



Monday, May 8, 2023

A Regular Meeting of the Veterans Commission was held in the Parks and Recreation Community Room, 6767 Passons Blvd, Pico Rivera, California. Parks and Recreation Interim Executive Assistant, Priscilla Sanchez called that meeting to order at 3:02pm.

**PRESENT:** Commissioner: Bobbie Tanner, Gilbert Perez, Daniel Garcia

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Led by Commissioner Gilbert Perez

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

**1. MINUTES:**

- None

**2. NEW BUSINESS:**

a) Welcome

Parks and Recreation Director Pamela Yugar invited Council Members to say a few words. Mayor Pro Tem, Lara stated it is a big milestone for the community. Veterans have not had a space to speak on services they need or on commemorations for Veterans Day or Memorial Day. When running for council, a forum was held at The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and one of the questions that was asked was if a Veterans Resource center would be supported. Mayor Pro Tem Lara answered yes and worked with the rest of the Councilmembers to successfully bring a Veterans Service Officer (VSO) to the city. Another question that was asked during the forum was if a Veterans Commission would be supported. Mayor Pro Tem Lara stated he is happy to be able to witness the first meeting and the inauguration of the Veterans Commission.

Councilmember Garcia stated it is an honor to see the Veteran Commission come together. Councilmember Garcia congratulated and thanked the Veteran Commissioners for their services and is looking forward to working together.

Kenneth Gonzalez introduced himself as a Veterans Service Officer for the Los Angeles County. Kenneth completes accreditation for American legion, the state, and the nation with the California Department of Veteran Affairs. VSO Kenneth works at the Veterans Resource Center located at the Pico Rivera Senior Center every Monday. Kenneth had great success during the first 6 months of the Veteran Resource center being open, Kenneth has met with 190 Veterans. 119 meetings have been in person at the Veterans Resource Center, and 62 have been calls with

organizations to get information so they can send referrals. Kenneth states he sees a lot of people in other cities that are from Pico Rivera. A lot of Veterans who are Pico Rivera residents are not aware of the Resource Center because it is not being marketed. Kenneth, mention he has received some concerns about the criteria for the Veteran Memorial Plaque. Veterans mention to Kenneth it is a hard criteria to obtain. Veterans can be going through PTSD, anxiety, depression, have drinking problem, and it can lead Veterans to self-medicate. Self-medicating can then lead to receiving things such as a DUI, domestic violence charges for yelling and these charges disqualify Veterans from the plaque. Another concern that Veterans have taken to Kenneth is a way to acknowledge Veteran homes in the city of Pico Rivera. Kenneth has mention to the Veterans that come and see him that they can obtain a yard sign from the city that states they are a Veteran living in the city of Pico Rivera. A last concern Kenneth has received is that there are no handicap portable restrooms for guest who have walkers or wheelchairs at the Memorial Day and Veterans Day events. The resource center has been overall good in the last 6 months, Kenneth has been able to help a lot of Veterans who are confused, and he is able to guide them to the correct path.

Commissioner Perez asked Kenneth if he has contacted anyone regarding the handicap restrooms for events. Kenneth responded these are questions he has received, and he is bringing them to the commission. Kenneth suggested asking the the library if they can open the facility to utilize restrooms during these events. Commissioner Tanner agreed it was a good idea because other cities have them open.

Commissioner Perez asked if Kenneth could give the commission ideas for the criteria regarding the plaque for the Veteran Memorial. Kenneth thinks the Veteran yard since is a great idea and has not seen other cities have it. Parks and Recreation Director Yugar advised commission to look over the plaque criteria currently in place and they can advise to add the topic for the next meeting.

Supervisor Efrain Lee stated there is a sample picture of the yard sign attached to the Memorial Day Logistics given to commission.

#### b) Memorial Day Ceremony

Director Yugar mentioned to the commissioners that Supervisor Lee would be going over the upcoming Memorial Day Event. Supervisor Lee shared the Memorial Day Invitation to the commission and stated the invite was sent to approximately 500 invitees who are part of the veteran database. Supervisor Lee continued with the layout and timeline of the Memorial Day Event. Commissioner Perez mentioned the Pico Rivera Memorial Day

event is one of the best around and appreciates that Parks and Recreation plans a great event.

c) Veterans Day Ceremony

Director Yugar mentioned to the commissioners that the Veteran Day event is usually hosted on the actual holiday. With this, a lot of the time dignitaries are unable to attend with having to make their way from city to city. Director Yugar asked the Veteran Commission if they would prefer the Veterans Day event to be held on the actual holiday or the Friday prior or the Monday after the actual day. Commissioner Taner stated she is not able to express her opinion at the moment. Commissioner Perez stated it is a subject that needs to be thought and talked about. He is aware the city is closed on Fridays and Saturdays can be a conflict with people going out of town. He suggested that Monday would be the best option to have the Veterans Day Event. Director Yugar mentioned if the discussion can be made now as planning for this event begins early to insure proper booking. Commissioner Garcia mentioned if the holiday is observed on Monday, then it might be better for everyone if the event is held on the observed day. Director Yugar asked Supervisor Lee what changing the date meant for him. Supervisor Lee responded that he had to resubmit an application to use the library parking lot to begin the permitting process. Commissioner Tanner agreed that it was a good idea to change the event day. Director Yugar acknowledged Commissioner Tanner for being the guest speaker at last year's Memorial Day event and asked the commissioner if they had someone in mind to be a possible guest speaker at the next event to let staff know. Commissioner Perez stated since the Veteran commission is in place, they can talk to veterans from the VFW and American Legion and make them aware of these opportunities so they can share their stories. Commissioner Tanner added that was why she agreed to be a guest speaker at last year's Memorial Day event because she had a need to tell her story.

d) Commission Structure Discussion

Interim Executive Assistant Sanchez mentioned that typically commissions have a Chair and Vice Chair. Usually how this is decided is the current roll a council member is in, that is the roll of their appointee. Current Mayor Lutz appointed Commissioner Perez to the Veteran Commission so he would act as Chair for the Veteran Commission and so on and so forth. If all agree, a vote among the commissioners would need to be put in place

to approve the structure. Commissioner Tanner voted yes and Commissioner Garcia second the vote.

Interim Executive Assistant Sanchez made aware to the commissioners at this point of the meeting if they had any reports, comments, or concerns, that this would be that time to do so.

### **3. COMMISSIONER REPORTS – Park Facility Issues**

- Bobbie Tanner

- Gilbert Perez

Chair Perez announced he would like a report and summary from VSO Kenneth as he brought up good points for the commission.

- Daniel Garcia

Commissioner Garcia mentioned bring a Veteran credit union would be a good idea to have for the veterans who live within the city. He also mentions he would like to speak more in regard to the criteria for the Veteran Memorial plaque would be of importance in the future.

- Paul Camacho

- Vacant

Director Yugar reminded commissioners that Veteran Commission meeting were set on a quarterly schedule. Interim Executive Assistant Sanchez mention to the commission that they can choose if they want to meet in the beginning, middle, or ending of the quarters as well as to what day of the week and what time. Commissioner Tanner stated she liked having the meeting on a Monday. Commissioner Garcia asked if the time can be moved to a later time as 3pm conflicts with his teaching schedule. Director Yugar asked if 4pm would be a good time. Commissioner Garcia agreed as well as Commissioner Tanner. Interim Executive Assistant Sanchez stated the next meeting would be on July 17th at 4:00pm and the commission agreed.

Before adjuring the meeting, Chair Perez asked if anyone had any questions. VSO Kenneth stated the Veteran Memorial Plaque had some standard criteria but that considerations should be on a case-to-case bases.

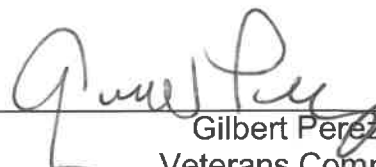
Resident Ortiz had a comment regarding Veterans Day. He stated he is an officer at the VFW but is speaking as a concerned Veteran. He mentions the significant of Veterans Day. The significance is in regard to WWI ending on the 11th hour, the 11th day the 11 month. He feels offended that the Veterans Day Event was changed to happen on day of observance instead of the actual day.

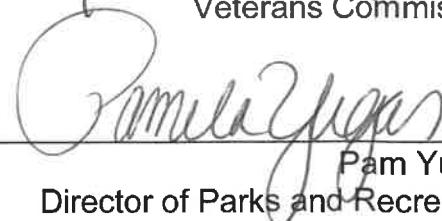
Mayor Pro Tem Lara mentioned creating a Veterans commission was made to help with decisions like choosing when to have the Veterans Day event. As a non-Veteran, he would not feel comfortable making the decision on the day change. Mayor Pro Tem Lara stated to the commission he would respect any decision they make as an Elected Official.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Veteran Commission Meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m. by Chair Perez

**NEXT MEETING DATE: July 17, 2023**

  
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Gilbert Perez, Chair  
Veterans Commission

  
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Pam Yugar,  
Director of Parks and Recreation