

East Hartford
Veteran's Commission
Meeting Minutes

June 20, 2018

- I. Call to order 7:00PM.
- II. Roll call:
 - a. In attendance: Joshua Quintana, Peter Beley, Awet Tsegai, Melodie Wilson, John Cook, Timothy Siggia, Vincent Parys, Jim Shelmerdine
 - b. Absent: David Whalen
- III. Approval of minutes: Motion was made by Timothy Siggia to approve minutes of the May 16th 2018 meeting and was seconded by Peter Beley. Motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.
- IV. Public Comment:
 - a. Richard Bates, a Veteran from East Hartford expressed his concern about the lack of a flag on his father's grave in Section E of Hillside Cemetery and also expressed concern about the removal of flags and the lack of proper care while being stored prior to retirement. He was passionate about his concern for the lack of proper care and had indicated that he met with the Mayor about it trying to find out who was responsible. It was suggested to him that the flags were removed by the Veterans Commission and that Commission was responsible for their improper storage. Commissioners assured him that we did not authorize the removal of the flags and that we were concerned as well about their removal and storage and that we were voting on motions to address some of these issues. He also expressed disappointment about the cancellation of the Memorial Day parade and how he felt that it was a disappointment to all veterans.
 - b. Tim Gleason and Roger Ochs of Post 2083 of the VFW expressed interest in working with the Commission for better unity and expressed an interest to get the Memorial Day parade reinstated. They also expressed interest in being non-voting members of the Commission if possible. They also indicated that they attend the farmers market where they are available to assist any veteran.
- V. Old Business
 - a. Chairman's Memorial Day Events report:
 - i. Friday at the East Hartford Auditorium went well but was not well attended. Improvements can be made for next year.
 - ii. Memorial Service at Bicentennial Park had light attendance with only a few elected representatives present. Also the PA system did not work well.
 - b. Upcoming flag placements and Veterans' Day events
 - i. Flags will be placed on November 3, 2018, in anticipation of Veterans' Day.
- VI. New Business
 - a. Payment of bills.
 - i. The following bills were presented for payment:
 - 1. \$500 for the Sound of New England – music for the Friday event prior to Memorial day.
 - 2. \$504.87 payment for the East Hartford Policy Honor Guard for duty at Bicentennial Park.
 - 3. \$ 40.00 for plaque for essay contest.
 - 4. A motion was made by Awet Tsegai to pay the bills. The motion was seconded by Peter Beley. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.
 - b. East Hartford Veterans' Officer Nominations. Discussion on this was tabled until it is clarified. Joshua Quintana indicated that he will discuss with town attorney to clarify the ambiguity in the

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Town Ordinances between the Mayor appointing a town employee and the Veterans Commission electing a member.

- c. Summer Events for the Commission. We are all invited to a Veterans' Day cookout sponsored by Goodwin College on July 5, 2018.
- d. The following motion was made by John Cook concerning the placement of flags on Veterans graves:
 - i. That the Veterans Commission has adopted the following standard for the placement of Graveside Memorial Flags. Flags will be placed on the graves in an upright position one foot in front of and centered with the headstone or marker and that the flags be made of cotton.
 - ii. The motion was made by John Cook and seconded by Timothy Siggia. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.
- e. The following motion was made by John Cook to create standards for when Graveside Memorial Flags are place, when they are removed, and the need to have a Commission member present and to officiate over the ceremony where flags are retired. The motion is:
 - i. That the Veterans Commission has adopted the following suggested time table for the placement of Graveside Memorial Flags. Flags are to be in place prior to the Memorial Day or Veterans Day events. Weather permitting and based on available volunteers, placement should begin on the Saturday at least one week prior to the events. The flags are to remain a minimum of one week following the event. Only dry flags maybe removed. If wet they must be allowed to dry before removal. A member or representative of the Veterans Commission should be present at and officiate the ceremony where the retired flags are to be burned in a manner prescribed by the US Flag Code.
 - ii. The motion was made by John Cook and seconded by Timothy Siggia. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

VII. Open floor

- a. Commission Cook indicated that he is making arrangements with EH Community TV to host a ½ hour Veterans show. He has already had conversations with them and with some local Veteran advocates and will continue to develop the idea.
- b. Commissions Cook and Parys indicated that we need to ask the Town to provide a lockable container, like a work site box, so that retired flags can be stored in a dignified manner until they can be properly retired.
- c. A motion was made by Joshua Quintana and seconded by John Cook to cancel Commission meetings for July and August. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

VIII. Adjournment.

- IX. Motion was made by Awet Tsegai to adjourned at 8:24 PM. The motion was seconded by John Cook and was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Submitted by:

Commissioner John Cook