

**MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF
THE HAMDEN VETERANS COMMISSION,
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITY ROOM – MILLER COMPLEX
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2023**

Commissioners Present: Mr. Best, Mr. Cardo, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Kautzner, Mr. Lewis
Ms. Lupi, Mr. Maebry, Mr. Shepard, Mr. Weil

Commissioners Absent: None

Guests: Charity Ford, Dan Levy, Joseph Mershock

Approval of Minutes – January 3, 2023 – Approved as Written.

HVC Office Updates – Ms. Lupi reported “The office is going Great! I think all of us who have been in the office can attest to that”. She had retrieved 11 messages. She got in touch with all the callers but one only because the woman’s mailbox was full. There was a woman from QU who has a student or two who may want to be involved with our Commission and help us in any way. She asked for an invite to this meeting. She also had a gentleman who wanted to know why he’s not eligible for Active Duty. There was discussion on Eligibility for Active Duty.

Mr. Best reported that he had committed to the Fire Commission that we would give them some data about veterans. He also noted that now that we have our office, we need Business Cards with our telephone number and location on them. We also need our HVC Contact List in the Office. Mr. Shepard mentioned the sign stand - We would keep the stand in the office & the member on duty would simply place it by the front door to the Government Center & then retrieve it before leaving.

Mr. Jackson spoke of his conversation with Mrs. Harris who was seeking info for her husband who is a veteran. Because of the Privacy Act, info could not be given to her. It was suggested they go to Newington. There was discussion on hypertension.

Veterans Awareness Day – Mr. Weil reported that we can not do VAD on the day we want. There is a conflict for QU. He spoke with Dan and Jennifer. The week before and the week after do not work either. After some discussion they suggested VAD be held on the Thursday before Veterans Day. Mr. Levy explained, “The very 1st time we did Veterans Awareness Dan it was tied to Veterans Day. I think it makes perfect sense”. He added that Michelle Coogan at HMS is All for it.

Mr. Weil has spoken to Jason at QU. Charity Ford said they just opened the Wellness Center – ask Jason. There was discussion about the Hamden School Calendar, Col. Adale Hodges schedule, etc. November 9th is the Primary choice for Veterans Awareness Day 2023.

Memorial Day Parade – Ms. Lupi reported we planted 1800 flags last year. 2000 are needed for this year. She wrote to all the Funeral Homes. They will be doing the Parade Email Blast by next week. HPD has contacted the State about shutting down Dixwell Ave between Hamden High and Hamden Middle School. At our next HVC meeting we need to discuss/decide if we’re having the ceremony inside or outside. The next Parade Meeting is Tuesday, February 21st at 11:00a. in the Recreation Conference Room (across from the HVC Office).

We have a new entry – Animal Haven! DPW & Parks & the Zamboni are part of the Blast! Mr. Weil will contact General Evon regarding a Marching Unit.

The Clerk asked about bands from other Towns as we've had in the past. It was thought that because of Covid bands weren't able to practice - Covid was an issue. Not anymore! The Clerk hears bands/drums from her home! Charity Ford said she believes it's the Hillhouse Marching Band. She will forward their contact info to Ms. Lupi.

HVC Vacancies – Mr. Weil reported that no names were submitted last month to the Legislative Council. No names were submitted this month. The reason being, they want to explain the new Charter to all Commissions. Thursday night Debbie & I have to attend a meeting for Chairmen and Clerks to go over the new Charter. Mr. Weil reviewed the changes to the Charter that impact the HVC.

Veterans Hall of Fame Ceremony – On January 19, 2023 Mr. Weil was inducted into the Veterans Hall of Fame. The Ceremony was held at the State Armory in Hartford. Mr. Weil spoke of the event. Mr. Shepard and Mr. Cardo attended. “It was a good evening. They had a lot of people. There were over 500 people. It was a nice ceremony”.

Mr. Jackson suggested that next year during Black History Month the HVC do something – “There's so much history - if we could have some things. Have you seen the movie Devotion? About the black pilot? That was phenomenal. A true story. The things that guy went through trying to be accepted. At the end he was a hero”. Mr. Shepard asked if anyone had read the book “On Desperate Ground”. Mr. Cardo spoke of the CT Colored Regiment. Mr. Reggie said, “There's a lot of history that people don't know”.

Mr. Maebry spoke of the 29th Infantry that served during the Civil War. Mr. Weil mentioned Ray Sims, Hamden resident and descendent of the CT Colored Regiment. There's much that can be displayed in the Display Case & on easels on the Wall at the Government Center.

Guests:

Charity Ford, MSW/QU, invited the Commission to the Social Work Event in March. The theme this year is Veterans. This event will allow the HVC to share with everyone what it is we offer. She spoke of the Ebony Horsewomen Inc., Patricia E. Kelly, US Marine Corp Vietnam-Era Veteran & Equestrian.

Ms. Ford is the Field Education Coordinator, School of Health Sciences, Dept of Social Work at QU. She has an extensive background working with the VA. She has a passion for working with veterans. Many of their students do get placed with different Veterans organizations – West Haven VA, Newington VA, etc.

Joe Mershock is a Registered nurse, Operating room for 35 years. As far as military career 1977-1983. First 3 years he was Infantry & Artillery. After the first 3 years he was going to get out but didn't really have any job skills so he reenlisted and became a combat medic and OR Tech. That's how he became a nurse after he got out of the military. He's a Hamden resident.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:50p.

Submitted by: Deborah Gaiolini
Deborah Gaiolini, HVC Clerk