



Harford County Commission on Veterans Affairs Meeting Notes

April 4, 2019

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robert Brown at 6:30 p.m. in the Conference Room, 220 S. Main Street, Bel Air, Maryland.

Attending: Bob Brown, Hayden Anthony, Robert Appleby, Lisa Brown, Jennifer Button, Janice Cassidy, Art Kaff, Scott Kearby, Bill Montgomery, Deacon Vic Petrosino, Councilman Andre Johnson (liaison)

Excused: Dennis Miller, Denise Perry, Mike Ray, Pam Silcox, Rick Scavetta

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Brown. Prayer was led by Deacon Vic.

Welcome & Opening Comments:

Chairman Brown – presented the HCCOVA Mission and Vision statements. He congratulated the newly confirmed members & welcomed all members to the meeting. He also commented on the “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans” recognition ceremony held at Upper Chesapeake Hospital in March.

Opening Comments from Appointed Members:

Councilman Johnson – attended the VFW Commanders Dinner on March 30th at Richlin Ballroom. Maryland State Commander Denise Perry & State President Joyce Thomas were honored at the dinner. Councilman Johnson commented the VFW is doing great things for veterans.

Hayden Anthony – shared a newspaper article, “*Operation Home on the Homefront*”, detailing an initiative to provide housing for military members/military families. The program provides a deeded/mortgage-free home to qualified veterans. The program has assisted 650 families since its inception in 2012. Other commission members asked Hayden to check with the organization to give a presentation at a future meeting &/or provide a fact sheet about the program since we get so many housing-related requests.

Robert Appleby – discussed an additional education benefit for veterans who have exhausted their Post 9/11 benefits. He noted the veteran must be 100% disabled to qualify, and more detailed information can be found on the VA home page.

OLD BUSINESS

Outreach Events – Bob Brown, commission members

- Part of the HCCOVA mission is to provide outreach to veterans and their families
- Reiterated the Veterans Resource Fair is our capstone event each year, but should plan other events throughout the year.

- Need to realign our subcommittees/individual commitment to charter missions to accomplish goals of commission. This can include organizing a HCCOVA-sponsored event or linking with VSO's & other veteran-related activities.
- Current & newly appointed members need to think about which area of the HCCOVA they would like to focus their efforts.

NEW BUSINESS

Requests – Chairman Brown

- Donation of gravesites: someone wants to donate 4 gravesites at Bel Air Memorial Gardens to veterans. (Her parents were cremated so gravesites are not needed by family). HCCOVA cannot accept property, so suggested to contact a VSO, like Jarrettsville VFW where her father was a member of that chapter.
- Memorial Day activities: need volunteers to attend/represent HCCOVA at events throughout Harford County, including Havre de Grace, Bel Air & Aberdeen. Will also pass out Save the Date flyers for Veterans Resource Fair. Checking into the possibility of wreath-laying at one or more events, as well as hospitality tent at the Bel Air event.

Commission Officers – Chairman

- Nominations & election of Vice Chairperson & Recording Secretary will be held at next month's meeting.

Subcommittees

- Chairman Brown discussed realignment of committees as noted above is needed
- **Technology and Social Media:**
 - Art Kaff – currently 406 *likes* on Facebook; Facebook page includes information on how commission members are appointed; free cybersecurity training; opening of VA clinic in Rosedale; Vietnam War veterans commemoration events: April is month of the military child.
 - Scott Kearby – HCCOVA website is updated with new commission members, agenda & minutes.
- **Education:**
 - Janice Cassady – discussed Maryland College Promise Scholarship – not necessarily just for veterans, but another program available for “free” college.
- **Community Outreach:**
 - Bill Montgomery – served on panel at March Soldiers for Life TAP (Transition Assistance Program) on APG. Due to budget cuts, the program will now only be held once per quarter (vs once per month); next program scheduled for Wednesday, June 5th from 12-1:30 PM in Building 3147.
 - Vic Petrosino – provided details on the “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans” Ceremony at Upper Chesapeake Hospital, a designated Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Site. All branches of service were represented & each veteran who attended was recognized & received a proclamation and a pin. Over 100

Vietnam veterans & their families attended the ceremony; Vic also discussed the Veterans Visiting Veterans program at the hospital.

Final Announcements

- MG Taylor is scheduled to PCS in June to STRATCOM.
- May 18th: Retiree Day at APG 9 AM – 1 PM
- The next HCCOVA meeting will be Thursday, May 2nd at 6:30 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Prepared by Lisa Brown