



**FORT ORD REUSE AUTHORITY  
VETERANS ISSUES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (VIAC) MEETING MINUTES**

**3:00 P.M. Thursday, July 28, 2016**

920 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Ste A., Marina California | FORA Conference Room

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Confirming quorum, Chair Jerry Edelen called the meeting to order at 3 p.m.

**Committee Members:**

Mayor Jerry Edelen, City of Del Rey Oaks (Chair)

Richard Garza, Central Coast Veterans Cemetery Foundation (CCVC Foundation)

Edith Johnsen, Veterans Families

Jack Stewart, Fort Ord Veterans Cemetery Citizens Advisory Committee

Sid Williams, Monterey County Military & Veterans Advisory Commission (VAC)

**FORA Staff:**

Robert Norris

Michael Houlemard

Nicole Valentino

**Others in Attendance:**

G. 'Cliff' Guinn, Forthm

Tammy Jakl, Bureau of Land Management

Edwin Marticorena, Veterans Transition Center

Eric Morgan, Bureau of Land Management

Erica Parker, Office of CA Assemblymember Stone

Bob Schaffer, member of the public

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Robert Norris led the pledge of allegiance.

**3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Fort Ord Monument Manager Eric Morgan, introduced himself and Park Ranger Tammy Jakl of the Bureau of Land Management. Park Ranger Jakl announced that BLM is in the early stages of exploring an idea to honor veterans by providing special day access and/or a tour to a highly desirable but not easy to access central area called *Lightfighter LZ*, of the Fort Ord National Monument. A tentative date being considered is November 19, 2016. The date was selected to not interfere with Veterans Day activities. Park Ranger Jakl and Monument Manager Morgan welcome ideas and comments from VIAC Committee members. Ranger Jakl can be reached at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) at (831) 582-2246 or by e-mail at TJakl@BLM.gov.

BLM welcomes ideas and comments from VIAC Committee members. Edith Johnsen asked if families would be welcome to participate. Ranger Jakl agreed that was a good idea, but acknowledged that the numbers may need to be limited if the anticipated number of participants were to be too great to accommodate everyone.

## 5. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

### a. June 23, 2016

MOTION: Jack Stewart moved, seconded by Edith Johnsen, to approve the June 23, 2016 Veterans Issues Advisory Committee minutes with two minor edits.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

## 6. BUSINESS ITEMS

### a. California Central Coast Veterans Cemetery Status Report

#### i. Cemetery Administrator's Status Report

Principal Analyst Robert Norris said that he reached out to CDVA to see if the new Cemetery Administrator Daria Maher, would be attending. In Ms. Maher's absence, Mr. Norris provided a brief report. Mr. Norris stated that as of his last check-in, the Cemetery Project had posted jobs for positions to be filled. Mr. Norris also stated that construction is forecasted to be complete near the end of September. Edith Johnsen stated *James* is working on a letter to Monterey County Veteran's Office that spells out the particulars including such details as the inscriptions on the benches. According to Mr. Norris, there are some final regulations being proposed by the Cemetery Advisory Committee to be submitted to the VIAC. Mr. Norris requested that an item to discuss the proposed regulations be placed on a future agenda. Mr. Norris offered to bring available written comments regarding the proposals to the next VIAC committee meeting for review.

#### ii. Cemetery Advisory Committee (CAC) Working Meeting Agenda

Mr. Norris reported that there was a July 14, 2016 meeting with Senator Monning in attendance. He stated there were a number of follow up issues that Kathy Smith, Michael Houlemard and Dan Fahey are working on a resolution of the issue of donor site visits for the wall for getting the donor checks processed? There are also other issues regarding financing. Mr. Norris reported that questions remain on what the contents of the memorial wall will be, as well as questions regarding the procedures will be for processing donations.

#### iii. Endowment Parcel MOU

Per Mr. Norris, the MOU is currently being worked through the County of Monterey FORA Committee. FORA has provided staff support to the committee for drafting the MOU for the endowment parcel. The draft is currently being circulated to the *County*, the *City* and the *Foundation* for review and comment. The anticipated next step is that the draft be agendaized for discussion at the next County Committee meeting.

#### iv. Opening Ceremony

Mr. Norris stated he has no information regarding the opening ceremony for the cemetery. He does know that there are plans going forward for the clinic ceremony.

#### v. Military and Veterans Affairs Pre-Enrollment Report

Mr. Norris stated that last he heard there is an enrollment of over 654 pre-screened applications and that approximately 20 additional applications have been returned for further information and/or corrections. Mr. Williams stated that as spouses may also be buried in the cemetery, the actual number may more closely approximate 1,400 requests for burial. Mr. Norris stated that will definitely underscore/impact the statement being

developed to substantiate the need for in ground burials in the future phase. There was a question about an application from Sgt. McDonald (the war horse veteran). Mr. Norris responded that he did not know, but would inquire.

**b. Fundraising Status**

**i. CCVC Foundation Status Report**

Richard Garza stated that he was not in the CAC meeting in which it was interpreted and reported that the Community Foundation would not be contributing anything to the cemetery. Mr. Garza stated the information was presented by Dan Fahey to Jimmy Panetta, but Mr. Garza does not know if it was said directly to the CAC. Mr. Garza stated that CCVCF has contributed all that it has been asked to contribute, and it is currently holding the next contribution to phase II. According to Mr. Garza, CCVCF had a major donor who requested a tour of the cemetery site. He stated that Candy Ingram and Jan Parks asked the Department of Veterans Affairs if that was possible, and they were told "We'll give them a tour of the site if they will give us the money instead of you". Mr. Norris stated that this is one of the issues to which he made reference earlier when he mentioned that Senator Monning's office was working with Michael Houlemard and others how to best resolve the issue of site visits and other issues. Chair Edelman suggested that Mr. Garza document the issue and send a letter on organization letterhead. Mr. Norris reiterated that Senator Monning's Office is working to resolve the issue. Specifically, Senator Manning's Chief of Staff has been in contact with Mr. Fahey's supervisor and the Senator and the Secretary are aware of the need to improve communication and resolve conflicts. Chair Edelen reiterated his suggestion to document incidences. He also stated that he is waiting for a notice of the first meeting of the Central California Veterans Advisory Committee, as without having a meeting, it is difficult to work some of this out. Mr. Garza agreed to document the incident

**c. VA/DoD Veterans Clinic Status Report**

**i. Historic Flag Pole Variance Update**

Mr. Williams stated that he had a lengthy conversation with a representative of the land owner, and that he was told that the owner of the property has reservations about putting the flag pole up on the property. Mr. Williams assesses the likelihood of that changing being about 10%. He has been in conversation with Jimmy Panetta about this issue. Mr. Williams received an e-mail from Mr. Schaeffer in which it was expressed that "they" have an idea for how to use the flagpole in a meaningful way for a project and they will have further conversation as to how to best use the flagpole in the most appropriate way. There was a suggestion made to contact the owner directly and ask for his permission. Mr. Williams stated that he has tried and will continue to work on the issue.

**ii. Clinic Construction Schedule**

Mr. Norris said the construction is on track for the scheduled October 14<sup>th</sup> ribbon cutting ceremony.

**d. Veterans Transition Center (VTC) Housing Construction**

Mr. Norris asked FORA Executive Officer Michael Houlemard to give a brief report to the Committee, as he was instrumental in resolving a critical water issue for the Veteran's Transition Center. Mr. Houlemard stated it was discovered that with increased opportunity to provide more housing, comes an increased need for water. This need is greater than originally anticipated in the earlier transfer. Mr. Houlemard stated he worked with the City of

Marina and the Army BRAC to ensure that through negotiations, water resources could be procured to support the housing needs of the Veteran's Transition Center. VIAC committee members expressed their appreciation for the efforts made by FORA on behalf of veterans. Mr. Garza expressed that the VTC receives several calls a day from veterans requesting housing—many of whom once served at Fort Ord and would like to return to Fort Ord. He also expressed appreciation for the support the VTC receives from FORA.

**e. Historical Preservation Project**

G. "Cliff" Guinn stated that he and Jack Stewart met with the City of Marina City Manager. Mr. Stewart stated the meeting was very productive and that the goal was to set some parameters in place regarding how to get it done and to establish a time frame. Mr. Guinn, Mr. Stewart and Mr. Williams spent approximately 90 minutes at the earmarked site. The City Manager gave them permission to move equipment and materials from certain buildings (e.g., barracks) to take them to the newly designated site. A design consultant has been hired and there will be a historical group involved in the planning process. There are some safety concerns, especially as they pertain to ADA compliance issues. Completion of the process that has begun is anticipated to be at least five years. The next step is for the design group to contact the VIAC. Eventually there will be an RFP.

A question was asked regarding placing the historic flag pole on the Historical Preservation Project site. Mr. Williams stated that it could be complicated, but that certainly other areas could be considered.

**7. ITEMS FROM MEMBERS**

Jack Stewart stated that there is an unmet need for items at the cemetery. The United Veterans Council under the direction of President Jim Bogan met with Dan Fahey and created an extensive wish list of items needed for the cemetery once funding runs out. The Marina Foundation which has a veterans committee and is an associate member of the UVC, stepped up to act as an interim fund raising group to ensure that the unmet needs would be met in time for the grand opening of the Veterans Cemetery. Their recommendation to the Veterans Council is to establish a veterans friendly fundraising mechanism that is "not bogged down in bureaucracy". Donors have already committed to the purchase of six benches. Mr. Stewart stated that he, Mr. Williams and Mary Estrada, are all members of the Marina Foundation.

Mr. Williams spoke and referred to both the donations list that was distributed with the agenda at the beginning of the meeting, as well as to the letter from the Marina Foundation. He stated that the Marina has is an established 501c3, making donations tax deductible. It also has a list of preferred vendors, saving individuals and organizations the time to look for them. Mr. Stewart emphasized that time is of the essence. Ms. Johnsen acknowledged her pleasure that that there is now a donations list and a coordinated effort.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Edelen adjourned the meeting at 3:35 p.m.

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING: 3 p.m. August, 25, 2016**