He stated that a lot of Veterans
31 they see go through the criminal justice system and have offenses.
32 Each Veteran is assigned a mentor to help guide them in a year long
33 process. They receive home visits and drug tests. Mr. Sanchez also
34 stated that if there is a need for community service, he can send help.
35

36 g. **Roy Maldonado, State Commander**, stated that the stand down for
37 the homeless Veterans first meeting is going to be on August 17, 2021,
38 at Post 10124. He also stated that the Veterans Court fell \$30,000
39 short this year. He is hoping to coordinate with the Veterans
40 organizations to assist with the shortage.
41

42 h. **Scott del Oso, Mesilla Valley Community of Hope**, stated that his
43 job is to help and support homeless Veterans with housing. He stated
44 that Veterans do not have to have an honorable discharge but do have

1 to have one day of active service to receive their benefits. If there is
2 an apartment available, they can house a Veteran the same day. Mr.
3 Oso is a healthcare navigator; he leads Veterans in the right direction
4 to receive healthcare.
5

6 **i. Tony Alvearez, Mesilla Valley Community of Hope,** stated that he
7 is the program manager to the Oak Street Apartments. Mr. Alvearez
8 also stated that if anyone needs volunteer work done to reach out to
9 him.

10
11 **j. William Beerman, City Council Candidate,** stated that he is running
12 for District 6 which is where the Veterans Park is located and if there
13 are any questions or concerns, he would like to assist.
14

15 **k. Desiree Johnson, El Paso VA - Las Cruces Clinic,** stated that
16 spouses and caretakers of a Veteran are also eligible for the vaccine.
17

18 **l. Travis Rogers, El Paso VA – Las Cruces Clinic,** stated that when a
19 patient has a complaint, they can go to him, and he will do some
20 research and then give a report of his findings.
21

22 **m. Rick Pineda, Veteran Liaison for Congresswoman Yvette**
23 **Herrell,** stated that he is still traveling in the surrounding areas
24 looking for trends and issues. Mr. Pineda is asking the Congresswoman
25 about the bill regarding the Veterans that she spoke about.
26

27 **n. Dale Lawrence, Las Cruces Vet Center,** stated that they are
28 currently waiting for approval for their going back to work plan to
29 reopen and have their groups back in. Mr. Lawrence stated that Sam
30 will be at the National Guard Amory on August 7, 2021. On September
31 18, 2021, there is going to be an open house at the VFW on Valley.
32 Mr. Lawrence stated that Sam is working on a website for the Vet
33 Center.
34

35 **o. Bill Hawkins, Veterans Parade Committee,** stated that they are
36 going to have their first planning meeting for the parade. The parade
37 will take place on November 6, 2021, at 11:00 a.m., with staging
38 starting at 9:00 a.m. Mr. Hawkins stated that he will report to this
39 board monthly with updates about the parade.
40

41 **p. Ronnie Cisneros, City Council District 5 Candidate,** stated that he
42 is an Occupational Therapist assistant for the past 15 years. Mr.
43 Cisneros stated that he works in home health with a lot of Veterans.

1 He also asked what resources Las Cruces has as far as if a Veteran
2 needs to go to the Veterans Hospital in Tucson, or El Paso.
3

4 Mr. Amaral stated that a veteran will need to qualify to get the
5 transportation for those appointments.
6

7 **VII. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:**

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9 **a. John Poland, American Legion Post 10 Commander,** stated that
10 the facility is back up and running and insured. They are welcoming
11 everyone back to their facility.
12

13 **b. Mike Cano, Member at Large 3,** stated that there is going to be a
14 car show on September 11, 2021, at Borman Auto plex from 9:00 a.m.
15 to 1:00 p.m., with registration at 7:00 a.m. They are going to honor
16 all First Responders that show up. They will have trophies to give away
17 to police and fire agencies. It will be called the Travis Mulls car show.
18 Travis Mulls was the 82nd airborne paratrooper that got injured in
19 Afghanistan and lost all four of his limbs. Mr. Mulls has a foundation
20 that he helps all Veterans who have had similar situations.
21

22 **c. Patrick Ramirez, VFW Post 10124,** stated that they are open again
23 and will be having some events. Friday night dinners and karaoke, and
24 Saturday the 31st, there is a teachers luncheon from 12:00 p.m. to
25 2:00 p.m., and pool tournament at 5:00 p.m. They also still do the
26 Senior breakfasts with donations if possible. It will be at 9:00 a.m., on
27 August 22, 2021. On August 28, 2021. There will be a rummage sale
28 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
29

30 **d. Victor Eres, Marine Corps League,** stated that their detachment
31 won the non-commercial float for the 4th of July Parade. Funerals have
32 been picking up. Mr. Eres stated that they are not only the Honor
33 Guard for the Marines, but they also get contacted by local funeral
34 homes for all Veterans. On August 19, 2021, they will be gearing up
35 for Honor Guard training and competition in Albuquerque.
36

37 **e. Hector Sanchez, Member at Large 2-Student NMSU,** stated that
38 NMSU will be going back to full student services starting August 2nd,
39 2021, and the term starts on August 18th face to face. Some offices
40 will continue to work remotely. Mr. Sanchez stated that they are
41 hoping to have a grand opening for the computer lab for the Veteran
42 students. Mr. Sanchez also stated that they are hoping that the
43 university will increase and give an extra staff member to assist with
44 first year student Veterans get through their first year.

1
2 **f. Kyle Trout, Vice Chair, Special Forces Association,** stated that the
3 concrete bench next to the memorial similar to the one next to the
4 Korean memorial has already been paid for they just need to get with
5 Parks & Rec for placement. Vice Chair Trout also stated that this is his
6 last meeting on the board. He has been on the board for eight years
7 now and would like to thank the City for the opportunity.
8

9 Chair Woods stated that there is potential replacement person. The
10 paperwork has been submitted.
11

12 **g. Hubert Gay, Vietnam Veterans,** stated that they have their
13 regularly scheduled food drive the first Sunday of every month. The
14 one in July they had issues with Walmart telling them they were not
15 on the schedule to have the food drive. They have learned that
16 Walmart has cancelled that nationwide. They are looking for a
17 replacement place to have this event. Mr. Gay stated that they are
18 going to have a meet and greet and information at Lowe's Home
19 Improvement store on Saturday, August 31st, at 7:30 - 11:00 a.m.
20 They will be passing out information to Veterans and membership for
21 VBA.
22

23 **h. James Turner, Member at Large 1,** stated that everyone knows that
24 the Garrison flag flies on specific dates that have been voted on. It is
25 flying today for Korean War Armistice Day. Mr. Turner provided
26 additional dates that the flag will be flown and mentioned that it is a
27 good opportunity for community service to help. The next day will be
28 on August 7, 2021, for Purple Heart Day. Mr. Turner stated that the
29 NM Department of Veterans Service Office has been closed during the
30 pandemic and people have been shuffled out of that office. Right now,
31 they only have one person doing the job. She is back in the office
32 working and doing claims by appointment. They are in the process of
33 hiring someone.
34

35 **i. Karen Woods, Chair, United Military Women of the Southwest,**
36 stated that they are having two events in September. One is a car
37 show and a swap meet at Sonoma Ranch Clubhouse on September
38 4th. The process will go to them. They will also be doing an event in
39 El Paso at Top Golf on September 25th from 9:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
40 Chair Woods stated that she is looking for sponsors.
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42 **VIII. REMINDERS:**
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- a. **Garrison Flag: Hubert Gay**, stated that they are still working with Parks & Rec for the flagpoles, there is currently a work order in place.
- b. **Next meeting August 24, 2021:** will take place at the East Mesa Public Facility Complex.

IX. ADJOURNMENT (10:18 a.m.)

Motion to adjourn by Vice Chair Trout, seconded by Board Member John Poland. Motion passes.

Ann Woods

Chairperson

August 24, 2021

Date