



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

MINUTES

Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 2, 2025
Scottsdale Community Design Studio
7506 E. Indian School Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

PRESENT: Chair Justin Layman, Vice-Chair Mark Ashley, Commission Members Stephen Casares, Patrick Mazzarella, Pete Palmer, Donna Tew

ABSENT: Commissioner Steven Jackson

STAFF: Kelly Corsette, Communications/Public Affairs Director

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

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. Discussion and possible action to approve March 5, 2025 commission meeting minutes

COMMISSIONER PALMER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 5, 2025, VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. VICE-CHAIR ASHLEY SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR LAYMAN, VICE-CHAIR ASHLEY, COMMISSIONERS CASARES, MAZZARELLA, PALMER, AND TEW VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

4. Discussion and possible action related to community veterans' events and activities

Kelly Corsette, Communications/Public Affairs Director, gave a report on the Vietnam Veterans' Day event that was hosted on Saturday, March 29th. The event had a good turnout and

coverage from several news stations. He highlighted the high school student who won the writing contest and thanked staff and Commissioners who helped with organizing the event. Mr. Corsette read aloud a letter received from a Vietnam veteran thanking the City for hosting the event and suggesting that in future years the American flag be more prominently displayed and be accompanied by opening with the Pledge of Allegiance and a color guard.

Chair Layman commented on the Vietnam Veterans' Day event and thanked staff and Mr. Corsette in particular for sacrificing their personal time and for their hard work in organizing the event. He noted that the Army Aviation Heritage Southwest Chapter has offered to bring the OH-6 scout helicopter again to next year's event. Referencing the letter received from an attendee, he commented that there is an American flag flying nearby at City Hall and that they need to be mindful when planning next year that additional time will be added to the overall programming if a color guard is scheduled. He thanked the Scottsdale Unified School District (SUSD), Neighbors Helping Neighbors, and Imprints of Honor for their participation. He commented about the importance of giving the Vietnam veterans an opportunity to receive recognition from the community.

Commissioner Mazzarella mentioned that one attendee approached the Neighbors Helping Neighbors table and talked about difficulties he is having getting a seat on an Honor Flight due to the long waiting list. The gentleman expressed that because of his failing health he is concerned about the estimated two-year timeframe it will take for his name to reach the top of the list. The man also had commented that his Legion offered to move him up on the list for \$1,200. Neighbors Helping Neighbors is working on getting him moved up on the list and possibly raising the money to pay if necessary. It was noted that Honor Flight typically sponsors the honorees' trip. Mr. Corsette said that he has had difficulty reaching the Honor Flight organization in the past. He will reach out again to invite them to speak at a Commission meeting.

Mr. Corsette said he has reached out to Legion Post 44 about the Memorial Day event and offered the City's support with the event. He plans to suggest that the list of names on the Scottsdale Memorial for the Fallen be read as part of the event. Chair Layman noted that he plans to work again with SUSD to organize an essay contest for the Memorial Day event as well as for Veterans Day.

Chair Layman reported on the American Music Festival that was held as a precursor to the Vietnam Veterans Day event. He would like to host something similar in November for Veterans' Day.

5. Discussion, updates and possible recommendations regarding the veterans advisory Commission Work Plan

Chair Layman noted that he has not been able to reach the Glendale Chief of Staff to talk about the annual event they host to honor high school students that are going into the military. He and Mr. Corsette will reach out again to learn more about the program in hopes of starting something similar in the East Valley. Mr. Layman said that he recently attended a music event at Saguaro High School and a student was awarded an ROTC scholarship during the presentation. Mr. Corsette asked Chair Layman to reach out to Scottsdale Arts about scheduling a military-related music performance around Veterans Day.

6. Commissioner reports, staff updates and suggestions for future agenda items

Commissioner Casares suggested that the Commission consider hosting a recognition for the 80th anniversary of VJ Day on September 2nd, acknowledging the end of World War II. He also suggested that the Commission consider assigning a Commissioner as a roving ambassador for the SUSD high schools.

Discussion ensued regarding the suggestions. Because of VJ Day's close proximity to Labor Day, it was suggested that the Commission host a lecture or a talk to recognize the 80th anniversary. On the suggestion about designating a roving ambassador for SUSD high schools, Chair Layman said that the annual celebration for high school seniors going into the military could be a good conduit into the relationship with the schools.

Mr. Corsette confirmed that he has been working with the Thunderbird II Veterans' Memorial and Scottsdale Airport staff to schedule a presentation during the May 7th Veterans Advisory Commission meeting being held at Scottsdale Airport.

Mr. Corsette announced that Imprints of Honor (formerly Veterans Heritage Project) is hosting a book signing and reception on Sunday, April 27, 2025, at Scottsdale Stadium Field House, starting at 1:00 p.m. Kids worked with Imprints of Honor staff to interview veterans and write their stories, which are compiled in the book. Veterans will be available to sign the books from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The next meeting is Wednesday May 7, 2025.

7. Adjournment

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With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

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