

SUMMARY MINUTES

**Veteran's Advisory Board Meeting
FEBRUARY 20, 2020 – 5:30 P.M.
10770 WEST OAKLAND PARK BOULEVARD**

A. CALL TO ORDER BY: Thaddeus Hamilton, Chair

B. ROLL CALL The following were found to be present:

Thaddeus Hamilton
Stanley Leibowitz
Angel Serrano
Kenton Isackson
Norman Rothfeld
Loretta Young

Daniel Travis – Unexcused Absence
Ana Barbosa – Excused Absence
Stanley Bostic – Excused Absence
Gloria Drago – Excused Absence
Robert Passarelli – Excused Absence

Mark Lubelski, Assistant City Manager
David Forteza, Police Liaison
Amanda Tomlinson – Division Director – Special &
Community Support (City of
Sunrise employee)
Sherrill Valdes, Licensed Clinician and Social Worker,
Retired VA Supervisor/Clinician
(Guest speaker)

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

D. OPEN PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Loretta invited Sherrill Valdes, Licensed Clinician and Social Worker, Retired VA Supervisor/Clinician to the meeting. Sherrill spoke about the *Quilts of Valor* ceremony. She opened by stating that this is a program that was founded in 2003 by Katherine Roberts, who had a son stationed in Afghanistan. Sherrill was a supervisor and clinician at the Bill Kling Outpatient Clinic in Broward for 32 years; she went through WWII and Vietnam, then 10 years with the younger servicemembers. In 2003 when soldiers returned from Iraq, there were 52 new Vietnam Veterans that came to the Clinic on a weekly basis, with 50 Veterans that

had never been to the Clinic. All soldiers often stated that: they did not fit in. Many of those soldiers wanted to know: “does the community know we are even in war?” Because of these and other concerns from Veterans, she implemented a *Welcome Home Ceremony*, finding that any welcome home is better than none. Sherrill found out about Katherine Roberts through the Chaplain Service in the VA. Katherine had made 293 quilts, and she graciously sent the quilts to the Clinic where they were presented to the Veterans who were touched by war. Later, quilts were received from all over the United States. There are community members in Florida who support the Veterans by way of quilting. *Quilt of Valor* is a national program, and people can look up the site and request quilts. The ceremonies conducted by *Quilt of Valor* provide all authentic quilts to Veterans. Roughly 4,000 quilts were presented to the VA prior to Sherrill’s retirement in 2010. It normally takes three months to make one quilt which was initially for OEF and OIF returning Veterans, because there was a limited number of quilters. Both men and women are quilters. So far, over 1,400 quilts have been made throughout the United States. Guilds take one project per year, and in 2003 to present, Guilds started making quilts for Veterans. Stormy Schevis is a quilter from the Gold Coast Quilters Guild, and she currently has three coalitions that are constantly making quilts. Stormy formed the *South Florida Coalition of Guild of Valor Quilters*. The other member Guilds are: *Quilt Guild By the Sea*, and *Palm Beach Patriotic Quilters*. The work is divided, which allows more quilts to be made.

There is now a Southern Coalition making quilts for the Veterans. The quilts are made out of love, and they are well made. Throughout the years, *Quilt of Valor* has become a national organization that reached out to the Veterans in order to personalize the quilts that are made. The front part of the quilt is for the Veterans to look at and receive a sense of hope, the middle part is to support the hope they receive, with the back being a symbol of courage. Sherrill sees this as a personal endeavor, as it is often family members that are going to war; therefore, the quilts are seen as a gift from the community that appreciates and values Veterans. The cost of one quilt is \$300 for the material, and 100 hours of work. There is a pillowcase tied to the quilt that provides the name of the individual quilter as well as care instructions.

The *Quilt of Valor* is hosting a program on March 5, 2020, at the Sunrise Civic Center, and they have received many applications. Sherrill is asking that the community come out to support the event. Sherrill thanked Loretta for her support, and giving her the opportunity to share *Quilt of Valor* information.

Thaddeus stated that the Veterans are Veterans for the *Quilt of Valor* as they have always supported the event. Kenton Isackson confirmed that he was a recipient of one of the quilts last year, and he sincerely appreciated it. He was a service member in the Gulf War, completing his service in Iraq. Thaddeus extended the Veterans Board as a support link to Sherrill, and she graciously accepted. Sherrill states that Nob Hill Elementary School conducts the *Nob Hill Salutes America* which involves entire families. It is an opportunity for citizens to show up and

support the Veterans. Her goal is to place the information on YouTube, and she asked if anyone would be able to assist her in this project. Loretta stated that Kenton indicated that Angel Serrano knows how to place information on YouTube. When asked, Angel stated that he would be happy to comply. Mark reminded the Board that they should remain cognizant of Sunshine Laws. Sherrill acknowledged that the required 50 applicants to receive quilts from the *Quilt of Valor* has already been filled. The *Quilt of Valor* has a designated website that will provide information to those that would like to know more about the event. Thaddeus asked about the application for next year, and Lorretta stated that the application was located on the website. Sherrill stated that the qualifications are: *touched by war*, which means someone that has been deployed to other countries dealing with either conflict or war. The quilts are now on the national level.

The Board thanked Sherrill for her time and sharing of information.

E. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 16, 2020 SUMMARY MINUTES

Thaddeus asked for a motion to approve the January 16, 2020 minutes, it was second, and the board approved.

F. OLD BUSINESS

Thaddeus wanted to know about Veterans Park, and Mark S. Lubelski, P.E. stated that Veterans Park is progressing, with a timeline roughly around July/August 2020.

G. NEW BUSINESS

Kenton Isackson advised the Board that feedback received from the LUTZapalooza event was positive. There was a huge turnout with an outstanding performance by the canine team from the City of Sunrise. Unfortunately, there were some forged flyers that made its way across social media. One such flyer published that the event was free, another claimed the event was a Brazilian event which, unfortunately, ended up with people being turned away. Mayor Ryan told Kenton that he would like to move forward with the event next year. The bag-pipe and drum core were present, and the performances from the bands were excellent. Thaddeus announced that the Chief of Police along with the Mayor were well represented. Kenton voiced that unfortunately, BSO was not able to attend, but the City of Davie was represented. The helicopter was present, which drew a lot of attention. Mark asked for an estimate of the people that attended, and Kenton disclosed that there were roughly 300 persons in attendance. Other members of the Board communicated that there were many more people present. Thaddeus said that there were many people in attendance, and the turnout was phenomenal.

Kenton announced that it would have been nice to have had more riders for the motorcycle ride, but all in all, the ride event was flawless. There were roughly 150

riders, which was an excellent turnout. The event overall was magnificent, and he is hoping that next year he will be able to partner up with other cities as there were a lot of positive feedback from the entire event. Angel voiced that the only issue was that bikers had to park far away from their motorcycles, which was somewhat problematic. Kenton stated that the reason for the distance from where the motorcycles were parked in relation to how far the riders had to walk to the event was purely a safety factor. Unfortunately, the Port-a-Johns did not show up, which was an inconvenience for event attendees. This issue is being investigated so that it will not happen again. The *First Responder Wall* and the *Veterans Wall* brought a lot of emotional reactions from people. The walls revealed the extent of suicides as it concerns First Responders and Veterans. Unfortunately, the City of Sunrise has one of their own whose name is on the wall. The *Spartan Sword* event was incredible, as it was forged from the steel from 9/11. The steel was escorted by one of the New York Fire Department. The story is that this particular steel was one of the most sacred steel that was present at the event. People were able to have their pictures taken with the sword, and then there was the recital of the *Spartan Pledge* written by Boone Cutler. Many police officers and firefighters turned out for the Pledge. The Pledge went nationwide, and there was a large turnout for this event. People really enjoyed the event.

MEMORIAL DAY

Amanda Tomlinson spoke about horses being involved in the event, and suggestions were made that the City of Fort Lauderdale and the Town of Davie has horses. She also said that she would inquire as to the availability of those horses. She plans to move forward with the program as before. She reiterated that *The Wall* was well received last year, and she will reach out to Jenny to see if she will be returning with the Wall. Thaddeus reminded Amanda of the *Battlefield Cross*. This year, the plan is to have a City employee as the featured singer. Amanda will contact Rob to see if he is available to perform as far as the Bag Pipers are concerned. Danielle Forem will attend the next meeting to confirm who will be attending the Memorial Day event.

VETERANS PARK

Mark gave a quick update of Veterans Park. He said the timeframe remains at roughly July/August 2020.

REP. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

Loretta Young stated that Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz previously attended a Town Hall Meeting where there was a Q&A. The meeting was well received. According to Loretta, it is extremely difficult getting Representative Wasserman Schultz to attend meetings considering her schedule. Thaddeus asked if it would be possible to try to have her attend the next meeting. Mark said Representative Wasserman Schultz's office will be contacted in regards to her

possible attendance.

H. NOB HILL SALUTES TO AMERICA

Norman Rothfeld passed out copies as it pertained to the *Nob Hill Salutes America* event. He said that his granddaughter attends Nob Hill Elementary, and his daughter is the president of the PTA. The school is holding an event saluting First Responders and Veterans on Saturday, May 16, 2020. Everyone is welcome, and there will be a Certificate given out to anyone that applies. The kids will be putting on a small presentation, and at 10:00 a.m. a light breakfast will be served. The event ends at 2:00 p.m. The school will try to accommodate everyone. Thaddeus said that to his recollection, last year, the Mayor and other members of the municipalities showed up and supported the event. Mark S. Lubelski, P.E. confirmed that he will reach out to the Commission Office to determine who will be attending.

I. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2020

Thaddeus asked that the *Nob Hill Salutes America* item be moved to the next agenda.

J. BOARD MEMBERS DISCUSSION

Mark S. Lubelski, P.E. told the Board that as of July 11, 2020, City Manager, Richard Salamon will be retiring from the City. On February 11, 2020, the Commission appointed Mark as the next City Manager. Mark will be attending the Board meetings at least through July, 2020. His goal is to promote his vacated position internally, but he has not yet made any determinations.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Thaddeus Hamilton made a motion to adjourn, it was second, and there were no opposition from the board.

The next meeting will be March 19, 2020.

Transcribed by: Karen Lawrence, Board Secretary/ *Karen Lawrence*

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the board, agency, or commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he/she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. F.S.S. 286.0105.