



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE  
VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, January 8, 2025  
Scottsdale Community Design Studio  
7506 E. Indian School Road  
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

**PRESENT:** Justin Layman, Acting Chair/Chair  
Mark Ashley, Commissioner/Vice Chair  
Stephen Casares  
Steven Jackson  
Patrick Mazzarella  
Pete Palmer  
Donna Tew

**STAFF:** Kelly Corsette, Communications/Public Affairs Director

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

Acting Chair Layman called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

Members present as listed above.

**2. Public Comment**

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

**3. Welcome new Commissioners**

Commissioners Stephen Casares and Donna Tew introduced themselves and gave a brief overview of their military background and work experience.

Staff and each of the Commissioners introduced themselves, highlighting their military background.

**4. Discussion and possible action to approve December 4, 2024, Commission meeting minutes**

COMMISSIONER PALMER MOVED TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 4, 2024, VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER MAZZARELLA SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). ACTING CHAIR LAYMAN, COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, CASARES, JACKSON, MAZZARELLA, PALMER, AND TEW VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

**5. Nominations and possible action to select a Commission Chair and Vice Chair to serve for 2025**

During the December 4, 2024, Veterans Advisory Commission meeting, nominations were made for Justin Layman to act as Chair and Mark Ashley to act as Vice Chair of the Veterans Advisory Commission for the 2025 year. Commissioners were given an opportunity to make additional nominations, and no additional nominations were made.

JUSTIN LAYMAN WAS ELECTED CHAIR OF THE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION, WITH A VOTE OF SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR LAYMAN, COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, CASARES, JACKSON, MAZZARELLA, PALMER, AND TEW VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

MARK ASHLEY WAS ELECTED VICE CHAIR OF THE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION, WITH A VOTE OF SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR LAYMAN, COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, CASARES, JACKSON, MAZZARELLA, PALMER, AND TEW VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

Chair Layman and Vice-Chair Ashley assumed their positions immediately following the vote.

**6. Discussion and possible action to adopt the Commission's 2024 Annual Report**

Commissioners were given an opportunity to review the draft 2024 Annual Report. Chair Layman noted that as requested during the December meeting, the attendance section has been corrected. There were no additional comments.

VICE-CHAIR ASHLEY MOVED TO ADOPT THE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION'S 2024 ANNUAL REPORT. COMMISSIONER PALMER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). ACTING CHAIR LAYMAN, COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, CASARES, JACKSON, MAZZARELLA, PALMER, AND TEW VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

## **7. Discussion and possible recommendations regarding the Veterans Advisory Commission Work Plan**

Chair Layman said that the work plan serves as a guide for the upcoming year. The plan aligns with the Veterans Advisory Commission enabling ordinance and is designed to provide structure without assigning specific tasks to Commissioners. Chair Layman noted that the plan has been streamlined to remove less relevant items while maintaining the core content. This approach was taken to simplify the document and make it more practical for the Commission's advisory role. Mr. Corsette emphasized that the revisions aim to preserve the purpose of the primary concepts of the work plan while shortening the details.

Commissioner Palmer reiterated his suggestion that the new Mayor and Council be given an opportunity to review the work plan and their guidance be incorporated into the document. Commissioners agreed that the best approach would be to approve the work plan now and incorporate any input from the Mayor and Council at a later date.

COMMISSIONER JACKSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2025 VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION WORK PLAN. COMMISSIONER PALMER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). ACTING CHAIR LAYMAN, COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, CASARES, JACKSON, MAZZARELLA, PALMER, AND TEW VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

## **8. Commissioner reports, staff updates, and suggestions for future agenda items**

Commissioner Ashley shared his experience volunteering at the December Wreaths Across America event, suggesting the Commission consider a wreath-laying ceremony at the Memorial for the Fallen. Commissioners expressed support for the idea. Chair Layman noted that adding such initiatives to the work plan would require Commissioners to lead efforts independently, as they cannot direct staff.

Mr. Corsette said that in the past it was routine for the Commission to identify an organization they were interested in learning more about and invite a representative to speak during a meeting. At one point, a representative from Wreaths Across America gave a presentation. He encouraged the Commission to invite relevant organizations to speak during future meetings.

Commissioner Palmer mentioned updates to the quality of life manual and requested staff support for a master list of videos. Mr. Corsette said that all of the videos can be found at VeteransAZ.org. He suggested that a link be included in the manual. Mr. Corsette highlighted ongoing efforts with the VeteransAZ program, including promoting its content via podcasts and sharing the videos with other government channels.

Discussion ensued regarding plans for the Parada del Sol, which is scheduled for Saturday, February 1 2025. Mr. Corsette noted that Scottsdale Salutes program honorees and any City staff who are veterans will be invited to participate. The Commission will host a pre-parade breakfast to address logistical challenges and foster camaraderie among participants. Mr. Corsette is looking into the possibility of using a golf cart to shuttle participants to the staging area.

Chair Layman provided an update on planning for Vietnam Veterans Day, highlighting efforts to secure a larger venue and listing some of the notable speakers due to the significance of the 50th anniversary of the U.S. participation in the war. Scottsdale Community College was identified as a likely event location on account of the potential size of the event and the facility's ability to support the technical needs. Mr. Corsette mentioned that he is working with the U.S. Vietnam War Commemoration to obtain commemorative materials and plans to reach out to the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall in hopes of having them at the event. The City's video crew will be present to record the event and conduct in-person interviews. Commissioner Mazzarella suggested inviting the Honor Flight program to participate in the event.

Mr. Corsette gave an update on plans to add two new names to the Memorial for the Fallen. For the benefit of new Commissioners, he provided background on the memorial's history, funding, and criteria for inclusion. He explained that staff is working to identify the physical process of chiseling the new names into the granite. Once the expert has looked at the memorial and given them an estimated timeline, he will have a better idea of whether the project can be completed on Memorial Day.

Mr. Corsette confirmed that the City is still a member of the National League of Cities, noting that participation is primarily with the Mayor's office.

Commissioner Mazzarella shared a story about veteran families who needed support for children to receive Christmas gifts. He was able to connect with both the Shop-with-a-Cop program and Neighbors Helping Neighbors to arrange for ten veteran children to participate in the program this year.

Future Meeting agenda items could include:

- Legislative update
- Event updates

The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 5, 2025.

## **11. Adjournment**

COMMISSIONER PALMER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER JACKSON SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). ACTING CHAIR LAYMAN, COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, CASARES, JACKSON, MAZZARELLA, PALMER, AND TEW VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the special meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

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