



MEETING MINUTES
ADVISORY MILITARY and VETERANS LIAISON COMMITTEE
MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 2022 – 6:00 P.M.
ONLINE – ZOOM WEB CONFERENCING
NORWALK, CT 06851

1. **CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** the meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jeff DeWitt.

2. **PUBLIC FORUM:**

a. None.

3. **ROLL CALL:**

a. Present (8): Jeff DeWitt, Chair; Irene Dixon, Mayor Rilling’s Staff; Fred Wilms, Financial Services Chair; Bryan Rooney, Veteran At-large; Leon Breault, Veteran At-large; Howard Dixon, Veteran At-large; Paulo Barros, Norwalk Chamber of Commerce; Matt Seebeck, Veteran At-large.

b. Absent or excused (2): Orlando Aquino, Community Health Center; Deanna D’Amore – Health Department;

c. **A reminder**, there are vacancies for Vice Chairman and a legal advisor. In addition, there is one vacancy for two At-Large veterans who are interested in getting involved.

4. **COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN COMMENTS:** The committee remained active in 2021 despite COVID-19. We were able to correct the Vietnam War plaque at the Shea – Magrath Memorial and were approved for a Purple Heart monument for Veterans Park. Looking forward to continued success in 2022.

5. **OLD BUSINESS:**

a. **VETERANS RESOURCE DIRECTORY:** (REPEAT) A physical binder or book of veterans’ resources in the City of Norwalk is finalized. (UPDATE): received a quote from a printer for roughly \$3,000 to mail the guide to the 1,400+ homes in Norwalk receiving a veteran exemption on their home or car. The budget doesn’t support that. Fred Wilms recommended applying to the City of Norwalk Finance Director for the amount needed as a one-time request. The goal will then be to increase the A-MVLC budget to cover this cost annually in January. Letter send to the City of Norwalk Finance Officer on January 11, 2022. **(OPEN)**



b. **OUTREACH:** Irene Dixon continues to funnel veterans in need to the committee and we appreciate her help in that regard. Nick Samodel, 101 years old, and one of three centenarians who were the co-Grand Marshals in the Norwalk Memorial Day parade, has moved out of Norwalk. The family had requested lawn care which had been taken care of for two seasons.

c. **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 to IT 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. **(OPEN)**

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

d. **PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NORWALK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE:** A database of veteran owned businesses in Norwalk has been started. This would give those business owners a chance to get together to share best practices and ways to market themselves in the city, as well as to participate in larger Chamber events throughout the year. See attachment 1 to these minutes for the list as of 9/16/2021. The goal is not to start a Veterans Chamber of Commerce, as that would appear to be competition with the chamber, but to form a sub group to leverage relationships with each other and the rest of the chamber. At-Large member Paulo Barros has agreed to take that on. **(OPEN)**

e. **VETERANS MEMORIAL SUB-COMMITTEE:** The Veterans Memorial Committee is on hiatus until March when they will begin planning the events in May. At their December meeting they have agreed to take on two new ceremonies for the city: D-Day (June 6), POW/MIA Day (3rd Friday in September), and assume responsibility for the Pearl Harbor Day commemoration event (December 7). **(OPEN)**

f. **PURPLE HEART MONUMENT:** The process to add a Purple Heart Monument to honor Norwalk's combat wounded in Veterans Park is complete. A vendor was chosen and Recreation & Parks will work with them on placement. They are Hughes & Chapman Monument Company, 96 Main Street, Route 25, Monroe CT 06468. Early to mid-Spring 2022 is the target timeframe. A voicemail was left and an e-mail was sent, inquiring on their timeline. **(OPEN)**

g. **VIETNAM PLAQUE AT THE SHEA-MAGRATH MEMORIAL:** The addendum to the Vietnam War plaque at the Shea – Magrath memorial has been installed. Coordination with surviving family members will be needed to have an event where the plaque is unveiled. As of today, the family members of Larry Thorne haven't been located. Captain Joseph Brown has two daughters in California and a sister in Connecticut. They are open to an unveiling event but would like to see better COVID-19 numbers. **(OPEN)**

h. **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 part 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." A park named "Veterans Park" should contain more that is related to veterans. A topic came up as to the number of monuments in Norwalk compared to some of our neighbors. From americanmemorialsdirectory.com:

Danbury – 15

Wilton – 12

Westport – 6

Stamford – 6

Weston – 4

Norwalk – 4

-- [Battle of the Rocks](#) (France St & Adams Ave), [Flax Hill](#) (Hillside & Elmwood Avenue), [Liberty Tree](#) (Sunset Hill/East Ave), [WWI](#) (Town Green).

Darien – 1

New Canaan – 0

i. **THE WALL THAT HEALS:** The Wall That Heals (TWTH), a ¾ scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC, has approved Norwalk for the 2022 tour. Norwalk is scheduled for June 2-5, 2022. The trailer will arrive in town on either May 31 or June 1. The City of Norwalk is the "named host" of the event. This means all the resources of the city will be available as planning and execution proceed. Many thanks to Mayor Rilling for approving the fee to be paid from city funds to host TWTH. Next Zoom is Wednesday, January 12, 2022. **(OPEN)**

5. NEW BUSINESS:

a. A Group was established on NextDoor.com for Military (Guard & Reserve) and Veterans living in Norwalk. The purpose is to increase awareness of veteran related events in Norwalk and to become a tight knit community that helps each other and the City of Norwalk. **(CLOSED)**

6. GOOD OF THE ORDER:

a. The American Legion, VFW and other organizations related to the veteran community will be very busy in 2022. See Attachment 2 to these minutes for a calendar of events.

b. A good discussion was held regarding communication to veterans and veteran-friendly residents. The goal for our committee is to reach as many homes in Norwalk as possible to increase awareness of events and programs. Ideas that came up: 1) e-mail blast to the Republican Town Committee, 2) e-mail blast to Chamber of Commerce, 3) e-mail blast to JoAnne Romano and Toni Boucher who know many people in Norwalk, 4) write articles for The Hour and News 12 in the form of a press release. One that didn't come up but including in the minutes, is an e-mail blast to other fraternal organizations: Lions Club, Exchange Club, Rotary Club, Kiwanis, Knights of Columbus and the Masonic Lodge.

7. ADJOURNMENT: the meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

8. NEXT MEETING: March 14, 2022, 6:00 p.m., via Zoom.

Attachment 1

Veteran owned businesses that have replied to the Chamber of Commerce questionnaire

DVB Commercial Realty, LLC

Law Office of Miklos P. Koleszar

THF Tax Solutions, LLC

Integrate4IT

Jack T Wolf LLC

RON AARONS

PRiME, LLC

Chamber

Seaport Electric

Ray Rumer, Realtor, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services New England

Omni Natural LLC

Web Realty Company

Attachment 2

JANUARY

Friday, January 14, 2022: Knights of Columbus Veterans Dinner, St. Ann's, 16 Hendricks Avenue, Norwalk, 5:00-9:00 p.m.; veterans are free. **POSTPONED DUE TO OMICRON TRANSMISSION RATES.**

FEBRUARY

Thursday, February 3, 2022: Four Chaplains Day

Wednesday, February 23, 2022: National Iwo Jima Memorial Ceremony, 1 Iwo Jima Way, New Britain, CT

MARCH

Sunday, March 13, 2022: St. Patrick's Day celebration, live music, corned beef and cabbage, 1:00-4:00, American Legion.

Tuesday, March 15, 2022: American Legion birthday

Friday, March 25, 2022: Medal of Honor Day

Tuesday, March 29, 2022: National Vietnam War Veterans Day

APRIL

Sunday, April 3, 2022: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion

MAY

Sunday, May 1, 2022: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion

Sunday, May 15, 2022: Cemetery visits, starts at 10:00, City Hall parking lot

Sunday, May 15, 2022: Veterans Memorial Ceremony, Calf Pasture Beach, 12:30 p.m.

Monday, May 30, 2022: Memorial Day Parade

Tuesday, May 31, 2022 or Wednesday, June 1, 2022: The Wall That Heals arrives in Norwalk

JUNE

Thursday, June 2 through June 5, 2022: The Wall That Heals, Veterans Park

Monday, June 6, 2022: D-Day Commemoration, 6:00, American Legion

Sunday, June 12, 2022 (2nd Sunday): Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion

Tuesday, June 14, 2022: Flag Day and Army Birthday

Sunday, June 26, 2022: PTSD March, time and details TBD

Monday, June 27, 2022: PTSD Awareness Day

JULY

Monday, July 4, 2022: Independence Day

Sunday, July 10, 2022: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion

Wednesday, July 27, 2022: National Korean War Armistice Day

AUGUST

Sunday, August 7, 2022: National Purple Heart Medal Day, 12:00, Veterans Park,

Sunday, August 7, 2022: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion

SEPTEMBER

Sunday, September 4, 2022: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion

Sunday, September 11, 2022: Patriot Day

Friday, September 16, 2022: POW/MIA Recognition Day Commemoration, 6:00, American Legion

Sunday, September 18, 2022: Air Force birthday

OCTOBER

Sunday, October 2, 2022: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion

Sunday, October 8, 2022: VFW team in Alzheimer's Walk, Calf Pasture

Thursday, October 13, 2022: Navy birthday

RECURRING MEETINGS

2nd Tuesday, Legion Auxiliary,
7:00

2nd Thursday, VFW Post 603,
7:30

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

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

NOVEMBER

Sunday, November 6, 2022: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion

Thursday, November 10, 2022: Marine Corps birthday

Friday, November 11, 2022: Veterans Day

Sunday, November 27, 2022: Christmas Tree Lighting, 5:00, American Legion

DECEMBER

Sunday, December 4, 2022: Flag Ceremony, 11:00, American Legion

Tuesday, December 5, 2022: Veterans Memorial Committee meeting, 7:00, American Legion

Wednesday, December 7, 2022: Pearl Harbor Day Commemoration; 9:00, City Hall

Saturday, December 10, 2022: Army – Navy game