



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

MINUTES

Regular Meeting
Wednesday, February 4, 2026
Scottsdale Community Design Studio
7506 E. Indian School Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

- PRESENT:** Chair Justin Layman; Vice-Chair Donna Tew; Commissioners Mark Ashley, Marcy Kostewa, and Christie Slegers
- ABSENT:** Commissioners Stephen Casares and Steven Jackson
- STAFF:** Holly Peralta, Public Affairs Manager; Justin Suryanata, Environmental Program Coordinator

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Layman called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m. Members present as listed above.

2. Public Comment

There were no members of the public who wished to speak, and no written comments received.

3. Discussion and possible action to approve January 7, 2026, Commission meeting minutes

VICE-CHAIR TEW MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 7, 2026, VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER SLEGERS SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR LAYMAN, VICE-CHAIR TEW, COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, KOSTEWA, AND SLEGERS VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

4. Discussion and possible recommendations regarding respectful retirement of the City's worn U.S. Flags

Justin Suryanata, Environmental Program Coordinator, presented information about the City's storage of approximately four Gaylord pallet-sized boxes of worn American flags and asked for

recommendations for appropriately retiring and discarding the flags. Flags have accumulated over several years from a variety of sources, including City building flag retirements, businesses, and resident discards being dropped with the fire and police departments. He noted that the VFW typically works with boy scouts to put together a ceremony and burning, but is unable to accept such a large amount.

Discussion ensued regarding ideas for respectable disposal of the flags at the warehouse and potential ongoing solutions. Chair Layman mentioned that in 1971 Scottsdale residents planted an Honor Grove that is no longer in existence. Conversations have been ongoing with the Parks and Recreation Department to include installation of an Honor Grove as part of the Indian Bend Wash renovations being done using Prop 405 tax dollars. He said that he and staff have reached out to Fire Chief Tom Shannon and discussed the possibility of holding a flag ceremony and burning the flags, with the ashes interred as part of the Honor Grove. Holly Peralta, Public Affairs Manager, noted that the Honor Grove will be planted with 75 trees in honor of the City of Scottsdale's 75th anniversary.

Suggestions were made regarding working with the local veterans organizations for ongoing flag disposal. The consensus of the Commissioners was to provide a recommendation to staff that they collaborate with the fire department to put together a ceremony to decommission the stock of American flags. Additional discussion will be agendized to talk about including the ashes as part of the Honor Grove and other ideas for disposal.

5. Discussion and possible action related to Gold Star and Blue Star plaques

Chair Layman said he received a request from Councilwoman Dubauskas regarding a citizen request for a gold star plaque at McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park. He reviewed the history behind the City's blue star plaques, which are located at the park, the chaplain at Civic Center Mall, and the Memorial for the Fallen at Civic Center Mall. The City does not currently have a gold star plaque. Discussion ensued regarding possible locations for a Gold Star plaque and fundraising requirements. Commissioners were in agreement to look into the possibility of including a gold star plaque as part of the Honor Grove that is planned for Eldorado Park.

Chair Layman and Ms. Peralta will contact Councilwoman Dubauskas and the Parks and Recreation Department to initiate further discussion about funding for and the location of a gold star memorial.

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

Future agenda items could include:

- Update on Veterans Court
- Police department's veteran recruitment efforts
- Vietnam Veterans Day event planning and promotion
- Update on VeteransAZ
- American flag disposal

Commissioner Kostewa mentioned a \$1,500 master class that is available to veterans on a limited basis. Ms. Peralta will look into ways to promote the opportunity to Scottsdale veterans and City employees who are veterans.

In response to a request for an update on veteran-related bills, it was noted that the City currently does not have a government relations representative.

7. Adjournment

VICE-CHAIR TEW MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER KOSTEWA SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR LAYMAN, VICE-CHAIR TEW, COMMISSIONERS ASHLEY, KOSTEWA, AND SLEGGERS VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

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