

MATTHEWS VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

October 5, 2016

Minutes

Chairperson Fisk Outwater called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Fisk reviewed the mission of the Matthews Veterans Advisory Committee.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Greg Smith read “The Final Inspection” for some moments of reflection.

Committee Members present: Fisk Outwater, Tom Cannon, Greg Smith, Nobie Thrasher, Jack Santaniello, Angelo Renguso, Amanda Kohout, Janet Perkins, Larry Stawicki, Kathleen Wilsbach, Ed Dement, and Freddie Baylor

Guests welcomed: Dessie Dufresne, Joseph Bochicchio, Beth McLemore and Blake Bourne

Vice Chairman, Tom Cannon introduced special guest Blake Bourne, Executive Director of Charlotte Bridge Home. Blake, a veteran and employment specialist spoke about the mission of the Charlotte Bridge Home (a non-profit) “Helping Veterans successfully navigate transition by identifying their unique goals and connecting them to available community-based resources.” Blake’s staff endeavors to align veterans in need of employment with 60 of the best companies in the area. With over 150,000 veterans in the greater Mecklenburg area, averages of 102 families are served on a monthly basis with many veterans in crisis. A handout given by Blake further described the goals and concepts for Charlotte Bridge Home and North Carolina Veteran info. Committee questions and comments followed with a request to Greg Smith to research the veterans in the immediate area and assess needs.

Minutes of September 7, 2016. After correcting Dessi Dufresne’s last name the minutes were approved as corrected.

New Business:

1. Fisk reported that the MVAC description is on the Town’s website. A Facebook page is in process to be completed in November.

2. Fisk gave committee homework assignments:

a. Whom should the MVAC serve (our customers)?

b. Review SOPs for Subcommittee Chairperson responsibilities, and

Roles and Responsibilities for Secretary and Treasurer.

3. A meeting was held with the Mayor and Fisk about the MVAC By-laws on what constitutes a quorum for the MVAC general meetings. In lieu of a percentage, the Mayor agrees that eight (8) MVAC members to include the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson be present at MVAC meetings. Membership on MVAC has a cap at 20. A motion was made to accept the number of eight to constitute a quorum for the MVAC general meetings with the requirement that the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson attend. The motion was accepted by acclamation.

4. Subcommittee Reports as follows:

a. Subcommittee 1 – Tom Cannon passed around placard/poster and banner artwork revised by Angelo Renguso. Public Works has one area where a banner could be displayed. If designs are approved by MVAC and Town, it was suggested the banner be ready for Veterans Day. The banner can stay in place for a week. Tom asked how and where we would use the placards and posters. Dessi Dufresne suggested placing posters in coffee shops and businesses around the Town of Matthews for Veterans Day. Dessi said she would pay for printing the posters. The Town has funds available for the two-sided banner(s) with standard size of 2.5' x 20.00' at \$500 each. MVAC suggestions will be discussed at next Subcommittee 1 meeting on October 13th.

b. Subcommittee 2 – Ed Dement said a priority is to develop a three-month rolling event calendar of veteran events in our area. Amanda Kohout had worked out a sample calendar for distribution for MVAC purposes. Janet Perkins and other members offered to funnel information to the subcommittee. Fisk asked that a broader distribution be developed. Regarding a signature event for Armed Forces Day proposed by Ed, Fisk relayed that the Mayor would support that in 2018. Fisk requested a proposal for that event be put together by the subcommittee for review and consideration at a later date. This conceptual plan will then be presented to the Town Council at a later date. A Program Director in conjunction with the Town would need to be established, as MVAC in an advisory capacity could not carry off the event without Town and business leadership and participation.

c. Subcommittee 3 – No report.

d. Subcommittee 4 – Greg Smith reported no subcommittee meeting for the month. Greg plans to attend the Veterans Canteen at the Levine Senior Center in Matthews on the first Thursday of the month. There he wants to meet other veterans to tell them about MVAC while reaching out to business leaders who are veteran friendly. Greg attended a Matthews Chamber meeting. Visitor, Beth McLemore mentioned that the Bar does offer some pro bono services to veterans. Tom Cannon requested subcommittee reports be sent via Town email to he and Fisk for review prior to monthly MVAC meetings.

5. Raymond Gaskins submitted his resignation to Fisk due to health issues. A motion was made and seconded to accept his resignation and forward to Town Council.

Old Business:

1. Secretary and Treasurer positions. Tom Cannon made a motion to approve Kathleen Wilsbach as Secretary and Jack Santaniello as Treasurer for the MVAC. The motion was seconded by Larry Stawicki. The motion passed and the names and positions will go forward to the Town Council for final approval.

2. Rad Pate, our Town liaison, reported that there is no formal process for hiring veterans. Town hiring is an open process, but said a veteran hiring process could be suggested to the Town Council. Rad said that the Telecom system in the conference room would only allow one person at a time to call in. Amanda Kohout will work on getting us a free conference bridge line to allow more than one call. Janet Perkins recommended we have a change to the SOPs to

include a qualifier that a telecom or bridge line call into a MVAC meeting will count as being present while traveling or otherwise unable to attend.

3. Fisk will contact Gary Aljets who has the Traveling Vietnam War Exhibit “on hold” for us and will speak with the Mayor and Town Manager about it’s use by the Town during the Memorial Day time period this upcoming May. Additional information to follow, before the end of the year, about how and where to place the exhibit.

4. Fisk gave the MVAC a good progress report on our 2016 goals. He asked that members be thinking about 2017 goals to be finalized at the December 7th meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Submitted by: Kathleen Wilsbach, Member