

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES FOR September 9, 2021, Meeting
Antelope Enclosed Shelter, Antelope Park (3200 Memorial Drive)
7:00 am

Advisory Council Members Present: Craig Anderson, Brendan Moore, Marcy Haas, Joe Brownell, Claude Frerichs, Thad Fineran

Advisory Council Member via Zoom: None

Advisory Council Absent: Chris Stokes, James Murphy, Melissa Wilkerson

Others Present: Diane Bartels, Joyce Peck

LPR/Lincoln Parks Foundation Staff Present: Lynn Johnson, Chris Myers, Shawn Quinn, J.J. Yost, Maggie Stuckey, Roy Rivera, Denise Pearce

1. - Call to Order (roll call) & Introductions: Joe Brownell called the meeting to order. A quorum was present, with six members in attendance.

2. – Recognition of Open meetings Act: Joe Brownell noted that the meeting was subject to the Open Meetings Act and indicated where the Open Meetings Act notice was posted in the meeting room.

3. – Pledge of Allegiance

4. – Approval of Minutes:

June 10, 2021, Minutes: Approval of meeting minutes for June 10th was moved by Craig Anderson and seconded by Brendan Moore; the motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

5. – Public Comments for items not listed on the agenda: None.

6. – Finance Report: Maggie Stuckey, Lincoln Parks Foundation

Maggie Stuckey provided the Balance Report for the Veterans Memorial Garden as of 07/31/2021. The Balance Report is available upon request. Bricks sales continue with thirty-two bricks as of 09/09/2021. This figure is higher than previous years; Maggie predicted ending the year at fifty bricks, unless there is a considerable increase of brick sales.

7. – Committee Reports

Due to time constraints Joe Brownell requested a motion to re-order the agenda and start the committee reports with the Executive Committee, followed by Facilities Committee and Events and Publicity Committees. Brendan Moore moved and seconded by Craig Anderson.

a. Executive Committee: Joe Brownell, Lynn Johnson, Denise Pearce

i. Fundraising Proposal: Maggie Stuckey and Jim Murphy have been meeting to prepare the plan to raise funds to replace the rest of the brick holders in the Garden. Instead of fundraising for each individual holder or by section, Maggie and Jim plan to identify five significant donors who would be willing to donate \$50,000 each. Maggie reported that they will present a plan to the group during the December meeting. Currently they are working with the Planning and Construction Team and potential vendors. The Advisory Council can aid this effort by helping reach out to connections within the organizations identified by Maggie and Jim. If council members have an individual or organization in mind as potential donors, please let Maggie know.

ii. Nominating Committee (Craig, Melissa, and Chris): Craig Anderson informed the group that they have one nomination for Chair. Joe Brownell was nominated to continue as Chair, has accepted the

nomination, and will continue as chair if elected. Craig Anderson has been nominated to continue as Vice-Chair, has accepted the nomination, and will continue as vice-chair if elected. No other nominations were brought forth. Joe Brownell reminded the group that according to the Bylaws, this is the last year that both he and Craig Anderson will be able to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair. He requested that the group think of other members who could be nominated for these two roles in the upcoming year.

iii. Amendment to Bylaws – Article IX: Denise Pearce presented the group with proposed changes to the Bylaws. She noted that all six members – two thirds of the council - at this meeting must vote ‘yes’ for the changes to be approved.

Lynn Johnson added that an officer fulfilling the Vice-Chairperson role may choose to serve as Chairperson after three consecutive years as a Vice-Chairperson. Joe Brownell confirmed that this is possible.

Thad Fineran moved to approve the changes to the Bylaws; the motion was seconded by Marcy Haas. Motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

iv. Board Vacancies: Joe mentioned Marlena Stevens as a potential new member. She is a marine veteran, lives in Lincoln and is a student at UNL. She would love to be part of the VMGAC. She has not completed the board application. Claude Frerichs mentioned Carol Tanner, spent two years in Iraq as pilot, in charge of the Child Advocacy Center. She is interested in being part of the VMGAC, will meet with Claude and have her called Joe with any questions. Thad Fineran mentioned Alexandria Evers, moved from Washington, she is not a veteran, has a military family and engaged in different areas of the community.

Joe Brownell shared that this may be Melissa Wilkerson’s last year as a council member. If this is the case, all three individuals could be nominated to be appointed to the VMGAC. Joe will check with Melissa. Melissa’s term ends in November 2023.

v. Recognition for outgoing members: There was discussion regarding ways to recognize past council members. Denise Pearce presented tile options from Brick Markers USA and other options from Rixstine Recognition. Denise started a list of past members who would be presented with this recognition. The estimated number of would be 20-25 members. After group discussion, the consensus was that the tile would be a good way to recognize past council members. There will be further discussion regarding the tile during development of the 2022 budget. Council volunteers will be needed to finalize the list of past members and distribute the tiles.

vi. Brick of Honor inscription text guidelines

Denise Pearce informed the group that a special working group of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and Parks Foundation Board is currently updating a number of policies, including those dealing with inscription on pavers, tiles, and bricks. Denise asked the group to review Bricks of Honor current policy, which dates to May 2007 and discuss what items in the policy should be updated. The updated changes will then be brought forth to the special working group and be included in the policy document that will be developed this fall/winter. Group discussion focused on allowing or not allowing messages of remembrance with inscriptions, removing the language indicating that an immediate family of a veteran can have a bricked inscribed with their name, and using the fourth line of the brick/tile to add the name of operation/war/conflict/ship or vessel of service. Thad Fineran also mentioned that there

are multiple definitions of a veteran. We need to make sure every veteran under Nebraska State Law can be honored in the Veterans Memorial Garden, including reservists.

The Parks and Recreation Department will work on language to address these changes and bring back to the council for vote and approval.

b. Facilities Committee: No report

c. Events and Publicity Committee: Marcy Haas & Melissa Wilkerson

Patriot Day: Denise Pearce provided the group information regarding the two ceremonies taking place for Patriot Day. Lincoln Fire and Rescue will host a 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at the State Capitol building. The event hosted by the Veterans Memorial Garden Advisory Council will follow at the Veterans Memorial Garden in Antelope Park.

Veterans Day Parade: Craig Anderson shared that the Veterans Day Parade will take place on Sunday, November 7th at 2 pm. Joe Brownell is coordinating registration for the VMGAC. Claude Frerichs has the two banners that are used during the parade, and both are in good shape.

Veterans Day: The Veterans Day event will take place on November 11th. Denise shared with the group that the Events Committee is considering pre-recording a virtual event, depending on the COVID risk dial. A time slot has been reserved with City Communications. The Events Committee will determine during its October 6 meeting whether to proceed with an in person or virtual event.

Pearl Harbor Day: Tentatively scheduled to be held on Monday, December 7th at 11:55 am in the Auld Pavilion. The Events Committee will determine whether to proceed with an in person or virtual/pre-recorded event.

8. Special Outreach Committee: Thad Fineran

Thad Fineran addressed the group and provided a summary of the activities done by this special committee. Thad's notes are included below:

I had two engagements last month on behalf of outreach efforts. First was to the Vietnam Veterans' reunion event in Lincoln on August 12th. This event did not generate any contacts or relationships but did socialize the Garden with many of the attendees. The second engagement was with the Nebraska National Guard Retiree Council - a quarterly council meeting which governs the 600+ members of the retiree association in the state. This meeting was very productive, and I was able to share the activities of the Memorial Garden with the council members and was invited to attend regularly to provide activity and calendar updates to the community. They will ensure the membership is aware of Garden activities. This should be a good forum to reach a broader number of individuals and veteran organizations across the city.

I also shared with the council the initial goals of the outreach committee. The four primary goals include: 1) visiting and connecting with community veteran organizations regularly, to establish networking, provide updates on events and activities at the garden, and to solicit partnerships for future work, fundraising, and event sponsorship and support. This is an enduring goal meant to expand the council's influence and network across the city.

2) creating a memorial garden history, accessible online, which describes the progress of the garden over the years. This history will describe the monuments, their sponsors, and how the garden has grown and

been updated by the city. The intent is to preserve the legacy of each monument and the actions of the stewarding council members, and to ensure visitors see the depth and history behind each part of the garden.

3) creating and engaging in educational opportunities with schools, scouting/volunteer organizations, hospitals, etc. These engagements further the garden's outreach potential by growing community advocacy beyond veterans' organizations. Many of these volunteer organizations have connections to veteran recognition and this goal expands the council's partnerships and influence in the community.

4) through the previous goals, the committee identifies potential future donors and stakeholders for future engagements from community partners and stakeholders. The committee then connects these stakeholders with our events or other committees for participation in garden events and fundraising.

At our next meeting I will have another progress report, as well as some work areas that I need further assistance/help with. I will reach out to a few of our members between now and then to get planning information for the above projects/goals.

9. Announcements:

a. Updated Strategic Plan in packet

b. Budget meeting will take place on December 9th during our annual meeting. The Executive Committee will be working on the proposed 2022 budget; please send suggestions to Denise or Executive Committee

c. Flags – Lynn Johnson provide information regarding the Veterans Advisory Group. The group is leaving the VA campus. They are currently using the Auld Pavilion for their Coffeehouse events. They will be hosting a car show in May that will probably take place at the Star City Shores parking lot. The advisory group currently has a triangle at the VA grounds with flags they installed during special events. They asked for the opportunity to add flags at Antelope Park close to the Veterans Memorial Garden. There is an opportunity for 8-9 flags to be placed, and the group would be responsible for storage. Group is willing to install the flagpole bases and be responsible for installing/removing the flags in connection with Special Events at the garden. J.J. shared a diagram with the group showing the layout for the flags. The diagram is available upon request. There is 20 feet spacing which would allow for 8 poles. The bases will be permanent, but the flags will only be installed during special events. Lynn Johnson also mentioned that the group also hosts a music event in June and the plan is to wrap around the Bricks of Honor celebration. The Bricks of Honor Dedication would take place on the second Saturday in June, followed by a music festival, which has taken place at the VA site in the past.

10. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn submitted and approved unanimously via roll call vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Roy Rivera, Recording Secretary