



APPROVED MINUTES Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee

January 13, 2016 – 11:00 am
300 N. Campbell Ave – CITY HALL
City Council Chambers

Members Present

David Nevarez
Bill Sparks
Daisy Ramos
Aldina Rosales
Tommy L. Loyd
Michael Flores
Joe Fierro
Lynn Westbrook
Siria Rocha
Michael Flores

Members Absent

Brian Kennedy

Early Departures

Lynn Westbrook
Joe Fierro

Staff & Others Present

See attached sign in sheets

Item 1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 11:00 a.m.

Item 2. Roll Call

Brian Kennedy not present.

Item 3. Pledge of Allegiance

Item 5. Discussion and Action to approve minutes of December 7, 2015

Motion made and carried to approve minutes as presented.

Item 6. Citizen Comment Period (individuals limited to 3 minutes; no specific action may

be taken)

Robin Rollins from the Veteran's Affairs Community Employment Program states that a lack of transportation causes some veterans' to miss workshops and asks if Sun Metro can expand Job Express guidelines or change the requirements on how bus passes are issued.

Daniel Vasquez: The Opportunity Center comes in contact with the majority of the homeless in El Paso and oversees 2 shelters designed to work with single women and children. They are the Reynolds Home & the William Sanchez Rosales Home.

David Thackston: Can appointed sub-committees be joined by other agency sub-committees or members of the public to help in their efforts regarding veteran issues?

Don Minton: No it is not allowed but meeting dates and times may be put on the VAAC website.

Item 7. Information on upcoming 2016 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Event

Representative Acosta presents a slide show.

Item 8. Discussion and Action: Possible Recommendations to address Transportation Issues for Veterans

A. Transportation Sub-Committee update

Bill Sparks proposes the city and county bus systems work towards providing dependable options for veterans to access transportation when needed and without difficulty.

A letter was drafted with suggestions for Sun Metro to issue free temporary bus passes.

All recommendations will be made in the 1st report to city council due in March 2016.

B. Possible Sun Metro discounted fare eligibility/program.

Veterans use their ID card to obtain a discount pass.

Sun Metro provide point to point service using their vans.

Provide social service agencies with discounted bus passes to hand out

Bill Sparks recommends Sun Metro create a discounted fare program specifically for social service agencies working with struggling veterans.

Raul Escobedo: Sun Metro also reports to the FTA and they must ensure other populations are not negatively affected by providing free bus rides only to veterans.

Mr. Lloyd: Asks what the process was for city employees to ride for free

Mr. Fierro: Asks why cost is in question if there are frequently vacant seats on bus

C. Other Transportation Issues

Veterans living outside city limits also struggle with transportation

Can the city apply for grants with the FTA or Texas Veterans Commission?

Motion made and carried to meet with Ms. Soto to draft a document to present to council with the transportation issues.

Item 9. Discussion and Action: Identification of Housing Issues for Veterans

A. El Paso Coalition for the Homeless review of current homeless prevention programs serving Veterans

Camille Castillo shares a slide show with strategies on ending Veteran homelessness

B. Veteran's Affairs Homeless Team Outreach review of current programs

Camille Castillo's slide show includes current programs.

Mr. Flores: Would like to see permanent housing as a solution to end homelessness rather than to just house individuals temporarily.

Motion made and carried to form a sub-committee to assess housing issues and bring forth

recommendations. Michael Flores, Daisy Ramos and Aldina Rosales are appointed.

C. Fair Housing Issues for Veterans in private rentals

Rhoda Tillman was unable to address the board as meeting ended at 1:00.

Item 10. Update on required training for Committee members

Vero advises she is coordinating with HR to provide additional training dates for board members.

Item 11. Discussion: Committee members report on upcoming Veteran events in the community.

No events reported.

Item 12. Adjourn

Motion made and carried to adjourn the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC:

The Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee of the City of El Paso may retire into EXECUTIVE SESSION pursuant to Section 3.5A of the El Paso City Charter and the Texas Government Code, Chapter 551, Subchapter D, to discuss any of the following: (The items listed below are matters of the sort routinely discussed in Executive Session, but the Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee of the City of El Paso may move to Executive Session any of the items on this agenda, consistent with the terms of the Open Meeting Act.) The Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee will return to open session to take any final action and may also, at any time during the meeting, bring forward any of the following items for public discussion, as appropriate.

Section 551.071 CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY

Section 551.072 DELIBERATION REGARDING REAL PROPERTY

Section 551.073 DELIBERATION REGARDING PROSPECTIVE GIFTS

Section 551.074 PERSONNEL MATTERS

Section 551.076 DELIBERATION REGARDING SECURITY DEVICES

Section 551.087 DELIBERATION REGARDING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEGOTIATIONS

Sign Language interpreters will be provided for this meeting upon request. Requests must be made to the Community Development department at phone number 915-212-0138 a minimum of 48 hours prior to the date and time of the meeting. Copies of this Agenda will be provided in Braille, large print or audiotape upon request. Requests must be made a minimum of 48 hours prior to the date and time of the meeting.

Chair

Secretary

Date

Date