



Mission BBQ
3410 Plumtree Dr.
Ellicott City, MD 21042

MINUTES

Thursday, 05 December 2019

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present: Mr. J. Greg Jolissaint, Mr. Jonathan K. Branch, Mr. Reginald Avery, Mr. Michael Blum, Mr. Steven M. Bolen, Mr. Robert Gillette, Ms. Kelly Kesler, Mr. Robert Lowell, Mr. Keith McGuire, Mr. Bob Moore, and Mr. Paul Rivers.

Members Excused: Ms. Jennifer Anthony and Mr. Michael Griggs.

Howard County Government Officials in Attendance: Ms. Lisa Terry (Manager, Howard County Office of Veterans and Military Families).

Special Guest(s): None.

Others in Attendance¹: *Ms. Linda Bolen, Ms. Delma Branch, Ms. Georgia Lee Moore, Ms. Cindy Lowell, Mr. Ed A. Hall (Chair, Joint Military Council), Mr. Lou Schott (A.L. Post 156), Ms. Nafrettifi Griffin, Mr. Bob Chew (VFBMD), Ms. Ronna Corman-Chew (VFBMD), Ms. Kyra D'Amato (VFBMD), Mr. Vance Blakely (A.L. Post 156), Mr. Bob Pelletier (VFW Post 7472), Mr. John Way (The VA Way), Ms. Edna Cummings (WWII 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion), Mr. Andrew Rutherford (MD VA), and Mr. Yale Stenzler.*

MEETING SUMMARY:

1900 hrs Mr. J. Greg Jolissaint, Chair, Howard County Commission for Veterans and Military Families (HCCVMF), presiding, opened the meeting.

- I. The Role was called: Eleven Commission members being in attendance, Mr. Jolissaint declared the Commission was in quorum and brought the meeting to order.



- II. Mr. Jolissaint acknowledged the attendance of key Commission personnel: Ms. Lisa Terry, Manager, Howard County Office of Veterans and Military Families and Mr. Ed A. Hall, Chair, Howard County Joint Military Council (JMC).

Mr. Jolissaint stated that Ms. Wanda Riddle, former Co-Chair, HCCVMF, was not able to make the meeting due to a personal conflict but that she passed along her regrets, well wishes, and happy holidays to the Commission.

- III. Mr. Jolissaint welcomed aboard new Commission members: Ms. Kelly Kesler, Mr. Keith McGuire, Mr. Michael Griggs, and Mr. Paul Rivers. (WELCOME ABOARD!)

SPECIAL GUEST(S):

None.

1. Consideration of the 07 November Meeting Minutes

- a. Mr. Jolissaint stated that consideration of the 07 November minutes will be postponed until the 02 January 2020 Commission meeting.

2. Old Business

- a. Update on Commission Vacancies: Ms. Terry stated she expected Ms. Nafrettifi Griffin to be nominated to the Commission early next year. Her appointment could come as early as February.
- b. Update on the Veterans Day Parade: Mr. Jolissaint stated that the Veterans Day Parade was a great success. He asked that Mr. Hall gather the Veterans Day Parade Committee together to summarize lessons learned for next year.
- c. Update on the Veteran Friendly Businesses (VFB) Program: Mr. Chew and Ms. Corman-Chew stated that the VFB Program is “taking on a life of its own.” As of 02 December, there are 70 businesses and over 432 members taking part in the program. In late October, there were only 36 businesses and about 200 members. The program is expanding beyond Howard County into Fort Meade. Both expressed thanks to Ms. Kyra D’Amato, VFB Administrator, and volunteers Mr. Tim Ruland, Ms. Marcella Ruland, Mr. Bob Berlett, Mr. Vance Blakely, Mr. Ed Hall, and Mr. Lou Schott for their help.

Mr. Blakely explained how veterans and their family members can nominate a business for the program. For more information, please contact Ms. Kyra D’Amato at kyra@bobandronna.com.



- d. Update on HCPSS Veterans Day Presentation Programs: Ms. Terry stated that she and Mr.'s Jolissaint, Moore and Rivers participated in a Veterans Day recognition event at Harpers Choice Middle School. They presented a slideshow to 7 social studies classes with a timeline of various conflicts and a discussion about the meaning of Veterans Day and what it means to serve.

Mr.'s Hall and Schott participated in a special Veterans Day presentation at Vantage House senior living home for veteran residents.

Mr.'s Hall and Schott participated in a Veteran's Day program at Longfellow Elementary School. Col. Schott made opening remarks after students sang the Star-Spangled Banner outside. They then went inside and lined up with veteran and active duty parents where students shook hands, high fived, fist bumped and thanked them for their service. Parents, Schott, Hall and 5th graders moved into the cafeteria for music by the chorus and band ensemble, as well as breakfast provided by the PTA. Students prepared questions for Col. Schott and he entertained them for 30 minutes with his answers.

3. New Business

- a. Commission Annual Report: Mr. Jolissaint asked each of the Commissioners and supporting Veterans Service Organizations to submit an End-of-Year summary of their activities for the Annual Howard County Commission for Veterans and Military Families Report.
- b. Veterans Resource Fair: Ms. Terry stated that the fair will be held at the Howard County Community College (HCCC) Galleria on 21 April from 1600 - 1900 hours. She is looking for volunteers to help organize the event. Please contact Ms. Terry if you are interested.
- c. Howard County Joint Military Council (JMC) Significant Items: Mr. Hall briefed the Commission on the following:
 - 1) The JMC is searching for a Vice-Chair.
 - 2) On 06 December, American Legion Post 156 will support "Sailor of the Year" presentation on Fort Meade in the Theater at 1000 hours.
 - 3) On 06 December, American Legion Post 136, Greenbelt, will host a World War II dinner. Those who are interested in attending can meet in the Broken Land Park & Ride at 1645 hours to carpool to the event.



- 4) On 07 December, Mr.'s Hall and Schott will be at Mission BBQ in Ellicott City with the U.S. Marines Corps collecting Toys-For-Tots.
- 5) Voices of Vets is now a Veteran Friendly Business.

d. Other:

- 1) Mr. Branch stated that during the Veterans Day Parade a person approached the Commission members and gave them two patriotic greeting cards. Inside both cards read the handwritten inscription. "We are grateful for your service. The Smith Family." (THANK YOU, SMITH FAMILY!)
- 2) Ms. Terry stated that Mr. John Way was one of the nine finalists at The Horizon Foundation Changemaker Awards on 11 November. Mr. Way is co-founder of The VA Way and is working to provide mental health first aid to veterans in our community. His work to improve the lives of our veterans is much appreciated.
- 3) Ms. Terry stated that on 22 December, The Fire & Ice show in Columbia will donate 10% of its ticket sales to the Howard County Veterans Foundation. The Foundation is raising funds for a veteran's monument to be placed in the Neighborhood Square currently under construction in downtown Columbia.
- 4) Ms. Terry stated that Mr. Rutherford is the new Veterans Administration specialist representative.
- 5) Mr. Jolissaint stated that Wreaths Across America will be holding a wreath-laying ceremony at every national veteran's cemetery across America. Ms. Terry stated that wreath-laying ceremonies will also take place locally at St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church cemetery in Columbia and at Crest Lawn Memorial Gardens in Marriottsville.
- 6) Ms. Kesler stated that Howard County has been designated as one of only a few counties in the U.S. as "Age-Friendly" by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). The designation is based on eight domains of living criteria that include such things as transportation, affordable housing, senior social participation, etc. (WAY TO GO HOWARD COUNTY!)
- 7) Ms. Terry stated that on 07 December, Mission BBQ will be giving free meals to World War II veterans.



- 8) Ms. Cummings stated that the WWII 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion has gained support from both Maryland Senators and five U.S. Representatives.

4. Special Announcement:

Mr. Jolissaint announced the retirement of Mr. Robert Gillette from the Commission. He noted Mr. Gillette's years of honorable service to the Commission and Howard County. Mr. Gillette will continue his work to improve the lives of veterans in our community and with his efforts with the Howard County Veterans Foundation to complete the construction of a Neighborhood Square and Veterans Monument in Columbia. (FAREWELL, BOB. WE WISH YOU THE BEST!)

5. Next Commission Meeting Date(s):

- a) Mr. Jolissaint announced that the next meeting of the Howard County Commission for Veterans and Military Families will be held on Thursday, 02 January 2019 starting at 1900 hours in the Government Office Building, 9830 Patuxent Woods Dr., Columbia, MD 21046.
- b) Mr. Jolissaint announced that other future Commission meetings will take place on 06 February and 05 March.

ADJOURNMENT:

1935 hrs Mr. Jolissaint called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion and second to the motion were made. Subsequent to the motions for adjournment, Mr. Jolissaint closed the meeting and directed the Commission to stand in adjournment until 02 January 2020.

(HAPPY HOLIDAYS!)

Minutes were drafted by: Mr. Steven M. Bolen

J. Greg Jolissaint
Chair

Notes:

1. Names in italics are Commissioner spouses.

Attachments:

None.