



MEETING MINUTES
ADVISORY MILITARY and VETERANS LIAISON COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2022 – 6:00 P.M.
VIA ZOOM
NORWALK, CT 06851

1. **CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** the meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jeff DeWitt.

2. **PUBLIC FORUM:**

- a. None

3. **ROLL CALL:**

a. Present (6): Jeff DeWitt, Chairperson; Chuck Kriewald, Veteran At-large; Michelle Nye, Veteran At-Large; Howard Dixon, Veteran At-large; Irene Dixon, Mayor Rilling’s Staff; Orlando Aquino, Veteran At-large

b. Absent or excused (4): Paulo Barros, Norwalk Chamber of Commerce; Bryan Rooney, Veteran At-large; Leon Breault, Veterans At-large; Matt Seebeck, Veteran At-large.

4. **COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS:**

a. Jeff DeWitt resigned on November 13, 2022, via e-mail to Mayor Rilling and Irene Dixon, effective December 13, 2022; chairperson since November 11, 2018 (4 years)

b. A new chairperson hasn’t been named yet.

c. Jeff DeWitt thanked the committee for their support

d. The way ahead for the new chairperson is defined in the Good of the Order section.

e. A few failures along the way

- Getting the committee recognized as a full-fledged commission; started the process in 2019 but was told to “stand down”
- Finding grant money to have the committee chair funded to at least a part-time wage
- Moving the Bridgeport VA office to the Norwalk Health Department building; seemed to be positive feelings about this but it never happened; middle of COVID?; not a priority?

f. A few wins along the way

- Purple Heart City designation
- More dignified and organized events; i.e. Veterans Day
- Raised awareness around the city and city government about the positive impact the committee has
- First-ever city-wide benefits handbook



- Documented all of Norwalk's wartime dead; information can be used in schools and beyond (<https://norwalkctheroes.org>)

5. OLD BUSINESS:

a. **MILITARY AND VETERAN REGISTRY:** (REPEAT) Creation of a veteran registry in Norwalk has been requested to the IT Department in City Hall. A link was sent again to the City of Norwalk IT Department on January 11, 2022, and they have been asked about the feasibility of duplicating what the State of Pennsylvania has already done. Recommendations to their form were made in the e-mail to make it more Norwalk-centric. UPDATE: This is on hold until the City of Norwalk website overhaul is complete. **(OPEN)**

<https://www.dmva.pa.gov/veteransaffairs/pages/outreach-and-reintegration/pennsylvaniaveteransregistry.aspx>

b. **PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NORWALK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE:** Paulo Barros is going to look at scheduling some meetings in both an in-person and hybrid delivery. The goal will be to create more engagement with veteran-owned businesses. This has been an agenda item for over six months with little to no progress. **(OPEN)**

c. **VETERANS MEMORIAL SUB-COMMITTEE:** On hiatus until March. Meetings are on the first Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m., American Legion downstairs hall. **(OPEN)**

d. **PURPLE HEART MONUMENT:** The formal unveiling of the Purple Heart Monument was held in Veterans Park on Saturday, December 10. **(CLOSED)**

e. **SOLDIER'S AND SAILORS MONUMENT:** the [Soldiers & Sailors Monument](#) at Martin Luther King Drive and Washington Street is unkempt. Moving it elsewhere such as Veterans Park is cost-prohibitive (\$40,000). The committee will find out which taxing district is responsible for the maintenance of the grass around it. An e-mail was sent to the Norwalk Historical Society on 10/26 to partner with them to create storyboards/placards for the monument. No response from the Historical Society. **(OPEN)**

f. **FUTURE MONUMENTS IN VETERANS PARK:** A concept of building out the brick sidewalk that leads into Veterans Park from Seaview Avenue has been informally discussed. The concept would involve placing a monument for all wars Norwalk residents have served in. The idea is to start with the Revolutionary War and add 1 or 2 per year until it's completed. This could take 5-10 years. Funding will be a priority. Bricks could be sold through a website such as fundraisingbrick.com, with a portion of the proceeds going to pay for new monuments. Public-Private Partnership could also be a method to build out this "Monument Walk" or "Veterans Walk." Norwalk has 4 monuments: [Battle of the Rocks](#) (France St & Adams Ave), [Flax Hill "Cannonball"](#) (Hillside & Elmwood Avenue), [Liberty Tree](#) (Sunset Hill/East Ave), [WWI](#) (Town Green). **UPDATE:** The committee should speak to the mayor about funding the concept in the capital budget in future years.

g. The by-laws need to be rewritten. The structure of the committee should be more veteran-centric. If expertise from a specific area is needed, those entities can be contacted to attend a meeting. Passing to the new chairperson to create something in their own vision. **(OPEN)**

h. Chuck Kriewald has spoken about veterans in assisted living facilities around Norwalk. Jeff DeWitt drafted a letter from the MVLC to give to each of the facilities, encouraging them to inform the MVLC who the veterans are so regular visits can be established. This will also help the City of Norwalk ensure there is representation by veterans at wakes and funerals. HIPAA concerns may prevent full disclosure, however, a simple list with the first name, last name initial, the branch of service, and years of service would be a great start. This project is now with Chuck Kriewald representing VFW Post 603. **(CLOSED)**

i. Paulo Barros spoke about “Caring for Seniors” located at 25 Van Zant Street at the October meeting. Jessica Edwards is the point of contact. It’s a place for senior citizens to go during the day and spend time with each other. Her focus is also on homeless veterans and making sure they’re fed and if they need a shower, provide one. A meeting was to have been scheduled but still hasn’t been to date. **(OPEN)**

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. None.

7. GOOD OF THE ORDER:

a. The following are some guidelines for the new chairperson and the committee as a whole for a loose framework of the business rules of the committee and some recommended projects to work on besides those listed in Old Business (paragraph 5).

BUSINESS RULES

- The contact on the Mayor’s staff is Irene Dixon
- Irene’s phone number is 203-854-7704
- Irene needs awareness of committee activity, as well as Memorial Committee activity
- Agendas for upcoming meetings, are due 14+ days prior to the meeting; send to zroundtree@norwalkct.org (Zulma Roundtree)
- Send minutes ASAP after a meeting; send to zroundtree@norwalkct.org (Zulma Roundtree)

GOOGLE DRIVE

- U = norwalkmvlc@gmail.com
- Password will be given to the new chairperson
- All files over the last 4 years are filed there
- Need the new chairperson’s e-mail for account recovery

COMMITTEE E-MAIL

- Need an e-mail address for the new chairperson to auto-forward e-mails sent to mvlc@norwalkct.org

2023 MEETING CALENDAR

- New chairperson sends schedule to zoundtree@norwalkct.org (Zulma Roundtree)

MILITARY & VETERANS LIAISON COMMITTEE

- Find Reserve & Guard in Norwalk; tricky topic in that units won't release the information due to OPSEC rules

CITY OF NORWALK SUICIDE PREVENTION GRANT PROJECT

- Remain involved
- Point of contact is Kelley Meier (KMeier@norwalkct.org)

BENEFITS HANDBOOK

- Needs to go out by the end of January; list of events should be at the end; use Attachment 1 to these minutes
- Get the "Grand List" from Tax Assessment Office to use for mailing
- Be sure to ask for the Tax Assessment Office for their input on their section in the handbook

JERRY PETERS (Norwalk resident/veteran)

- Family sent Mayor Rilling an e-mail that he turns 100 on May 8, 2023; tentative drive-by/parade birthday parade on Saturday, May 6, 2023; police, fire, veterans, and the public can participate
- Point of contact for the family is Ed at (203) 853-2907

8. ADJOURNMENT: the meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

9. NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be scheduled by the new chairperson.

//SIGNED//

Jeff DeWitt

Chairperson, Advisory-Military & Veterans Liaison Committee
City of Norwalk

Attachment 1 – events in 2023

RECURRING MEETINGS

2nd Tuesday, American Legion Auxiliary, 7:00

2nd Thursday, VFW Post 603, 7:30

3rd Tuesday, American Legion Post (vets), 7:00

3rd Thursday, Sons of the Legion, 7:00

For Marine Corps League meetings and

JANUARY 2023

Saturday, January 14, 2023: VFW Post 603 anniversary (1921 = 102 years)

FEBRUARY 2023

Black History Month

Friday, February 3, 2023: Four Chaplains Day

Friday, February 24, 2023: Start of Operation Desert Storm (1991)

Tuesday, February 28, 2023: End of Operation Desert Storm (1991)

MARCH 2023

Women's History Month

Tuesday, March 1, 2023: Veteran Memorial Committee meeting, 7:00, American Legion (nominations for '23-'24)

Sunday, March 5, 2023: Seabee's Birthday

Monday, March 13, 2023: K9 Veterans Day

Sunday, March 19, 2023: Start of Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003)

Saturday, March 25, 2023: National Medal of Honor Day

Wednesday, March 29, 2023: National Vietnam War Veterans Day

APRIL 2023

April 15-22 National Volunteer Week

Sunday, April 2, 2023: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion

Tuesday, April 4, 2023: Veterans Memorial Committee Meeting, 7:00, American Legion (elections for '23-'24)

Wednesday, April 5, 2023: Gold Star Spouses Day

Thursday, April 6, 2023: U.S. Entry into World War I

Sunday, April 9, 2023: National Former POW Day

Sunday, April 30, 2023: National Military Brats Day

MAY 2023

Asian Pacific Heritage Month

National Military Appreciation Month

SAL Squadron 12 Patriotism Month (Ten Ideals Program)

May 1 – 7, 2023: Public Service Recognition Week

May 14 – 21, 2023: Peace Officers Memorial Week

Monday, May 1, 2023: National Silver Star Service Banner Day

Monday, May 1, 2023: Loyalty Day

Tuesday, May 2, 2023: National Teacher Appreciation Day

Tuesday, May 2, 2023: Veterans Memorial Committee Meeting, 7:10, American Legion

Saturday, May 6, 2023: National Nurses Day

Sunday, May 7, 2023: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion

Monday, May 8, 2023: V/E Day (Victory in Europe Day, 1945)

Monday, May 15, 2023: Peace Officers Memorial Day

Friday, May 19, 2023: Constitution Day and Citizenship Day

Saturday, May 20, 2023: Armed Forces Day

Sunday, May 21, 2023: City of Norwalk Cemetery Visitation Day

Sunday, May 21, 2023: City of Norwalk Veterans Memorial Ceremony (**Veterans Park**)
Monday, May 29, 2023: Memorial Day Parade (start - 10:00)

JUNE 2023

PTSD Awareness Month

Sunday, June 4, 2023: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion
Tuesday, June 6, 2023: National and City of Norwalk D-Day Observance Day (**location & time TBD**)
Tuesday, June 6, 2023: Veterans Memorial Committee meeting, 7:00, American Legion
Friday – Sunday, June 9-11, 2023: Weekend at the Post (Legion Open House); 9:00 – 6:00 all days
Monday, June 12, 2023: Women’s Veterans Day
Wednesday, June 14, 2023: Army Birthday (1775)
Wednesday, June 14, 2023: Flag Day
Monday, June 19, 2023: Juneteenth
Sunday, June 25, 2023: Start of Korean War (1950)
Tuesday, June 27, 2023: PTSD Awareness Day

JULY 2023

Tuesday, July 4, 2023: Independence Day
Sunday, July 9, 2023: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion (**2nd Sunday**)
Wednesday, July 27, 2023: National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day; End of Korean War (1953)

AUGUST 2023

Friday, August 4, 2023: Coast Guard Day (1790)
Sunday, August 6, 2023: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion
Monday, August 7, 2023: National Purple Heart Medal Day, 12:00, Veterans Park, wreath laying
Wednesday, August 16, 2023: National Airborne Day

SEPTEMBER 2023

National Suicide Prevention Month

National Disaster Preparedness Month

Saturday, September 2, 2023: V-J Day (Victory over Japan Day)
Sunday, September 3, 2023: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion
Tuesday, September 5, 2023: Veterans Memorial Committee meeting, 7:00, American Legion
Monday, September 11, 2023: Patriot Day, ceremony details TBD
Friday, September 15, 2023: Sons of the American Legion birthday (1932)
Friday, September 15, 2023: POW/MIA Recognition Day Commemoration, 6:00, American Legion
Sunday, September 17, 2023: Citizenship / Constitution Day
Monday, September 18, 2023: Air Force birthday (1947)
Sunday, September 24, 2023: Gold Star Mother’s Day
Friday, September 29, 2023: VFW established (1899)

OCTOBER 2023

Sunday, October 1, 2023: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion
Tuesday, October 3, 2023: Veterans Memorial Committee meeting, 7:00, American Legion
Saturday, October 7, 2023: Start of Operation Enduring Freedom (2001)
Friday, October 13, 2023: Navy birthday (1775)
Wednesday, October 25, 2023: Grenada Invasion (1983)
Thursday, October 26, 2023: National Day of the Deployed
Saturday, October 28, 2023: Make a Difference Day

NOVEMBER 2023

National Veterans & Military Family Month

Warrior Care Month

National Caregivers Month

November 3 – November 7: National Veterans Small Business Week

November 13 – November 19: National American Education Week

Sunday, November 5, 2023: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, **Veterans Park**
Tuesday, November 7, 2023: Election Day
Tuesday, November 7, 2023: Veterans Memorial Committee meeting, 7:00, American Legion

Friday, November 10, 2023: American Legion Auxiliary birthday (1919)
Friday, November 10, 2023: Marine Corps birthday (1775)
Saturday, November 11, 2023: Veterans Day and Armistice/Remembrance Day
Thursday, November 23, 2023: Thanksgiving Day
Sunday, November 26, 2023: Christmas Tree Lighting (5:00) and holiday Craft Fair (9:00 – 5:00), American Legion

DECEMBER 2023

Sunday, December 3, 2023: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion
Tuesday, December 5, 2023: Veterans Memorial Committee meeting, 7:00, American Legion
Wednesday, December 7, 2023: Pearl Harbor Day Commemoration; 9:00, City Hall
Saturday, December 9, 2023: Army-Navy game
Wednesday, December 13, 2023: National Guard Birthday
Thursday, December 14, 2023: National Wreaths Across America
Friday, December 15, 2023: Bill of Rights Day
Tuesday, December 20, 2023: Space Force Birthday (2019)
Tuesday, December 20, 2023: Panama Invasion / Operation Just Cause (1989)